

# WORK PAPERS OF SIL - AAB

Series B Volume 3

**AN AUSTRALIAN CREOLE IN THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY: A DESCRIPTION  
OF NGUKURR-BAMYILI DIALECTS (PART 1)**

John R. Sandefur

Summer Institute of Linguistics  
Australian Aborigines Branch  
Darwin  
February 1979



© SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS 1979

ISBN 0 86892 191 2

## PREFACE

These Work Papers are being produced in two series by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines Branch, Inc. in order to make results of SIL research in Australia more widely available. Series A includes technical papers on linguistic or anthropological analysis and description, or on literacy research. Series B contains material suitable for a broader audience, including the lay audience for which it is often designed, such as language learning lessons and dictionaries.

Both series include both reports on current research and on past research projects. Some papers by other than SIL members are included, although most are by SIL field workers. The majority of material concerns linguistic matters, although related fields such as anthropology and education are also included.

Because of the preliminary nature of most of the material to appear in the Work Papers, these volumes are being circulated on a limited basis. It is hoped that their contents will prove of interest to those concerned with linguistics in Australia, and that comment on their contents will be forthcoming from the readers. Papers should not be reproduced without the authors' consent, nor cited without due reference to their preliminary status.

Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of SIL.

The publication of this volume has been partially funded by a grant from the Research Fund of the Australian Aborigines Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

To order individual volumes of the Work Papers, or to place a standing order for either series, write:

SIL  
P.O. Berrimah  
Darwin, N.T. 5788  
Australia

G. L. Huttar  
Series Editor



INTRODUCTION TO  
SERIES B VOLUME 3

The purpose of this paper is to make available for the layman a description of the creole language spoken in the Roper River area of the Northern Territory. It is written particularly with Europeans working in the area in mind. It has not been written as a technical paper for linguists, but it is hoped that linguists will find it useful in providing information on the language.

It should be noted that this volume (Part 1) does not contain a complete description of Creole. Intonation and rhythm, word formation, adverbs, conjunctions, questions and commands, complex sentences, and discourse structure are not discussed. It is planned that these sections will be described in a second volume (Part 2) in the future. (In addition, a basic dictionary is being published separately as *Work Papers of SIL-AAB*, Series B, Volume 4.) The sections contained in Part 1 are comprehensively, but not exhaustively, covered.

At several places in this paper the reader is referred to a discussion of a particular item at another location. When the reference is stated as being 'elsewhere', it means that the item will be discussed in Part 2. If the discussion is within Part 1, the chapter or section reference is given.

Examples occur frequently throughout the chapters dealing with Creole grammar. These examples are written in the Creole practical orthography as discussed in Chapter 3. In some situations an example of an unacceptable or ungrammatical construction is given. These examples are marked by a preceding asterisk (\*).

