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***Linguistic surface and deep level structures
in Aboriginal English: a case study of New
South Wales Aboriginal English***

**Wissenschaftliche Arbeit im Fach Anglistik
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vorgelegt von

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1. INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have seen an ever-increasing academic interest in the linguistic study of post-colonial varieties of English, which has contributed to the postulation of English as a pluricentric language and the emergence of ‘World Englishes’ as a new branch of linguistics. This discipline is, however, informed by other linguistic fields of study, including dialectology, sociolinguistics, creolistics as well as theories of language contact. As regards language contact, ‘New Englishes’ like ‘Indian English’ assume an important role in so far as their emergence as distinct dialects of English is largely due to the contact between Indigenous languages and English. The same is also true for such ethnic contact dialects as ‘African American English’ and ‘Chicano English’. While the linguistic structures of all those varieties have been extensively studied in recent years, ‘Aboriginal English’ (henceforth also ‘AbE’), an umbrella term covering a range of varieties of English spoken by Australian Indigenous people, has received much less attention and is often conspicuously absent from the discussion of ‘World Englishes’. One of the aims of this thesis is then to redress the balance a little bit by providing a comparative linguistic analysis of a corpus of spoken data recorded in the Australian region of New South Wales, the results of which may contribute to the emergence of an overall picture of regional variation of ‘Aboriginal English’ in Australia. Most importantly, the distinctiveness of ‘Aboriginal English’ in Central New South Wales will not only be discussed on the basis of linguistic surface features, including phonology, morphosyntax and the lexicon, but also include an analysis of linguistic ‘deep level structures’. In this context, the term ‘deep level structure’ is not to be confused with Chomsky’s structuralist approach to the study of grammar, but instead refers to the different aspects of language as visualised in the following citation:

An analogy of a floating **iceberg** has been used to refer to and represent [the] level of language. Readily identifiable, well above the water line, are “surface structures”: phonology, lexicon and syntax. These features are what people first “notice” about a speech variety that is different from their own. Other, less obvious but equally important, language levels are just below the “water-line”. They are the semantic and pragmatic features. These levels often go unnoticed and “untaught”, leading in many cases to miscommunication. (Cahill 2000: 55)

In my opinion, this observation points to the fact that English as a pluricentric language can be a linguistic expression of quite different cultural worldviews and that this possibility must be taken into consideration irrespectively of the distinctiveness of a variety of English in terms of its ‘surface features’.

While chapter 2.1 focuses on establishing a link between Aboriginal varieties of English, other ethnic contact dialects as the ones mentioned above as well as varieties generally

subsumed under the label ‘New Englishes’, chapters 2.2 and 2.3 will respectively provide important theoretical background on the evolution of ‘Aboriginal English’ and present major studies in the field.

After describing the data and methods used in the context of this thesis in chapter 3, I will then proceed with a structure-centred analysis of the data, focussing on morpho-syntactical aspects and phonology in particular. Given that the postulation of a distinct dialect is most commonly based on major differences in all of these areas, the linguistic features in the data will not only be compared to other studies of ‘AbE’, but most importantly be contrasted with ‘Australian English’. The use of this term is, however, problematic: First of all, it is not exempt of bias because ‘AbE’ could also be considered as ‘Australian English’ from a geographical point of view. Second, it does not constitute a genuine basis for comparison since it is commonly associated with the written ‘standard’, whereas the term ‘Aboriginal English’ comprises spoken non-standard varieties of English. Despite this fact, references to ‘Standard Australian English’ seem to be inevitable, given that it is used as a basis for comparison in other descriptions of ‘Aboriginal English’ and that studies of ‘Australian settler vernacular’ still need to be conducted (see chapter 3.2.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of this problem). Whenever possible however, the term ‘mainstream Australian English’ (henceforth also ‘mAusE’) coined by Leitner will be used to refer to aspects of spoken English, especially in connection with phonology.

