

## CHAPTER 1

# Moving through space and (not?) time

## North Australian Dreamtime narratives

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This chapter is concerned with an analysis of narrative structure in the endangered non-Pama-Nyungan language Jaminjung and Australian Kriol. Previous analyses of Aboriginal narratives and story-telling techniques focused on the significance of *place* in plot and content (McGregor, 2005; Klapproth, 2004; Bavin, 2004). This study aims to extend these observations to include expressions of *motion* as a major structuring device in narratives. Furthermore, spatial may take precedence over temporal ordering of events in narrative. I argue that spatial narrative structuring is deeply rooted in cultural and environmental features creating a connection of unique identity for every 'owner' and audience of a story.

### 1. Dreamtime stories of Australia

This chapter examines narrative structure in the two Australian languages Jaminjung and Kriol. Jaminjung is a non-Pama-Nyungan highly endangered language spoken in the Victoria River Area. Different varieties of Kriol, an English-lexified Creole, have about 20,000 speakers across Northern Australia. The basis for the analysis is a selection of Jaminjung dreamtime and personal stories collected in fieldwork settings (Schultze-Berndt, 2008) and for Kriol, two published narratives (Sandefur et al., 1981).

Dreamtime narratives are the creation stories of indigenous Australians. They are located at the interface of religious belief, myth, and oral history, and link the land, where they take place and their owners' identity to one another. The term 'owner' here refers to both the owners of the land and its stories being intricately connected to one another. Zigzagging 'invisible' pathways, *Dreaming Tracks*, are created all over the continent. Each narrative section is assigned an owner responsible for re-telling the story in order to keep the connection between the land, people, and animals strong: "the land and all within it was irrevocably tied up

with the content of a myth or story, just as were (and are) the people themselves" (Berndt & Berndt, 1989, p. 5).

It is true, for both place names and dreaming narratives in Aboriginal society, that "people affiliated with a language (and a land and its toponyms) do indeed 'own' (them)" (Hodges, 2007, p. 399). Furthermore, "landscapes and the places that fill them become tools for the imagination, expressive means for accomplishing verbal deeds, and also, of course, eminently portable possessions to which individuals can maintain deep and abiding attachments, regardless of where they travel" (Basso, 1992, p. 142).

A dominant feature of Aboriginal story-tellings is that a narrative is never told 'in full', but as episodic instances focusing on particular sub-events that often are thought to have taken place at or near the location of the actual storytelling. Many stories are told where language and tribal boundaries meet. However, unlike dividing European boundaries, these are thought to connect and relate points in the landscape to one another (Rose, 1992, p. 52). The rights in the track extend towards each owner's country (Bell, 1983, p. 134), and as a result, the Dreaming then can be viewed as a particular kind of 'map' (Rose, 1992, p. 44).

The notion of *Dreaming Track* is uniquely Australian and crucial for understanding Aboriginal culture and narrative. It is particularly well captured and explained by Myers (1991, pp. 49–50):

Frequently known as totemic ancestors in anthropological literature, the mythological personages of The Dreaming travelled from place to place, hunted, performed ceremony, fought and finally turned into stone or 'went into the ground', where they remain. The actions of these powerful beings – animal, human and monster – created the world as it now exists. They gave it outward form, identity (a name), and internal structure. The desert is crisscrossed with their lines of travel, and, just as an animal's tracks leave a record of what happened, the geography and special features of the land – hills, creeks, salt lakes, and trees – are marks of the ancestors' activities. Places where exceptionally significant events took place, where power was left behind, or where the ancestors went into the ground and still remain, are special sacred sites.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the very nature of the dreaming as a traveling ancestral being leaving behind traces is embodied within narrative structure; based on literal and metaphorical movement through space, though not necessarily time. It has been remarked, that there is a kind of temporal paradox to the dreaming tracks which form an ordered series established by the totemic beings' movement from one place to the next; however, the totemic being is nonetheless simultaneously present at all of these places (Strehlow, 1947, p. 25). As such, they have an eternal quality, relevant to people of the past, present, and future (Berndt & Berndt, 1989, p. 4). It has been widely debated, among anthropologists, that the

concept of 'time' for indigenous Australians, with regards to the *DreamTIME* has a different connotation than the Western view; being neither measured nor numbered (e.g. Brody, 1990; Stockton & Weeks, 1995; Swain, 1993). Most influential, Stanner (1956, p. 52) coined a special term for this concept in: "One cannot fix the Dreaming in time: it was, and is *everywhen* (my emphasis)".

This notion is in stark contrast to influential Western analyses of narrative, which places strong emphasis on recapitulating *past* experiences, strict temporal ordering, and established elements of narrative structure: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution, and coda (Labov, 1972, pp. 360–363). I argue that in the oral tradition of Aboriginal narratives, these structural elements are replaced by the systematic usage of *motion* encodings and *spatial* rather than *temporal* ordering of events. Previous analyses of Aboriginal narratives and story-telling techniques have focused on the significance of *place* in content and culture (Bavin, 2004; Klapproth, 2004; McGregor, 2005; Rumsey & Weiner, 2001). These are extended to include *motion* as a major structuring device in narratives in my investigation.

