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Orientation or Location? A Case-Study of Jaminjung and Kriol

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This paper deals with the notion of orientation within the typology of Frames of Reference (FoR) in Jaminjung, a Non-Pama-Nyungan Australian Aboriginal Language spoken in the Victoria River area in the Northern Territory and Kriol, an English-lexified creole which is now the major community language in the area.

Levinson (2003, 2006) influentially proposed the existence of three FoRs in natural languages, namely intrinsic (involving an object-centred coordinate system), relative, (a coordinate system centred on the main axis of the body), and absolute (horizontal as well as vertical fixed directions). An approach developed by Terrill and Burenhult (2008) states that orientation in some languages rather than a particular FoR is used to establish spatial reference. These languages seem not to employ independent cues to impose external coordinates and do not describe location.

It has been observed by Schultze-Berndt (2006) that Jaminjung usually only uses absolute terms in large-scale space and only to indicate location of a place or entity relative to the deictic centre. In small-scale descriptions only orientational information is given in absolute coordinates, while ‘standing’ (placement) information is given in terms of intrinsic coordinates.

- 1) *mayi=biya jirrama bunthu-yu, janyungbari ngiyina-wurla*
 man=now two 3du-BE.PRS other PROX-DIR
*ga-yu=ni juwiya, janyungbari manamba-ngining ga-yu *
 3sg-BE.PRS=SFOC nose other upstream-L.ALL 3sg-BE.PRS
 ‘there are two men, one has his nose that way, the other is facing upstream’
 (Men & Tree 4.10; 4.9 matched. Director and matcher facing towards the river; river visible

(Schultze-Berndt, 2006) 109

This paper intends to investigate the use of orientation rather than location further in Jaminjung and Kriol. In addition to a comparative study in the respective languages, the paper also considers possible differences between static and motion descriptions of orientation. The use of *ad-hoc* landmarks seems to be preferred over directionals in small-scale motion, as observed by Terrill and Burenhult (2008). This might also apply for Jaminjung and needs further investigation.

Special attention will be given to the use of landmark terms - illustrated with *taun-wei* in the Kriol example below - as reference points for orientation rather than absolute direction.

- 2) *Melan go-bek den langa modiga,*
 1PLexcl go-back then LOC car
 \ *go langa taun-wei.*
 go LOC town-towards
 ‘Then we went back to the car and headed towards town.’

(Sandefur 1982, lesson 32)

The investigation is based on a 40 hour corpus of Jaminjung compiled by Schultze-Berndt. Kriol data is taken from published examples in Sandefur (1979, 1982) and Munro (2005) as well as unpublished texts recorded by Denise Angelo (1998 in Katherine) and a small corpus by Schultze-Berndt.

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