In accordance with the observation that deep level structures should be taken into account in the description of varieties of ‘AbE’, the second part of chapter 4 will then be dedicated to an ethnographic analysis of the data focussing on narrative speech events and the genre of oral history in particular. Besides providing information on the social and historical background of the informants, the analysis will not only be concerned with the study of narrative schemata, but also include references to cultural presuppositions, which may be at the heart of cross-cultural miscommunication.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

2.1.1 Language Contact

Linguistic research has shown that far from being a marginal phenomenon, language contact does and has always played a major role in the history of languages. According to Thomason, it is indeed not only responsible for what she calls ‘contact-induced language change’, but it also operates both in the emergence of pidgins, Creoles and bilingual mixed languages as well as in the process of language death, which is concomitant to language shift in the case of indigenous languages spoken by a minority of the population (Thomason 2001: 18-20). While treating pidgins and creoles as a class of their own does not present anything new in the field, Thomason’s category of ‘contact-induced language change’ is noteworthy. Substituting the categories of ‘maintenance’ and ‘shift’ used in Thomason and Kaufman (1988) with the categories of ‘contact-induced language change in which imperfect learning plays’ or, alternatively, ‘does not play a role’ allows the grouping together of ‘New Englishes’ in the Kachruian sense¹ and other stable contact-induced varieties spoken as mother tongues² under the first of the two new categories.

The references in this section, and throughout this book, to language shift and shift-induced interference therefore carry an implicit warning label: the linguistic predictions are the same for all instances of imperfect group learning of a TL, regardless of whether or not actual shift has occurred. (Thomason 2001: 74)

The terminology Thomason uses in the quotation above is reminiscent of the one usually found in the context of second-language learning and draws attention to the fact that the so called ‘substrate language’ – either the language abandoned by its speakers in the case of shift or the indigenous language(s) spoken as mother tongues in a specific contact situation – strongly influences the emergence of contact-induced varieties.

First, learners carry over some features of their native language into their version of the TL, which can be called TL₂. Second, they may fail (or refuse) to learn some TL features, especially marked features, and these learners’ errors also form part of the TL₂. If the shifting group is not integrated into the original TL speech community, so that (as in the case of Indian English) its members remain as a separate ethnic or even national group, then the TL₂ becomes fixed as the group’s final version of the TL. (Thomason 2001: 75)

¹ According to Kachru’s model of the ‘Three Concentric Circles of English’, ‘New Englishes’ can be found in what he calls the ‘Outer Circle’, that is countries in which English has been institutionalised as an ‘additional language’ (Kachru 1997: 214) after the colonial period. This definition excludes ethnic varieties of English which are the linguistic result of language shift and are spoken as mother tongues today. Kachru’s ‘New Englishes’ are regional dialects of English.

² ‘Chicano English’, for example, is increasingly becoming a first language for Mexican-Americans in the USA.

Indeed, 'New Englishes' like 'Indian English' have often been regarded as interlanguages, with deviations from the exonormative standard ('British' or 'American Standard English' in most cases) often being wrongly dismissed as errors due to interference with the speaker's mother tongue. However, Mair reminds us that "[a]ssuming the criterion of inculturation in a community to be primary, ESL varieties are similar to ENL ones – routinely used by speakers in their ordinary social activities and hence developing their own stable usage norms" (Mair 1995: 13). In the same vein, though somewhat more vehemently, Mufwene exposes the ideology underlying the traditional distinction between native and non-native varieties as one of legitimate vs. illegitimate offsprings of English:

It is especially interesting that the varieties identified as "indigenized" are spoken in former exploitation colonies, whereas native Englishes are spoken in settlement colonies, in which assimilation policies have endangered, if not totally replaced, the indigenous languages and have eliminated from the competition most of the non-indigenous languages that English came in contact with. Challenging the "native/nonnative" distinction linguistically is significant that it presupposes that norms are not necessarily set by native speakers, only by those who speak a particular variety on a regular basis. (1997: 185)

What is true for postcolonial 'New Englishes' can also be claimed in the case of 'Chicano English' (henceforth also 'ChE'). In their book *Chicano English: an ethnic contact dialect*, Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia note that:

[m]ore recently, research has argued that ChE and its varieties are acquired in Chicano communities and therefore have their own norms of form and norms of usage in multidialectal/multilingual contexts. As more studies are conducted on Chicanos who do not speak Spanish, such as in East Los Angeles, it is increasingly difficult to argue that ChE is simply the product of interference between English and Spanish or imperfect StE. (1985: 16)

However, learners of English and speakers of 'ChE' both exist in the Chicano context, and given that the influence of Spanish is evident in both 'ChE' and interlanguage varieties, it can sometimes be very hard to differentiate between the two on a linguistic basis alone. In addition, the transition from an interlanguage to an indigenised variety of English or an ethnic contact dialect is often a gradual process occurring over a certain period of time. As a result, the linguistic and social boundaries between the two are considerably blurred, as Schneider shows in his discussion of 'New Englishes':

In largely monolingual English-speaking countries like Australia or New Zealand, some former IDG-strand³ usage results in ethnic dialects of English. In multilingual countries like Canada, Singapore, or South Africa, the IDG strand appears as either ethnic dialects or L2-varieties of English. But the difference between the two types of situation is less significant than traditional models suggest, and the latter may actually turn into the former with time. (2003: 254)

³ Describing the emergence of 'New Englishes', Schneider distinguishes between "[...] the settlers' perspective STL STRAND and the experience and situation of the indigenous populations IDG STRAND." (2003: 242). His model will be explained in more detail in chapter 2.1.2.

What generally distinguishes indigenised varieties or ethnic contact dialects of English from interlanguages is the fact that the former are based on a conventional norm and are therefore relatively stable, while the latter are dynamic and individual. In addition, Penfield and Ornstein-Garcia rightly state that:

[t]he most significant difference between ChE and interference English is a social one. Interference speakers of English do not share a social identity and speech community as do ChE speakers – at least not as far as English is concerned. ChE, embedded in a highly multilingual situation, serves as an in-group marker of ethnic identity and brotherhood. (1985: 17)

Another example of an ethnic contact dialect of English is ‘African American English’⁴, which has been intensively researched in the last few decades. Though linguists have long acknowledged ‘African American English’ as a distinctive, rule-governed dialect with its own linguistic norm, in contrast to what Penfield and Ornstein-Garcia stated for ‘ChE’, speakers’ attitudes towards this variety tend to be negative: ‘African American English’ seems not only to be associated with ethnicity, but also with a lack of education and lower social classes (see chapter 2.1.3 for a more detailed discussion of attitudes):

The focal point is on the fact that the system simply deviates from the standard. For some African Americans, reference to AAE as a legitimate variety is a source of embarrassment, as it carries with it the stigma of inferiority and the stereotype that African Americans cannot speak (or learn to speak) mainstream English. (Green 2002: 221)

Both ‘ChE’ and ‘African American English’ (henceforth also ‘AAE’) are spoken by ethnic minorities in what has been considered a ‘monolingual ancestral’ English-speaking country (cf. Gupta 1997), namely the United States (the only other country of this type being Australia). In addition, African Americans are monolingual – though in most cases not monodialectal – in English, while more and more Chicanos are gradually shifting towards ‘ChE’ as a mother tongue (see Penfield and Ornstein-Garcia as cited on page 6 of this thesis).

Similar in general to ‘New Englishes’ in the Kachruian sense, the emergence of both ethnic contact dialects of English can be traced back to sociohistorical and –political situations in which varieties of English have come into close contact with other languages, that is, with varieties of Spanish in the case of ‘ChE’ and with African languages spoken by slaves abducted from Africa in the case of ‘AAE’. However, though there is no doubt that language contact was crucial to the development of both ethnic contact dialects in general, ‘ChE’ is said to have historically developed through code-switching (Penfield and Ornstein-Garcia 1985: 15), whereas the origin of ‘AAE’ is still discussed controversially. While proponents of the so

⁴ Other possible labels for this distinct variety would be e.g. ‘Black English’, ‘African American Vernacular English’ or ‘Afro American English’ (see Green (2002: 6) for a full list of options).

called ‘substratist hypothesis’ maintain that “[...] AAE is structurally related to West African languages and bears only superficial similarities with English” (Green 2002: 9), other scholars suggest that ‘AAE’ is the linguistic product of decreolisation, thereby assuming that ‘AAE’ started off as a creole. The latter view, however, has recently been repudiated in its status as the only valid theory of explaining the genesis of varieties like ‘AAE’, which may exhibit some linguistic features found in creoles while at the same time sharing others with their assumed lexifier languages.