### 1.1 The concept of 'motion' in North Australian narratives

Many Jaminjung and some Kriol narrations start with a type of motion event description such as example (1) for Jaminjung, (2) for Kriol. This pattern can even be observed for other Australian languages, such as MalakMalak in (3).

- (1) *ga-jga-ny nu:: gudarlg=mala:ng ganurr-uga ja:lig*,  
3SG-go-PST 3SG.OBL brolga=GIVEN 3SG:3PL-take.PST child  
'she went up to her, the brolga it was, she took her children' (E01004, VP)<sup>1</sup>
- (2) *dubala-dubala boi bin kam-in bram det-wei*  
3DU-3DU boy AUX.PST come-PROG ABL:from that-way  
'Two men came from over there.' (Conversational Kriol Tape5 Lesson35 0003)  
(Sandefur, 1981)
- (3) *tyerriny tity ka-nggi yida=ke dat*  
goanna come.out come-PROX.DIR 3SG.MASC.go.PST=FOC look  
*yiminu-nu*  
3SG.MASC.do.PUNCT-3SG.MASC.OBJ  
'the goanna came out and looked at him' (DH12\_A47\_01) (Lindsey et al., 2013)

1. *taunwei*=Kriol is marked in Jaminjung examples in cases of code-switching with underlining.  
Prosodic breaks are marked by %, ... or ,  
Intonational breaks are marked as \  
Vowel lengthening is marked with :

These phrases are a sudden entrance path into the story. Such a pattern has very little resemblance with a Western type introduction, which usually positions major characters prior to moving into a sequence of events. Instead, Aboriginal narrative openings already hint towards the journey-like structure many of the narrations display.

Within the story, structurally parallel journey sections between episodes may mark transitions across narrative boundaries between (static) events and places. On the other hand, the practice of *gapping* contextual information within a story due to socio-cultural constraints leaves contextually blank spaces between episodes making it exceedingly difficult for any cultural outsider to understand a plot.

Various story-telling versions of the same narrative in Jaminjung provide an opportunity to examine how storytelling can differ and where underlying structures may lie. Similarities observed for the two languages under consideration and other Aboriginal languages (Klaproth, 2004; Rumsey & Weiner, 2001) suggest an aerial pattern of narrative structure. For Jaminjung stories, examined in Section 2, *spatial* may take precedence over *temporal* ordering. *Motion* is a structuring device leading into and out of the story-world, thus linking episodes to each other in space. Similarly, in Kriol narratives, analysed in Section 3, *motion* and parallel journey sections within the story are used as structuring devices along which the narrative flow depends.

Jaminjung dreamtime narratives place particular focus on the narrative significance of *place*, thereby, re-telling the land alongside the story. As such, place-names, landscape features, and journeys are narrated in detail, forming oral maps of the country. Strikingly, similar observations were made for Western Apache narratives, for which “placeless events are an impossibility” (Basso, 1992, p. 154). For the Australian context, Berndt and Berndt (1989, p. 6) state:

It is, then, the land which is really speaking – offering, to those who can understand its language, an explanatory discourse about how it came to be as it is now, which beings were responsible for its becoming like that, and who is or should be responsible for its becoming like that, and who is or should be responsible for it now.

In Kriol narratives, the key structural and contextual element is that restriction in movement ultimately leads to stagnation within the plot of the story. This chapter analyses one traditional and one personal narrative in both Jaminjung and Kriol languages to show that spatial narrative structuring is deeply rooted in cultural and environmental features creating a connection of unique identity for every owner of a story.

## 2. Spatial and motion structure in Jaminjung narratives

### 2.1 'All over the place' – Jiniminy, a Jaminjung narrative

#### 2.1.1 *Spatial over temporal order*

The *Jiniminy* story occupies an exceptional place in the corpus of narratives available for this study (Schultze-Berndt, 1991–2008). There are six different versions of the narrative and no two are alike in terms of content, length or detail. In this analysis, I focus on one story-telling event (Lewis & McDonald, 1996) which is presumed to be told on site. This assumption is based on a number of linguistic components of the narrative such as deictic expressions and structural observations explained in more detail below. The recording's accompanying metadata and my knowledge of the story are not conclusive enough to allow for a more certain assessment. The following synopsis gives a brief summary of the plot, but might not be accurate concerning the linear order of events:

The ghostbat *Jiniminy* is promised two of the *Rainbow Serpent's* daughters as wives. When Rainbow fails to keep his promise, Jiniminy spears him and steals his fire. He then attempts to steal the daughters after hiding under bark sheets of a paperbark tree, but the daughters and some animals chase him off. When he reaches a river, one animal catches up with him and attempts to spear him, but misses and only hits the fire on his head which makes the water sparkle. The two daughters then raise floodwaters and Jiniminy nearly drowns while trying to cross the river. He survives, but only after eating some special meat to become strong again. In the end he marries the Rainbow's daughters.