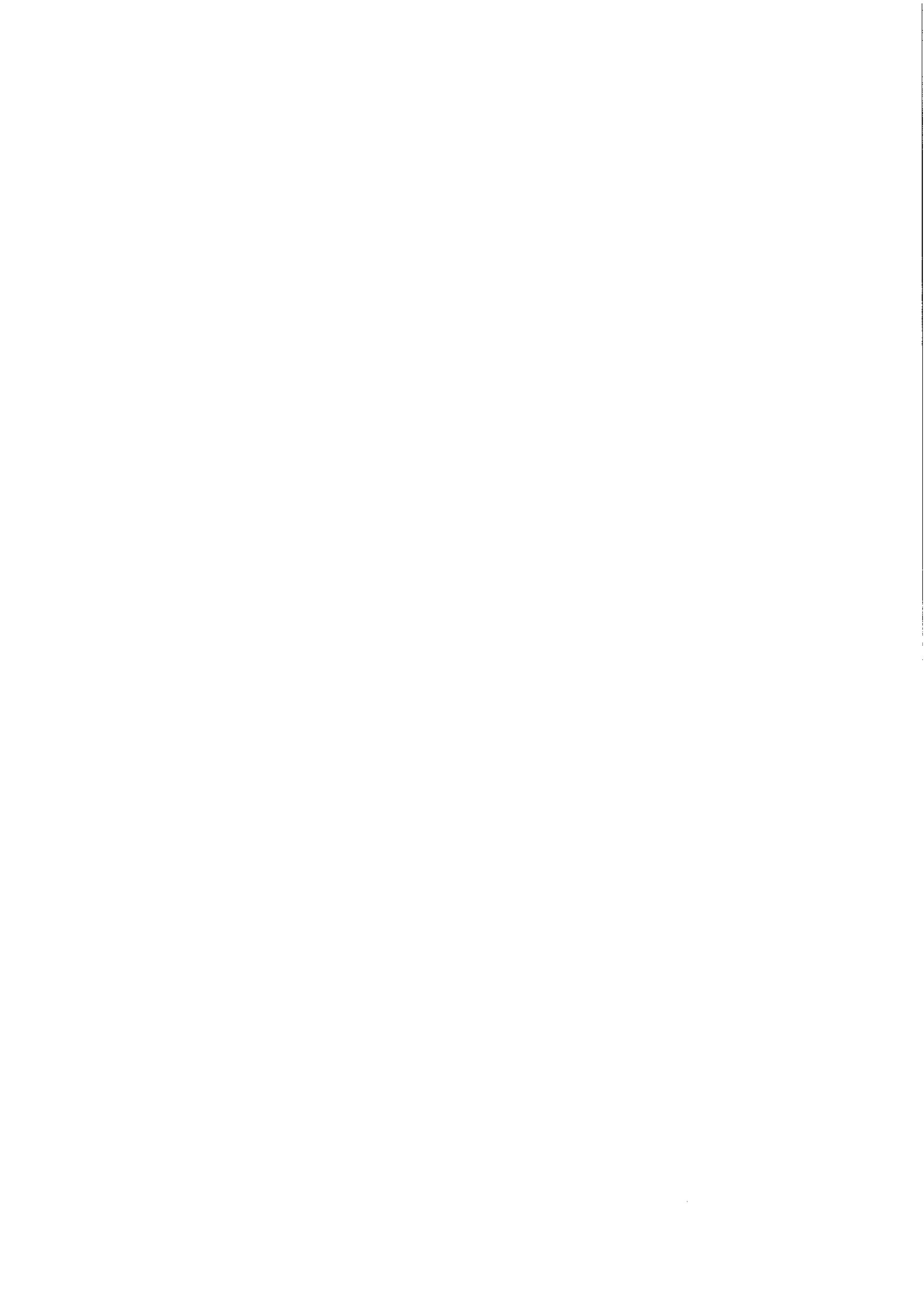
This paper is based on some 27 months of fieldwork under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics since March 1973. Of this time approximately 60% has been spent at Ngukurr, 30% at Bamyili, and the remaining 10% elsewhere.

Without the help of many people this paper would not have been possible. I would like to thank the many Creole speakers who have shared their language with me, especially those who patiently worked with me in formal situations: Barnabas Roberts, Mordecai Skewthorpe, Andrew Joshua, Isaac Joshua, Charlie Johnson, Wallace Dennis, David Jentian, and Danny Jentian. Thanks are due to the late Lothar Jagst,

Kathy Menning, and Joyce Hudson for their editorial comments on earlier drafts of sections of this paper, and especially to Mary Huttar and Mike Ray for editing the full manuscript. Thanks are also due to Julanne Slater and her typing pool for typing an earlier draft of this paper and to Verna Campbell for typing the final draft. I also appreciate the encouragement received from Phil and Dorothy Meehan, Margaret Sharpe, Velma Leeding, Holt Thompson, Warren Hastings, Neil Chadwick, David Zorc, Gail Forbutt, Debbie Maclean, George Huttar, Reg Houldsworth, and my wife Joy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Preface	iii
Introduction to Series B Volume 3	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE SOUND SYSTEM OF CREOLE	27
3. A PRACTICAL ORTHOGRAPHY FOR CREOLE	53
4. NOUNS, PRONOUNS, ADJECTIVES, AND THE NOUN PHRASE	75
5. VERBS AND THE VERB PHRASE	111
6. PREPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES	141
7. SIMPLE SENTENCES	163