Earlier creole theory explained much of this variability as products of “decreolization”, later approximation towards the superstrate of an erstwhile fully basilectal creole; but the historical reality and the sociolinguistic usefulness of the concept of decreolization have also increasingly come under fire [...] . (Neumann-Holzschuh, Ingrid and Edgar W. Schneider 2000: 2)

The fact that the existence of a former creole could not be proven in the case of ‘AAE’ despite thirty years of research has recently led linguists to the hypothesis that ‘AAE’ is indeed the outcome of a gradual process, during which ‘AAE’ was in constant contact not only with English varieties spoken by the settlers, but also with African languages and “[...] restructured, especially creolised varieties of English” (Winford in Green 2002: 10). Thus, ‘AAE’, which resembles a mesolectal creole resulting from a process of decreolization (Knautzsch and Schneider 2000: 247), quasi constitutes a linguistically intermediate stage of restructuring between a creole on the one hand and a dialect of English on the other hand. However, the fact that it could not be correctly classified into either of the two categories has led linguists to invent a third category for such partially restructured varieties: semi-creoles or creoloids. In his *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, David Crystal defines ‘creoloid’ as:

[a] term used in SOCIOLINGUISTICS for a VARIETY of language which displays linguistic resemblances to a CREOLE (e.g. in simplification, or in the mixing of features from different source languages) while lacking a history of origin in a PIDGIN language. Creoloids may have a strong tradition of use by NATIVE-SPEAKERS (as in the case of Afrikaans) or be used entirely by people who have developed it as a second language (as with Singapore English). (Crystal 2003a: 117)

Holm tentatively describes the genesis of such semi-creoles as a series of linguistic processes including ‘primary levelling’, ‘language drift’, ‘imperfect language shift’, ‘language borrowing’ and ‘secondary levelling’ (Holm 2000: 32). Among these processes, ‘imperfect language shift’ and ‘language borrowing’ are especially noteworthy as they are responsible for the intermediate status of semi-creoles: On the one hand, Holm’s stage of ‘imperfect language shift’ – accounting for the fact that “[...] structural features from ancestral languages and interlanguages [are perpetuated] in the speech of monolingual descendants” (Holm 2000: 32) – is reminiscent of the evolution of Thomason’s category of ‘contact-induced language

change in which imperfect learning plays a role' mentioned earlier in this chapter⁵. On the other hand, 'language borrowing' establishes the link between creoles and semi-creoles as semi-creoles often borrow linguistic features from pidgins or creoles of the same target language spoken in the area. Another reason for the close relationship between creoles and semi-creoles lies in the fact that semi-creoles, in contrast to other dialects of English, necessarily "[...] occur among a shifting population speaking a number of *different* first languages" (Holm 2000: 31). However, note that Crystal mentions 'Singapore English' as a possible candidate for a semi-creole, which implies that language shift is not an absolute necessity (cf. Thomason's category of 'contact-induced language change in which imperfect learning plays a role'). The fact that 'Singapore English' is also often mentioned as a prime example for a 'New English' in the Kachruian sense supports the conclusion that clear boundaries between dialects of English and semi-creoles are rather hard to sustain⁶.

The discussion on semi-creoles shows that pidgins and creoles do not constitute a linguistic category as distinct from other contact-induced varieties as is traditionally postulated. Rather, particular restructured varieties can be situated on a 'creole continuum' (Thomason 2001: 189), paying attention to the fact that such a continuum can by no means be considered as a genetic one:

If it is true that Creoles come in different degrees of "radicalness" (an assumption that will be shared by most but perhaps not all creolists at present), then it is implied that this fact positions any individual language on a continuum between varieties closely modelled upon substrate(s) on the one hand and superstrates (non-standard dialects) on the other. [...] In all these cases, it is to be understood that the mixture of features should be the product of the process of original creole formation *per se*, not the outcome of a later approximation of a creole to its lexifier language by "decreolization". (Neumann-Holzschuh and Schneider 2000: 7)