Presumably, the story forms part of a larger narrative or *Dreaming Track*, as defined in Section 1, and only parts of it are narrated by the responsible speaker. Story-telling, therefore, focuses on individual episodes which take place at one location and, thus, pays close attention to environmental details. For example, none of the versions in my corpus explains about the origin of Jiniminy or, when, and how, the Rainbow Serpent promised him two of his daughters as wives. Similarly, we do not know what happens to him after he marries the daughters, and where he goes into the ground to remain – as all dreamtime beings do when they die. Regarding ownership as part of the narration, during the storytelling, the speakers repeated on numerous occasions, that the story's episodes were located within *their* country. These reassurances are not only of great significance to the individual, but also exhibit a political dimension for Native Title claims, which "is the recognition by Australian law that some Indigenous people have rights and interests to their land that come from their traditional laws and customs" (NT Government, 2013). Consequently, since the story is linked to an individual and

his/her places only, other episodes outside the speaker's realm cannot be narrated. These narrations are creation stories of great significance, where instead of man-made places of worship, the land itself becomes sacred. This relationship is described by Bell (1983, p. 137):

Ancestral activity in country provides a metaphor for relations between the living: the comings and goings of the dreaming animate the landscape, infuse it with significance, and provide paths along which links between living people may be traced. Each individual has a unique complex of relations to land, its sites and dreamings, but it is the corporate nature of interests in land which is emphasized.

This analysis will focus on one narration of *Jiniminy* told in 1996 by a group of three Jaminjung elders in Gidburdiny near the Victoria River and Timber Creek. The narration is composed of 104 lines and all following examples in this section include a line-number to indicate their location within the story. The structure of the narration alongside an illustration of a (presumed) temporal linear structure is presented in Figures 1 and 2. Within the grey arrows in Figure 1, boundary-marking phrases are provided. The narration begins with a few opening lines (A:1–9), starting with example (4) below, where the scene is set in which Jiniminy and Rainbow meet. From there, the story moves on to Jiniminy's marriage proposal (B:10–17), which is not answered by Rainbow. At this stage, the first break

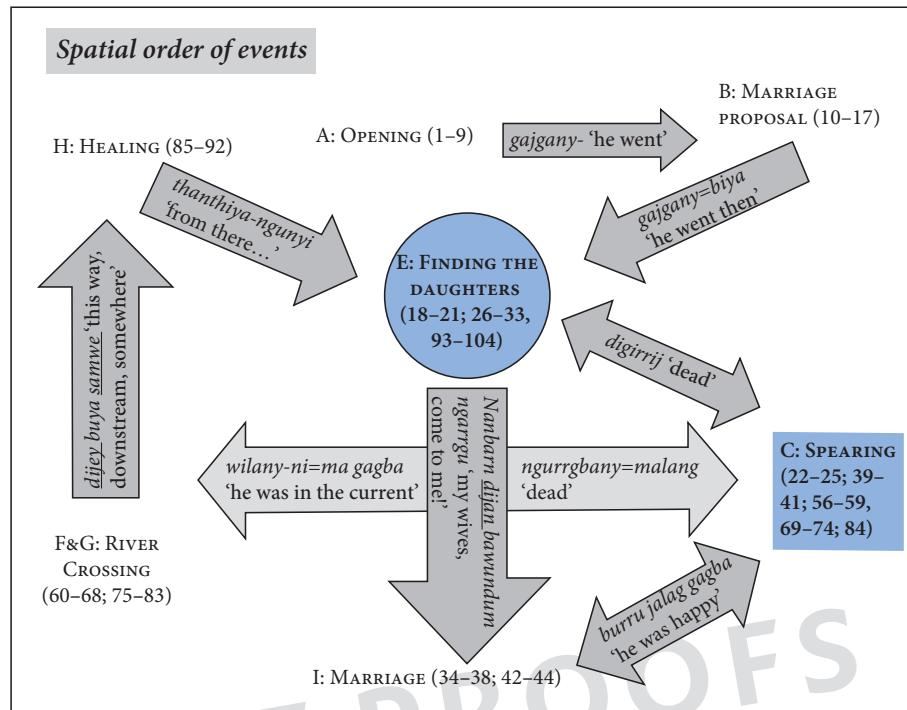


Figure 1. Spatial order of events in *Jiniminy*

in a linear narrative flow takes place when the speaker includes three lines about finding the daughters (E: 18–21). This event takes place later in the temporal order of events.

However, this short interlude quickly ends when the speaker moves *backwards* to narrating the death of Rainbow by Jiniminy's hand (C: 22–25). Again, this episode is not narrated in detail, instead, the narrative flow moves *forward* to finding the daughters (E: 26–33). Following this, the speaker talks about the wedding of Jiniminy and the two daughters (I: 34–38); interrupted by another move *back* to talk about the spearing (C: 39–41), and then again *back* to the wedding (I: 42–44). At this point, there is a short interruption (lines 45–55) when speakers talk about a topic unrelated to the story. When the narrative resumes, the spearing event is narrated again (C: 56–59), before another leap *forward* to the episode when Jiniminy crosses the river (F&G: 60–68). But again, the narration takes a step *back* to the spearing event for a few lines (C: 69–74), before it returns to how the two daughters raise the flood levels of the river to drown Jiniminy (75–83).

For just one phrase, the speaker *returns* to the spearing event (C: 84), and then the healing process of Jiniminy after nearly drowning is narrated (H: 85–92). Finally, all comes (almost) full circle with a *return* to the episode describing how Jiniminy finds the two daughters before marrying them (E: 93–104).