## CHAPTER 7

### SIMPLE SENTENCES

	Page	
7.1	NON-VERBAL SENTENCES	165
7.1.1	<u>Descriptive Sentence</u>	166
7.1.2	<u>Equative Sentence</u>	167
7.1.3	<u>Impersonal Sentence</u>	168
7.1.4	<u>Locative Sentence</u>	169
7.1.5	<u>Genitive Sentence</u>	171
7.1.6	<u>Modifications to Non-Verbal Sentences</u>	172
	7.1.6.1 Expansion of Embedding	172
	7.1.6.2 Inversion of Order	173
	7.1.6.3 Inclusion of Verbal Modifiers	175
7.2	VERBAL SENTENCES	176
7.2.1	<u>Intransitive Sentence</u>	177
7.2.2	<u>Transitive Sentence</u>	177
	7.2.2.1 Reflexive and Reciprocal Sentences	178
7.2.3	<u>Double Transitive Sentence</u>	179
	7.2.3.1 <i>Gibit</i> Sentences	179
	7.2.3.2 <i>Dalim</i> Sentences	180
	7.2.3.3 <i>Meigim</i> Sentences	182
	7.2.3.4 <i>Budum</i> Sentences	183
7.3	EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES	184





1. I am big.
2. He is boss.
3. It is raining.
4. They are at the river.
5. They are mine.

Creole, instead of linking the topic and comment together with a verb, link them simply by means of juxtaposition. That is, the topic and comment occur side by side with nothing between. Examples 1 and 2 above in Creole would be

*Mi bigbala.*  
'I (am) big.'

and *Im bos.*  
'He (is) boss.'

The lack of a 'to be' linking verb in Creole is not a sign of a simplistic or underdeveloped language. Many of the world's languages, including Russian, lack such a linking verb.

The non-verbal sentences of Creole can be divided into five main types, for which the English examples above are selected. They are (1) descriptive, (2) equative, (3) impersonal, (4) locative, and (5) genitive. These are discussed in order below.

#### 7.1.1 Descriptive Sentence

A descriptive sentence is a sentence in which the comment describes the topic. A minimal example would be one in which the topic is a pronoun and the comment an adjective.

*Im bigbala.*  
'He is big.'

The topic can also be a noun.

*Munanga bigbala.*  
'The European is big.'

But the topic need not be simply a noun. It can also be a noun phrase.

*Jadan longwan munanga bigbala.*  
'That tall European is big.'

Usually, however, when the topic is a noun phrase (and often when simply a noun), the noun phrase does not occur by itself but in combination with a pronoun in an appositional construction.

Jadan longwan munanga, im bigbala.  
'That tall European, he is big.'

and also

Munanga, im bigbala.  
'The European, he is big.'

Of course, in English, this is 'bad grammar'. But Creole is not English, and in Creole this appositional construction is 'good grammar'.

The comment can also be expanded from a simple adjective to a phrase.

Im brabli bigbala.  
'He is very big.'

#### 7.1.2 Equative Sentence

An equative sentence is one in which the topic and comment are equated. It could be said that the comment identifies the topic. In a real sense the equative sentence is simply a sub-category of the descriptive sentence. The distinction is not so much one of grammar (though equative comments tend to be nouns while descriptive comments adjectives) as one of meaning. All of the grammatical expansions that can occur with descriptive sentences also apply to equative sentences. A minimal form would be

Im bos.  
'He is boss.'

An expansion of the comment to a phrase could be

Im brabli bigbala bos.  
'He is the head boss.'

An expansion of the topic to an appositional construction could be

Wanbala lilbala olmen, im brabli bigbala bos.  
'A little old man, he is the head boss.'

### 7.1.3 Impersonal Sentence

In English there are a number of sentences that make use of what is usually called an empty 'it' subject. Some examples are

It is raining.

It is hot.

It is noon.

The 'it' in these sentences does not really refer to anything in particular and are thus meaningless or 'empty'. The use of 'it' is purely conventional. Such constructions are called impersonal sentences.

Creole impersonal sentences, like other non-verbal sentences, consist of a topic linked to a comment by juxtaposition. The topic is invariably the pronoun *im*. The comment may be a noun, adjective, or adverb as given in the following examples respectively.

*Im*     *rein.*       (noun)  
'It is raining.'

*Im*     *hotbala.*     (adjective)  
'It is hot.'

*Im*     *dinadaim.*   (adverb)  
'It is noon.'

In the first example the Creole non-verbal sentence has had to be translated into English as a verbal sentence. That is, where Creole used the noun *rein*, English had to use the verb *raining*.

With many constructions, the specific meaning and usage depends on the context. With the examples above in other contexts, the empty *im* would not be empty nor would the construction be an impersonal sentence. For example, if it is just starting to rain as someone is waking up, they might conceivably ask

*Wanim    jat   nois?*  
'What is that noise?'

The reply could be

*Im       rein.*  
'It is rain.'

In such a context, *im* would refer to *nois* and the construction would be an equative sentence.