This example of the Jiniminy narrative is an excellent case-study for my hypothesis. It has become clear that the narration does not follow a linear temporal order of events as laid out in Figure 2. Instead, the speaker explicitly focuses on one episode/location within the story – finding the daughters – to which 23 lines are dedicated. Consequently, the narration moves *back and forth* between other

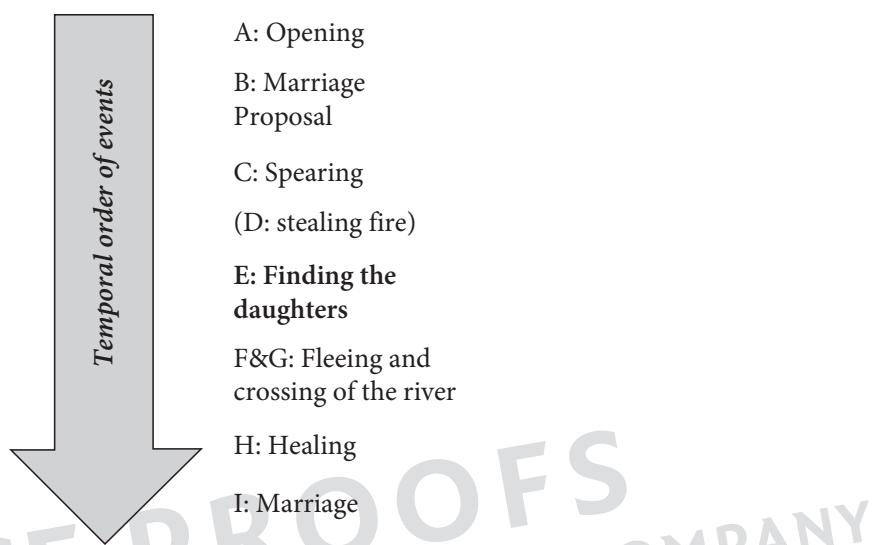


Figure 2. Temporal order of events in *Jiniminy*

episodes and this one (E) being the centre of attention. While overall, some temporal pattern is being kept by narrating the healing part of Jiniminy towards the end of the story-telling session, the speakers move back and forth between episodes in quick succession. This kind of ordering makes sense if it is kept in mind that this story portion of the Jiniminy narrative does not have a beginning or an end. It is part of a Dreaming Track and the speaker telling the story does not 'own' either the beginning or the end of it. As such, the *temporal paradox* of the Dreamtime Beings remaining simultaneously present in all narrated places at once (Strehlow, 1947) also finds its reflection in the narrative structure. Jiniminy travels the land, without temporal restrictions and all events in his story can be narrated at the same time. In sum, the major points about this narrative are:

1. *spatial* may take precedence over *temporal* ordering of events: by focusing on one episode within the narration which may be located at the deictic centre
2. *motion* phrases or *static* events mark episode boundaries: events are narrated when a break in the narrative flow triggers a change in narrative space

### 2.1.2 *Linguistic features of spatial ordering in narratives*

The spatial ordering of events in the narrative is reflected in linguistic expressions of movement and static location at episode boundaries. Example (4) is the opening line of the narrative.

(4) *yina-ngunyi ga-ruma-ny Leguna-ngunyi*,  
 DIST-ABL 3SG-come-PST n top-ABL  
 'He came from over there, from Legune' (line 1)

(5) a. *ga-jga-ny biya:*  
 3SG-go-PST now  
 'he went then'  
 b. *ga-gba=nu widimbat*,  
 3SG-be.PST=3SG.OBL wait:TR:CONT  
 'he was waiting'  
 c. *nangulany gan-bu-ngarna, gani-yu=nu*  
 when 3SG:1SG-POT-give 3SG:3SG-say/do.PST=3SG.OBL  
 "When will he give them to me?" he said'  
 d. *thamarlung*  
 nothing  
 'nothing (happened)' (lines 14–17)

The deictic locomotion inflecting verb (IV) *-ruma* leads into the story-world and towards the deictic centre of the narration from a specific source of motion in the form of a distal deictic *yina* 'there' and by an explicitly mentioned toponym

*Legune*. In Jaminjung, the verb phrase is often a complex predicate composed of an *inflecting verb* from a closed class denoting TAM and number as well as some semantic content, and an uninflecting *coverb* from a closed class contributing the majority of the semantic information to the structure as in (6b) below. For more details, refer to Schultze-Berndt (2000) and Hoffmann (2011).

When the narration moves on to another episode a few lines later, a single general locomotion IV *-ijga* 'go' in (5a) leads *into this* episode, and *away* from the deictic centre of the narration. It does not specify a goal or any moving entity specifically other than in the mandatory bound third person singular pronoun *ga-*. Instead it marks a narrative structural boundary which indicates 'movement' towards a new event within the story, both spatially and metaphorically. From there, the negotiations between Jiniminy and Rainbow Snake about marrying the daughters are introduced in (5b). This abruptly ends with a failed solution for the narrative problem at hand in (5d).

The IV *-ijga* is used to mark episodic boundaries in the narration where the story 'moves' from one place and episode to another. It may even mark episode boundaries irrespective of the protagonists' movements as seen in example (5) where the IV appears without expressing a goal of motion or even the protagonist itself. While the inflecting verb *-ruma* 'come' is always used deictically as seen in example (4), *-ijga* 'go' may indicate movement towards a goal or general motion. The stagnation of events, in (5d), leads the story away from this narrative problem towards another sub-event (finding the daughters), which occurs much later in the temporal order of events, seen in (6).

- (6) a. *bard-bard*  
DUP-cover  
'covered up'
- b. *bard-bard ga-rra-ja burrinyi bagarli-ni*  
DUP-cover 3SG-put-REFL.PST 3DU paperbark-ERG  
'he covered himself for them two, with paperbark'
- c. *ngarlangan=biyang buny-ijga-ny gagawurli-wu \*  
young.girl=NOW 3DU-go-PST long.yam-DAT  
'the two young girls went for long yam' (lines 18–20)

The series of events narrated here is recounted following a spatial ordering and movement between (real) places of significance to the narrative rather than following a temporal linear pattern, as illustrated in Table 1, where properties of a spatial versus temporal ordering of events are listed. While in a temporal ordering, the narrative flow is uninterrupted, except for marked flashbacks, in spatial ordering, narrative episodes often overlap and continuously break up the narrative flow. Because of these interruptions, in spatial orderings, sub-events are

Table 1. Properties of spatial and temporal ordering of narrative sub-events

Spatial ordering	Temporal ordering
general broken up narration of subevents	typically unbroken narrative flow
(un)marked episode overlap	marked flashbacks instead of episode overlaps
narrative focus on location	focus of narrative attention independent of location
repetitive narration of sub-events	singular narration of sub-events
episode boundaries marked by expressions of motion or stagnation	episode boundaries marked by temporal adverbs or discourse markers

frequently narrated more than once. If episode boundaries in spatial ordering are marked, spatial expressions of motion or stagnation are used. In temporal ordering, on the other hand, temporal adverbs or discourse markers are in use. Furthermore, the contextual focus in spatial ordering is on events taking place at a particular location, whereas in temporal ordering this focus is independent of location. In this version of the story, the discovery and persuasion of the daughters are in focus. The actual locations where the two sub-events take place are probably close to each other. I believe that this emphasis has to do with the location of the speaker at Gimul, which appears to be where the discovery and marrying of the daughters took place.

(7) *yinjuwurla ga-ruma-ny=ni garna-wurru*,  
 PROX:DIR 3SG-come-PST=FOC spear-PROPR  
 'he came here with a spear' (line 6)

Consequently, during the story-telling, the narrative flow returns continuously to this place which is marked with a proximal deictic *yinjuwurla* 'here' in example (7) and the deictic locomotion IV *-ruma* in example (4) setting the deictic centre of the narration at the beginning of the story-telling. In addition to these instances of overt movement expression at episode boundaries, other boundaries are marked with either static descriptions of location in example (8), or resolution-type events, where actions appear to come to a standstill, such as examples (9) and (5d).

(8) *yalumburrma ga-gba=ni walyang*  
 freshwater.crocodile 3SG-be.PST=SFOC in.front  
 'the Crocodile was already (waiting) there' (line 3)

(9) *burru=biya jalag ga-gba, Jiniminy-ni*  
 belly=NOW good 3SG-be.PST ghostbat-ERG  
 'he was happy now, the Bat' (line 38)

At each of these static event boundaries, the narration moves back in time to an earlier episode, while the motion boundaries often mark forward movement in time. Such overt marking of time and/or place shift has also been reported in connection with Arrernte sand drawings in narratives where erasure of drawings signal a change of space-time location (Wilkins, 1997). The static location and resolution descriptions are used to indicate a permanent situation from where there is no moving forward. Instead, the narrator moves back in time and to a different location, after which the narration can unfold again.

(10) a. *lambarra=malang niwina gani-jja-ny\*  
           father-in-law=GIVEN 3SG.POSS 3SG:3SG-poke-PST  
           ‘he speared his father in-law’

b. *yalumburra*  
       freshwater.crocodile  
       ‘the crocodile’

c. *gan-ijga-ny=biyang, digirrij*  
       3SG:3SG-poke-PST=NOW dead  
       ‘he speared him now, dead’ (lines 39–41)

This is particularly apparent in the events following example (9) above when the narration comes to a standstill describing Jiniminy’s success in finding and marrying the two daughters with the coverb *jalag* ‘good’. Afterwards the narrator moves far back in time and place to the spearing event, marking the Rainbow Serpent overtly with the clitic *malang* ‘GIVEN’ referring to an aforementioned entity or referent. This episode is concluded with *digirrij* ‘dead’ to describe the death and, therefore, permanently static situation of the Rainbow Serpent in example (10).

Spatial ordering of events and either, overtly expressed movement between episodes and places or a standstill of actions, lead to a covertly expressed movement to a different place in order to keep the narrative flow going. Motion of protagonists within the narrative context itself and motion between episodes and their locations on a structural level become a major means of narrative composition. A side-effect of these kinds of story-telling techniques is the aforementioned ‘gapping’ often observed in traditional story-telling settings. Speakers typically focus on one or (few) more sub-events in one narrative setting, so that cultural and literary knowledge passed on through these stories are distributed not as a whole but in small segments. That way, distribution of knowledge becomes an elaborate process over time in which a story’s entire context is only known by the most senior members of a society. This also makes it particularly difficult to comprehend the full plot of a narrative as an outsider.