Similarly, a child might reach for a freshly cooked damper and be warned

*Im hotbala.*  
'It is hot.'

in which case *im* would refer to the damper and the construction would be a descriptive sentence.

#### 7.1.4 Locative Sentence

A locative sentence is one in which a comment is made about the location of the topic.

*Olabat jeya.*  
'They are there.'

and *Im la riba.*  
'He is at the river.'

While it is conceivable to say that the comment describes the topic as to its location, locative sentences differ from descriptive sentences in the construction of the comment. While the descriptive comment is a noun or noun phrase, the locative comment is an adverb, prepositional phrase, or a combination of the two. The topic of a locative sentence, however, has the same grammatical construction and expandability as the descriptive topic.

In its minimal form, a locative sentence has the comment as simply a locative adverb.

*Im jeya.*  
'He is there.'

*Im gubijap.*  
'He is near.'

and *Im airrap.*  
'He is upstream.'

The comment can also be a locative prepositional phrase.

*Im langa riba.*  
'He is at the river.'

and *Im la midul.*  
'He is in the middle.'

A further expansion or further specification of location is possible by using a combination of adverb and prepositional phrase.

*Im gulijap la riba.*  
'He is near the river.'

and *Im rait langa midul.*  
'He is right in the middle.'

The combination of adverb and prepositional phrase is not restricted to only one occurrence of each. Nor is the prepositional phrase limited to a minimal form.

*Im rait la midul la dubala bigbala wadi.*  
'He is right in the middle between two big stress.'

and *Im jeya lodan wansaid la riba*  
'He is there down stream on the side of the river

*gulijap langa jat waitwan rok.*  
near that white rock.'

While it is possible for this last example to occur, it would usually be expressed not as one unit but as several. It might be broken up as

*Im jeya lodan wansaid la riba.*  
'He is there down stream on the side of the river.

*Gulijap la jat waitwan rok.*  
Near that white rock.'

or *Im gulijap la jat waitwan rok. Wansaid jeya*  
'He is near that white rock. On the side there

*loda langa riba.*  
down stream by the river.'

or even

*Im jeya lodan. Wansaid la riba.*  
'He is there down stream. On the side of the river.

*Gulijap la rok, jat waitwan.*  
Near that rock, the one that is white.'

In other words, Creole, like most Aboriginal languages, allows for much (but not total nor ad hoc) flexibility in word order.



### 7.1.5 Genitive Sentence

A genitive sentence is one in which the comment is a *blanga* prepositional phrase.

*Im* *blanga mi.*  
'It is mine.'

The topic of a genitive sentence has the same grammatical construction and expandability as descriptive and equative topics. It can be simply a pronoun or noun or a noun phrase. Continuing with the example used above, the construction could be

*Dog* *blanga mi.*  
'The dog is mine.'

or *Jadan baibulbala* *dog, im* *blanga mi.*  
'That black and white spotted dog, is mine.'

The above examples have a possessive meaning. That is, the topic is possessed by the comment ('I own the dog.'). The same construction in a different context would have a different meaning. Consider the following examples:

At a post office:

*Jadan leda* *blanga mi.*  
'That letter is for me. (I am the intended recipient.)'

At a discussion on 'nationality':

*Jadan kantri* *blanga mi.*  
'That country is mine. (I do not own it, but that is where I come from.)'

At a dispensary, by a doubtful patient:

*Dijan medisn* *blanga mi.*  
'This medicine is for me. (It is for my benefit.)'

Upon hearing a story about one's self:

*Jadan stori* *blanga mi.*  
'That story is about me.'

Actually, this last example, depending on what the context is, could mean

'That to is about me.'  
 'That story was told for my benefit.'  
 or 'I am the owner of that story.'

### 7.1.6 Modifications to Non-Verbal Sentences

To further complicate these 'simplest' of Creole sentences, three additional factors must be taken into consideration. These are expansion of topics and comments to include an embedded sentence, inversion of the normal order of the topic and comment, and inclusion of verbal modifiers between the topic and comment. These will be discussed in order below.

#### 7.1.6.1 Expansion by Embedding

It has previously been discussed under the various types of sentences above, that in most cases the topics and comments can be expanded. For most sentences the topic can be expanded from a pronoun or noun to a phrase. The notable exception is the impersonal sentence where the topic is always an empty *im*. With descriptive and equative sentences, the comments can be expanded from an adjective or noun to a phrase. Similarly, with locative and genitive comments, the internal structure of the prepositional phrases can be expanded to include phrases.

The topics and comments that can be expanded into phrases can also be expanded by incorporating or embedding other sentences within the topic or comment. The sentence

*Ai bin luk olmen.*  
 'I saw a man.'

could be embedded in the topic of the sentence

*Jadan olmen, im sikbala.*  
 'That man is sick.'

to produce

*Jadan olmen ai bin luk, im sikbala.*  
 'That man that I saw is sick.'

When a simple sentence, however, has another sentence embedded within it, it is no longer a simple sentence but has become a complex sentence. Embedding and complex sentences are discussed in detail elsewhere.

### 7.1.6.2 Inversion of Order

The normal or usual word order for non-verbal sentences is the topic followed by the comment, as all previous examples have been. It is common in Creole for this order to be inverted or reversed. In most cases the comment can precede the topic.

*Jadan munanga longwan.*  
'That European is tall.'

can be inverted to

*Longwan jadan munanga.*

Such inversions do not affect the meaning of the sentence, though they may shift the focus or emphasis.

Other examples would be

*Dijan leda blanga mi.*  
'This letter is mine.'

inverted to

*Blanga mi dijan leda.*

and *Dubala olgamen jeya la riba.*  
'Two women are there at the river.'

inverted to

*Jeya la riba dubala olgamen.*

However, there are restrictions on inversions. Notable among the restrictions is the inability for an inversion to occur if the topic is simply a pronoun.

*Im bigbala.*  
'He is big.'

cannot be inverted to

*\*Bigbala im.*

*Im blanga mi.*  
'It is mine.'

cannot be inverted to

*\*Blanga mi im.*

*Im langa riba.*  
'He is at the river.'

cannot be inverted to

*\*Langa riba im.*

nor can

*Im hotbala.*  
'It is hot.'

be inverted to

*\*Hotbala im.*

This restriction, as exemplified in the last example, means that impersonal sentences cannot be inverted since the topic is always the pronoun *im*.

Inversions need not be total. Partial inversion occurs when appositional constructions are split.

*Jadan olmen, im sikbala.*  
'That man is sick.'

can be partially inverted to

*Im sikbala, jadan olmen.*

and *Dijan daga, im blanga melabat.*  
'This food is ours.'

can be partially inverted to

*Im blanga melabat, dijan daga.*

Partial inversions can only take place when appositional constructions occur. Single phrases cannot be partially inverted.

*Jat blekwan dog blanga mi.*  
'That black dog is mine.'

cannot be partially inverted to

*\*Jat blekwan blanga mi dog.*

Nor can

*Jadan olmen sikbala.*  
'That man is sick.'

be partially inverted to

\**Jadan sikbala olmen.*

It should be pointed out, however, that the constructions

*Jat blekwan blanga mi dog.*

and *Jadan sikbala olmen.*

are correct and legitimate constructions in Creole. But they are not partial inversions of the above examples because their meanings are different: the first one means 'That black one belongs to my dog.' (not 'That black dog is mine.') and the second one means 'That is a sick man.' (not 'That man is sick.').

#### 7.1.6.3 Inclusion of Verbal Modifiers

The five sentence types discussed above are classed as non-verbal sentences because none of them include a verb within their construction. All of them, however, can occur with verbal modifiers between the topic and comment. Verbal modifiers are discussed in Chapter 5, so only a few selected examples will suffice here.

*Olmen bin sikbala.*  
'The man was sick.'

*Olgamen bin gulijap presidint.*  
'The woman was almost president.'

*Im andi hotbala.*  
'It will be hot.'

*Olabat bin andi lodan.*  
'They should have been down stream.'

*Jadan nomo blanga mi.*  
'That is not mine.'

Verbal modifiers cannot occur in a totally inverted sentence, though they can occur with partial inversion.

*Im bin sikbala, jadan olmen.*

'That old man was sick.'

but not

\**Bin sikbala, jadan olmen.*

nor \**Sikbala bin jadan olmen.*

## 7.2 VERBAL SENTENCES

In addition to the non-verbal simple sentences, there are three main types of verbal simple sentences in Creole. These are sentences, as stated earlier, that contain a verb.

Some English examples selected to illustrate these three main types would be

(1) We are eating.  
Subject + Verb

(2) He banks the money.  
Subject + Verb + Direct Object

(3) He gives us strength.  
Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

Number (1) is intransitive, (2) is transitive, and (3) is double transitive.