To sum up, the *Jiniminy* narrative often follows a spatial and not a temporal sequence of events making the storytelling a highly culturally and locally specific

event. As such, it is considered oral history rather than fiction. The story of Jiniminy is narrated *on* the land, embodied in sacred sites, and may explain natural phenomena such as the sparkling of water. Spatial ordering, however, is not only a phenomenon observed in traditional dreamtime narratives, but also for personal story-telling, although with a slightly different focus. This is examined in the following section.

## 2.2 A trip to the sea – a trip by the sea: A Jaminjung personal narrative

In 2008, two Jaminjung elders told a story about a trip to the ocean with family members. This story-telling illustrates how the *journey* itself becomes a narrative structuring device, framing a series of static events. The narration is about a trip to the beach and is structured as five parallel travel sections to different interim destinations along the way by car and boat. Then a number of hunting, camping, fishing activities, as well as some descriptions of distress, such as a getting stuck in quicksand, are narrated. Following this, the journey back is narrated in only one travel section which includes an echidna hunt along the way.

(11) *gun-dum-any gurrinyi Ben gun-dum-any ngiya tau*  
 2DU-come-PST 2DU name 2DU-come-PST PROX town  
 'you two came, Ben and you (to) this town' (ES08\_A04\_05tt\_0003, EH)

As observed in the earlier *Jiniminy* narrative, the personal narration discussed here also starts with a motion event description to lead the listener into the story and towards the deictic centre (*ngiya* 'here') and to start off the narrative journey from there in example (11).

The speakers pay a great deal of attention to detail, including repetitive actions such as stopping on the way, eating, or filling up the car. This is characteristic of both Jaminjung and Kriol narratives. For Pitjantjatjarra, Klapproth (2004, p. 283) remarks that events inside and outside the daily routine are described no differently from one another. In other words, speakers pay as much attention to ordinary events as to exceptional ones. However, this view might be influenced by a 'Western' perspective on the significance and insignificance of events that might not be shared by Aboriginal storytellers. A traditional hunter-gatherer society may have a very different notion of 'routine' from a Western viewpoint because of a particularly unpredictable lifestyle. Another potential analysis of the detailed journey sections is that they serve as a kind of evidential strategy to assure the listener of the accurateness and truth value of the story told by reporting on exact 'real'-world routes, where landmarks and named places are mentioned in detail. Parallel motion expressions, marking travel sections in traditional as well as

personal Kriol and Jaminjung narratives, can be seen as additional evidence for this kind of analysis.

(12) a. *buyi yurri-jga-ny=murlu=biy:::ang Brolga Spring*  
 keep.going 12PL-go-PST=COLL1=NOW TOP  
 'we kept going, to Brolga Springs' (speaker EH)

b. *yawayi*  
 yes  
 'yes' (speaker IP)

c. *gugu laburr-laburr*  
 water DUP-scoop  
 'picked up water there' (EH)

d. *yawayi tenk-nyunga*  
 yes tank-ORIG  
 'yes, from a tank' (EH)

e. *buyi marraj yurri-jga-ny*  
 keep.going go.past 1PL-go-PST  
 'on and on! We kept going (past this place)' (IP)

f. *marraj=jung=biya yurri-jga-ny=murlu:::::*  
 go.past=RESTR=NOW 12PL-go-PST=COLL1  
 'we all kept goiiiiing-' (EH)

g. *la det channel*  
 LOC that channel  
 'to the channel' (IP)

h. *ya*  
 yes  
 'yes' (EH)

i. *yirr-arra-nyi=ma bot thawu*  
 13PL>3SG-put-IMPF=SUBORD boat immersed  
 'where we used to put the boat in the water' (IP)  
 (ES08\_A04\_05tt\_0036-0045)

Example (12) is a typical travel episode narrative. The duration of travel sections is denoted using the path coverb *buyi* 'keep going' in (12a) and (12e) and vowel lengthening in (12a) and (12f) to encode durative events. The example additionally shows how the two speakers typically interact during the narrative by expressing agreement ((12b) and (12h)), repetition (12f), or adding information not mentioned by the other ((12g) and (12i)). The story's narrative flow appears to place a spatial ordering over a temporal ordering of events in a meaningful manner only outside designated travel sections. These sections, as shown in example (12), follow a clear linear pattern in a cyclic manner and are tripartite consisting

of leaving a place, traveling itself, and arriving at another place. This pattern is repeated for all 'uneventful' travel sections and breaks only in a part of the narrative where the speakers describe a disruption of the travel flow in the form of a stranded boat. Klaproth (2004, p. 285) notes that in Aboriginal storytelling, maintaining the balance of a fragile system of checks and balances is a cognitive strategy of problem avoidance, which might be reflected in this example in a break of the narrative flow.

Arrival at the destination triggers a break in narrative structure. When the story world is no longer in motion, but has reached its destination at the beach, the parallel and cyclic ordering of events within the narrative flow is no longer used. Instead, activities and events at the destination are told in what appears to be a temporarily 'free' order as seen in example (13).

(13) a. *hi rait olmen gan-ina=nu biyang waitbala-ngunyi*  
 it right old.man 3SG>3SG-say/do.IMPF=3SG now white.person-ABL  
 "it's all right old man", he said to him, the white man did'  
 (ES08\_A04\_06tt\_0272)

...

b. *det olmen bin reckon hi minyga ngih, barndal gulban*  
 that old.man AUX.PST reckon 3SG what's.it TAG strong ground  
 'that old man thought it was hard ground'

c. *yathang=ung yiga ngard ga-rdba-ny ngiya-gija-gi=gung*  
 allright=RESTR STILL bogged 3SG-fall-PST PROX-RECIP-LOC=RESTR  
 'but he instead got bogged up to here' (ES08 A04 06tt 0283-4)

The order of events can even be temporally inverted as in example (13) where eleven utterances lie between (13a) when the old man is rescued from quicksand and (13b) where he gets stuck.

Whereas the speakers follow a linear temporal narrative pattern when describing travel and journey, this structure is not carried over when the destination of this overall traveling is reached. Each event on the beach is told as an independent incident that can be broken up and retold at a different time. Even within these events, there appears to be freedom of temporal sequence. Therefore, the journey itself becomes the narrative structuring device by framing the entire narration as journeys to and from the beach.

Contrary to what was observed for the two Jaminjung narratives in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, in the Kriol narratives under consideration, spatial does not take precedence over temporal ordering of events. However, descriptions of motion, travel, and space are highly significant structuring and contextual devices. This is the topic of the following Section 3.

### 3. Travel through time and space: Kriol narratives

#### 3.1 The *Cloud-Story*, a traditional narrative

The Kriol stories analysed here follow a more ‘Westernised’ structure than the Jaminjung narrations. They are edited for a written context. However, as observed for Jaminjung, in the Kriol narrations the journey can also be identified as a main structuring device.

In the *Cloud Story* (Sandefur et al., 1981) two men are traveling in the Dreamtime. When they get tired, they very carefully choose their campsite for the night at *Hularra Springs*. However, when they wake up in the morning, their surroundings appear to have changed dramatically and they find themselves inside a waterhole. Before the two can reach dry land again, a cloud comes, pressing down from above, burying them alive.

(14) *dubala boi bin kam-in bram detwei*  
 3DU boy AUX.PST come-PROG from that-way  
 ‘Two men came from over there’

The focus of this particular narration of the story is the space through which the two men travel; their final destination and death. This journey begins in example (14) with a sudden introduction into the story as movement into the scene. This strategy was also described for Jaminjung (Section 2.1 and shown in (4) and (5)) as a linguistic means of marking episodic boundaries and as an introductory device, which leads the listener into the story-world.

Following this, four journey sections are narrated, interrupted only by re-enacted direct speech acts of the protagonists at decision points en-route.

(15) *dubala bin go kamat la sen-hil*  
 3DU AUX.PST go.AUX come-out ALL sand-hill  
 ‘So they went to the next sandridge’ (line 15)

(16) *dubala bin go kamat la det pleis*  
 3DU AUX.PST go.AUX come-out ALL that place  
 ‘So they went to the next one’ (line 21)

(17) *Hularra jat dubala bin gon til tubala bin*  
 TOP that+one 3DU AUX.PST goon until 3DU AUX.PST  
*gijimap dat pleis*  
 reach that place  
 ‘They kept going until they came to the spring called Hularra’ (line 24)

Two of those motion event descriptions, which occur six lines apart, in examples (15) and (16) are parallel in structure, using the same serial verb construction *go kamat*, denoting continuous movement followed by reaching a destination, but not necessarily coming to an ultimate standstill. To mark that the final destination of the narrative has been reached, the speaker uses a different telic verb *gijimap* 'reach' in example (17) three lines later.

(18) a. *binij-im-ap dat dubala*  
           kill-TR      that 3DU  
           'It killed them'  
   b. *binij*  
       finished  
       'the end'  
   c. *nathin bin gid-at*  
       nothing AUX.PST get out  
       'Nothing survived'

Klaproth (2004, p. 257) identifies the journey as an organisational principle in Aboriginal narratives. It can provide a basic structural unit for establishing patterns of daily cycles in movement between camps and, secondly, is a globally relevant structure towards a desired destination. In the cloud narrative, the repetitive travel sections are marked by a pattern of parallel actions until a final destination is reached and clearly marked by firstly using a telic verb of motion *gijimap* 'reach' and, secondly, the only place-name of the story *Hularra Spring*, thus, overtly marking the destination. The individual sub-journeys combine to structurally form an overall journey, which started with a sudden movement of the protagonists into the story-world in example (14) and ends with arrival at a final destination and rest, e.g. (18).

In many Aboriginal stories, reaching the last camp is used as a strategy for narrative closure after something interrupted the travels (Klaproth, 2004, p. 293). In the *Cloud* narrative, getting to the night's camp leads to an interruption of the journey and, ultimately, catastrophe. According to Klaproth (2004, p. 285), it is this interruption of the usual routine which leads in many Aboriginal stories to a fatal ending. In contrast to Western storytelling, which places the narrative focus often on problem solving, Aboriginal stories appear to aim to train their listeners in avoiding emergence of problems by behaving in ways that will not jeopardise the equilibrium of the system (Klaproth, 2004, p. 285). Thus, when the men decide to break their routine and stop moving, they are doomed. Since movement is no longer possible, the story must conclude at Hularra Springs. No movement or struggle is described while the men are in the water. The story concludes in a

lengthy coda in example (18) focusing on the end of the men's journey and, consequently, their death.