The subject in all of these sentences in Creole, as with most of the non-verbal sentences, may be either a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. For example, number (3) above in Creole with a pronoun as subject would be

*Im gibit melabat murnda.*  
'He gives us strength.'

with a noun as subject it would be

*God gibit melabat murnda.*  
'God gives us strength.'

and with a noun phrase as subject it would be

*Melabat dadi la top gibit melabat murnda.*  
'Our Father in heaven gives us strength.'

### 7.2.1 Intransitive Sentence

The simplest of the verbal sentences is called an intransitive sentence. Like English, it consists simply of a subject followed by a verb.

*Melabat*            *dagat.*  
'We            are eating.'

*Biganini*            *bago.*  
'The baby is vomiting.'

*Blekbala*            *jabi.*  
'Aborigines understand.'

### 7.2.2 Transitive Sentence

A sentence in which the subject does an activity to another person or object is called a transitive sentence. In a sense, the activity is transferred from the subject to the object. A transitive sentence in Creole, like English, consists of a subject followed by a verb which in turn is followed by an object.

*Stakmen*            *lukluk yarraman.*  
'The stockmen see the horses.'

*Olgamen*            *blandim daga.*  
'The woman hides the food.'

*Im*    *boksimap mani.*  
'He banks the money.'

Most verbs that are used in transitive sentences in Creole occur with the suffix *-im* as in the last two examples above with *blandim* and *boksimap*. Verbs that occur with this *-im* suffix are called marked verbs; those without are unmarked verbs as in the first example above with *lukluk*. While some unmarked verbs may occur in transitive sentences, marked verbs only occur in transitive sentences; they never occur in intransitive sentences. For more detail, see the sections on marked and unmarked verbs and transitive suffix in Chapter 5.

Unlike English, Creole has the ability to delete the object from most transitive sentences. This is normally restricted, however, to sentences that have marked verbs and is possible because the *-im* suffix, in essence, carries the 'weight' of the object much like a pronoun. The specification of the object would be understood from the context in which the sentence was used.

*Im barnimap modiga.*  
'He is wrecking the car.'

in context, could simply be

*Im barnimap.*  
"He is wrecking (the car)."

The object in transitive sentences is referred to as a direct object. Like the subject, a direct object may be a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. For example, with the object as a noun

*Imin blandim daga.*  
'She hid the food.'

as a pronoun

*Imin blandim im.*  
'She hid it.'

and as a noun phrase

*Imin blandim melabat munanga daga.*  
'She hid our whiteman's food.'

#### 7.2.2.1 Reflexive and Reciprocal Sentences

There are two special cases of transitive sentence in which the direct objects are specific pronouns. The first is a reflexive sentence in which the direct object is the reflexive pronoun *mijelb*. The subject acts upon itself; the activity is reflected back upon the subject.

*Yangboi barnim mijelb.*  
'The young boy is burning himself.'

*Jineik bin baidim mijelb.*  
'The snake bit itself.'

*Olabat kilim mijelb.*  
'They are hitting themselves.'

The second case is a reciprocal sentence in which the direct object is the reciprocal pronoun *gija*. In this case the subjects act upon each other in a reciprocating manner. Note that the subject is plural, involving more than one entity.



*Dubala kilim gija.*  
'They hit each other.'

*Munanga en blekbala lukluk gija.*  
'The Europeans and Aborigines see each other.'

### 7.2.3 Double Transitive Sentence

Related to the transitive sentence is a type of sentence that occurs with not only a direct object but a second object as well. This type of sentence is referred to as a double transitive sentence since the activity of the subject in some way affects two objects.

*Im gibit melabat murnda.*  
'He gives us strength.'

*Im dalim mi laya.*  
'He is telling me a lie.'

Unlike with transitive and intransitive sentences, relatively few verbs can occur in double transitive sentences. Virtually all verbs which do occur in double transitive sentences can also occur as the verb of a transitive sentence as well. Four of the most common double transitive verbs are discussed below.

#### 7.2.3.1 *Gibit* Sentences

The basic form of the double transitive sentence is

Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

as exemplified by the sentence

*Im gibit melabat murnda.*  
'He gives us strength.'

The second or indirect object, like the subject and direct object, can be a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. Unique to the double transitive sentence, the indirect object can also be a prepositional phrase. This is usually a *la* prepositional phrase as in

*Im gibit la melabat murnda.*  
'He gives to us strength.'

When the indirect object is simply a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase, it always precedes the direct object. When it is a prepositional phrase, however, it may follow the direct object. The above example could be expressed as

*Im gibit murnda la melabat.*  
'He gives strength to us.'

but not as

*\*Im gibit murnda melabat.*

Similar to transitive sentences, the direct or indirect object or both can be deleted in a given context. Thus the following constructions are possible.

*Im gibit melabat.*  
'He gives us (strength).'

*Im gibit la melabat.*  
'He gives to us (strength).'

*Im gibit murnda.*  
'He gives strength (to us).'

or simply

*Im gibit.*  
'He gives (us strength).'

Just as the meaning of such reduced forms depends on their context, so also does the type of sentence it represents.

*Im gibit daga.*

in one context could be a reduced double transitive sentence meaning

'He is giving food (to us).'

but in another context it could be a transitive sentence meaning

'He distributes (is a distributor of) food.'

#### 7.2.3.2 *Dalim* Sentences

Very similar to the constructions using *gibit* 'give' are those using *dalim* 'tell'. All the forms discussed above can occur with *dalim*.

*Im dalim mi laya.*  
'He is telling me a lie.'

could also be expressed as

*Im dalim la mi laya.*  
*Im dalim laya la mi.*

but not

\**Im dalim laya mi.*

Likewise, reduced forms could be used.

*Im dalim mi.*  
*Im dalim la mi.*  
*Im dalim laya.*  
*Im dalim.*

As with the *gibit* examples, depending on the context,

*Im dalim laya.*

could either be a double transitive sentence with the indirect object deleted meaning

'He is telling (me) a lie.'

or it could be a transitive sentence meaning

'He tells lies.'

Unlike with *gibit*, the direct object with *dalim* need not be restricted to simply a noun, pronoun, or basic noun phrase. It can be a complete sentence in direct or indirect quote form.

*Im dalim mi, "Go weidabat bla mi jeya".*  
'He tells me, "Go wait for me there".'

*Im dalim mi go weidabat bla im jeya.*

or *Im dalim mi bla go weidabat bla im jeya.*  
'He tells me to go wait for him there.'

Such constructions, however, because they involve two sentences or clauses in one, are no longer simple sentences but rather complex sentences.

### 7.2.3.3 *Meigim* Sentences

The verb *meigim* 'make' is usually used in simple transitive construction.

*Olgamen meigim damba.*  
'The woman is making a damper.'

*Meigim* can also be used in a type of double transitive construction.

*Olgamen meigim olmen damba.*  
'The woman is making the old man a damper.'

As with other double transitive sentences, the indirect object can be expressed as a prepositional phrase. In this case it is with a *bla* phrase.

*Olgamen meigim bla olmen damba.*  
'The woman is making for the old man a damper.'

or *Olgamen meigim damba bla olmen.*  
'The woman is making a damper for the old man.'

but not

\**Olgamen meigim damba olmen.*

Compare, however, the following

*Im meigim mi nogud.*  
'He makes me feel bad.'

*Im meigim mi ofsaida.*  
'He is making me (his) assistant.'

The form of these examples is

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Object Complement

It should be noted that the object complement, unlike the direct and indirect objects, normally cannot be deleted. For example, it is possible to delete the direct object and have

*Im meigim nogud.*  
'He makes (me) feel bad.'

but it is not possible to delete the object complement and have

*\*Im meigim mi.*

'He makes me (feel bad).'

#### 7.2.3.4 *Budum* Sentences

The verb *budum* 'put' is used in double transitive sentences having the basic form

Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Object Place

as in

*Im budum ai la bekbom.*

'He puts (his) eyes on (his) back.

(i.e. He is turning away.)'

The object place is always a locative construction, being either an adverb, prepositional phrase, or a combination of both. Locative constructions are discussed in detail elsewhere.

Unlike other double transitive sentences, the word order of those involving an object place are fixed. The object place always follows the direct object.

*Im budum mi la pitja.*

'He is putting me in the picture.

(i.e. He is paying my way into the movie.)'

but not

*\*Im budum la pitja mi.*

As with other double transitive sentences, either or both of the objects can be deleted in a given context.

*Im budum mi la pitja.*

'He is paying my way into the movie.'

could be reduced to

*Im budum la pitja.*

'He is paying (my way) into the movie.'

*Im budum mi.*  
'He is paying my way (into the movie).'

or simply

*Im budum.*  
'He is paying (my way into the movie).'