The Kriol personal narrative briefly analysed in the following section includes similarly rich motion expressions as the traditional story.

### 3.2 Visiting a dam: Journey features of a personal Kriol narrative

In this Kriol personal narrative the speaker talks about a trip to a dam and sewerage treatment plant near Sydney (Sandefur et al., 1981).

(19) *Mibala bin go langa jat dem*  
1PL.EXCL AUX.PST go ALL that dam  
'We went to the dam'

(20) *mela gid-in kam-bek la kemp na*  
1PL.EXCL get-in come-back LOC house now  
'We arrived back at the place where we were staying'

(21) a. *mibala go-dan go-dan yilif go-dan yilif pulap*  
1PL.EXCL go-down go-down lift go-down lift stop  
*langa midl ap-wei*  
LOC middle up-wards  
'We went down in the lift and we stopped half way up'  
b. *mela bin luk-aran*  
1PL.EXCL AUX.PST look-around  
'We looked around'

(22) a. *mela bin ol jump-an wi bin go-dan igin*  
1PL.EXCL AUX.PST all jump-on 1PL AUX.PST go-down again  
'We got in and went down again'  
b. *pulap wi bin wok-aran na*  
stop 1PL AUX.PST walk-around now  
'We stopped and then walked around'  
c. *wi bin kam-at \ wi bin luk-in-at*  
1PL AUX.PST come-out 1PL AUX.PST look-PROG-out  
'We came outside and observed everything'

A first striking observation concerns the overall frequency of motion event descriptions in this story. Of the 69 clauses of the narration, 41 are motion event descriptions emphasising the thematic prominence of the 'journey'. The amount of detailed attention the speaker pays to each section of the trip is noteworthy.

In between the general start in example (19) and end (20) of the trip, three different sub-trips are comprehensively narrated. Examples (21) and (22) above

show how the speaker tells different sub-journeys in a parallel manner, a strategy also observed for the traditional *Cloud* narrative in Section 3.1. A general verb of motion (*go*) is followed by a stopping verb (*pulap*) indicating refraining from movement, and, finally, a verb of perception (*lukaran*) expresses the activity at the place.

The Kriol personal and traditional stories in my corpus, just like the Jaminjung narrations, use gapping, and place the journey in the thematic centre of many narratives. Additionally, the journey might frame a story using movement and stagnation as contextual structuring devices.

#### 4. Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of narrative structure in two Australian languages. There is an intricate connection between the narrative content and structure and the space it is set in. At the same time, Aboriginal notions of time differ considerably from Western perspectives. It is then not surprising, that these fundamental cornerstones of indigenous culture are reflected in narrative structure of *Dreamtime* and personal narratives. This connection had, however, to my knowledge, not been made explicit before, and, therefore, this chapter adds important insight into linguistic, as well as anthropological, and literary aspects of indigenous storytelling.

Jaminjung narratives focus on geographical features of places and follow a spatial rather than a temporal line of events such as *Jiniminy*. Moreover, the practice of gapping information from a story, due to socio-cultural constraints, is a common feature used by all Jaminjung speakers. The journey itself may become the frame of the entire storyline's narrative structure.

The Kriol narratives analysed also use the journey as a major structuring principle. I showed how restriction in movement ultimately leads to stagnation in the plot, making it the key structural and contextual element of the stories. The narrative strategy of detailed and paralleled journey descriptions works as a kind of evidential strategy to verify the 'truth' value of the narrated events. Concerning the interplay of linguistic, narrative and cultural structure in general, the significance of space, landscape and landmarks is immense in Aboriginal Australia. This can most notably be observed in the culturally salient uses of spatial and motion descriptions being independent of typological language type for both Jaminjung and Kriol described elsewhere in detail (Hoffmann, 2011, 2012; Schultze-Berndt, 2006).

Finally, a major conclusion from this chapter is that the significance of space and geographical features of the country, already observed in detail elsewhere (Bavin, 2004; Klapproth, 2004; McGregor, 2005), for narrative content and plot, needs to be extended to the structure of the narration itself. The way a story is told changes according to the narrators' location and can only be fully understood if the listener is familiar with features and named places of the land. Additionally, linguistic encodings of motion event descriptions often function as defining structuring devices in the narratives at the beginnings of the stories. They often also mark the start of new episodes within the narration.

Consequently, this analysis of Aboriginal narratives has shown that storytelling as a cultural and linguistic activity goes beyond the mere contents of the story, but may also extend to serve as a geographic and in-group reference. Spatial may take precedence over temporal ordering of events and motion encodings serve as episode markers instead of temporal expressions. This impressively shows that the classic Labovian (1972) model of narrative structure does not transfer to oral narratives of Aboriginal Australians. Instead, the narratives are situated in a unique setting of temporal and spatial paradox where the dreamtime beings are present in past, present, and future, while simultaneously traveling on- and backwards at all times. This special setting is reflected in the very structure of the narratives itself, which may only be understood with this background in mind. In summary, this chapter provided some insight into this exceptional relationship in Jaminjung and Kriol stories of Northern Australia.

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