### 7.3 EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES

Sentences that are used to make a statement as to whether or not something exists are referred to as existential sentences. The basic form of existential sentences in English is

'there' + a form of the verb 'to be' + a noun expression  
as in

There are swarms of mosquitoes at Roper.

There are several ways of making an existential statement in Creole. The simplest is by use of a non-verbal construction. The English example above would be

*Tumaj miskida la Ropa.*  
'Swarms of mosquitoes are at Roper.'

A stronger, more emphatic construction would be

*Ropa onli fo miskida.*  
'Roper is only for mosquitoes.'

This construction, however, is used relatively rarely.

The same existential statement could, however, also be expressed by using a verbal construction. This could be a transitive sentence using one of the verbs for 'have', either *abum* or *gadim*, as in

*Ropa abum tumaj miskida.*

or *Ropa gadim tumaj miskida.*  
'Roper has swarms of mosquitoes.'

The same idea could also be expressed by an intransitive sentence using the verb *jidam* 'exist, dwell, to be'.

*Tumaj miskida jidan la Ropa.*  
'Swarms of mosquitoes exist at Roper.'

The verb *jandap* is also used in intransitive existential constructions. It is, however, restricted to stating the existence of entities that in some sense have a vertical nature, such as trees.

*Tumaj meinggo tri jandap jeya.*  
'Many mango trees exist there.'

(i.e. There are many mango trees there.)'

Another way of expressing existential in Creole is by the use of a *deibin* construction. This is similar to the English 'there + to be' construction. It consists of a contraction of the third person plural pronoun *dei* and the past tense marker *bin* followed by a noun expression. It is restricted to an expression of the past existence of an entity.

*Deibin tumaj miskida la Ropa.*  
'There were swarms of mosquitoes at Roper.'

*Deibin tumaj meinggo tri jeya.*  
'There were many mango trees there.'





WORK PAPERS OF SIL - AAB

Series A

- Volume 1: *Five Papers in Australian Phonologies*, ed. J. Hudson  
vii + 204 pp. October 1977 \$5.85  
(Alyawarra phonology; A tentative description of the phonemes of the Ngalkbun language (including a small word list); Notes on rhythmic patterning in Iwaidja; What are contrastive syllables? the Wik-Munkan picture; A phonological analysis of Fitzroy Crossing Children's Pidgin.)
- Volume 2: *Papers on Iwaidja Phonology and Grammar*, N. Pym  
xiii + 253 pp. Forthcoming \$6.25  
(Two papers on phonology, five on grammar. First extensive description of Iwaidja. Phonologically interesting [5 stop series, but 4 laterals] as well as grammatically [a prefixing language with no noun classes and no case marking].)
- Volume 3: *Four Grammatical Sketches: From Phrase to Paragraph*,  
ed. C. Kilham, vii + 128 pp. Forthcoming \$4.35  
(Notes on paragraph division in Tiwi; The sentence: boundaries and basic types in Ngaanyatjarra narratives; Clause types in Gugu-Yalanji; The Walmatjari noun phrase.)

Series B

- Volume 1: *The Walmatjari: An Introduction to the Language and Culture* (2nd, slightly revised, printing), J. Hudson, E. Richards, P. Siddon, P. Skipper *et al.*  
vii + 109 pp. May 1978 \$4.75
- Volume 2: *Papers in Literacy and Bilingual Education*,  
ed. E. Richards, vii + 147 pp. November 1978 \$4.50  
(Northern Territory bilingual education [with a preview of a selection of programmes in six other countries]; Teaching aids for Tiwi; Transition from Australian Aboriginal languages to English: as it applies to children in bilingual schools; A literacy programme for maximum compatibility with teaching methods used in Australian schools.)
- Volume 3: *An Australian Creole in the Northern Territory: A Description of Ngukurr-Bamyili Dialects (Part 1)*,  
J. R. Sandefur, vii + 185 pp. February 1979 \$5.20  
(Historical background and introduction to pidgins and creoles; phonology, orthography, and grammar. Most extensive description of "Roper Creole" published.)
- Volume 4: *Beginnings of a Ngukurr-Bamyili Creole Dictionary*,  
J. R. Sandefur and J. L. Sandefur  
v + 136 pp. February 1979 \$4.50  
(Creole to English; approx. 2725 entries.)

Prices quoted include surface postage within Australia and are subject to change without prior notice. Discounts are available on quantity orders; enquire for details.