Going one step further, Mufwene even dismisses the linguistic category of creoles altogether and instead perceives fully restructured varieties as " [...] "disfranchised" dialects of their lexifiers" (Neumann-Holzschuh and Schneider 2000: 9). Comparing varieties of English like 'Irish English' with creoles, Mufwene suggests that:

[i]n the development of new language varieties the restructuring formula involves the same general competition-and-selection process [...], subject to relevant ethnolinguistic-ecological factors. What is especially significant in this observation which applies to both creole and non-creole vernaculars is the allowance it makes for substrate languages to influence the restructuring of language. (2000: 68)

⁵ Thomason also claims that the main reason for the distinction between pidgins and creoles on the one hand and other mixed languages on the other hand lies in the fact that imperfect learning only plays a role in the genesis of the former (Thomason 2001:197).

⁶ 'Singapore English' is an umbrella term which covers varieties ranging from 'Standard Singapore English' to a heavily substrate-influenced 'Colloquial Singapore English' (Singlish). Schneider (2003: 265) mentions 'Singlish' as a creoloid and later refers to it as basilectal Singaporean English. From this perspective, the semi-creole seems to be a subnational variety of an English dialect used in informal contexts.

Instead, he argues that creoles can be set apart from other contact-induced varieties because of similarities in their socio-historical and socio-economic settings (Mufwene 2000: 78). Extra-linguistic factors also play a significant role in Edgar W. Schneider's model of the emergence of 'New Englishes', including socio-historical and –political processes as well as questions of identity construction. However, before I proceed with a more detailed discussion of Schneider's model, I would like to quickly summarize the content of this chapter and explain its significance in the context of this thesis on 'Aboriginal English'.

So far it has been argued that the emergence of both linguistic outcomes of the colonial period (including 'New Englishes' in the Kachruian sense, semi-creoles and fully-fledged creoles) as well as other ethnic contact dialects like 'ChE' can generally be traced back to situations of language contact in which imperfect learning and the subsequent incorporation of linguistic features of the 'substrate languages' played a significant role. As a consequence, contact-induced varieties may sometimes be quite difficult to distinguish from learners' interlanguages, the difference between them being rather social than linguistic. Furthermore, the discussion of the relatively new category of semi-creoles has shown that from a linguistic point of view, the boundaries between what are considered dialects of English on the one hand and creoles on the other hand are not as absolute as traditionally claimed. And last but not least, it has been argued that despite different processes in their specific genesis, 'ChE' and 'AAE' can be compared in that they are spoken by ethnic minorities in a 'monolingual ancestral English-speaking country' who have or, in the case of 'ChE', are increasingly shifting to their respective indigenised variety of English as a mother tongue.

Earlier in this chapter, it has been mentioned that, apart from the United States, Australia is the only other country which can be classified as 'monolingual ancestral English-speaking'. Thus, the status of 'AbE' as an ethnic-contact dialect is comparable to both 'ChE' and 'AAE'. In addition, the majority of Aboriginals speaking varieties of 'AbE' are monolingual, though not monodialectal, in English. However, in some regions of Australia, a variety of 'AbE' is spoken as an additional language alongside speakers' indigenous mother tongues. In these cases, individual learners' interlanguages coexist with stable indigenised varieties, a situation which is reminiscent of multilingual settings like the one found in Singapore. In addition, certain varieties of 'AbE' could indeed be considered as semi-creoles, given that all of them arose in multilingual settings (including non-standard varieties of English spoken by the settlers on the one hand and numerable Aboriginal languages on the other hand) in the first

place. The emergence of some of these varieties could easily have been influenced by borrowings from the ‘neighbouring’ creole languages ‘Kriol’ and ‘Torres Strait Creole’. (Chapter 2.2.2 will discuss the linguistic nature and origins of ‘AbE’ in more detail.)

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that the preceding discussion should not be understood as an attempt to dismiss the traditional distinction between post-colonial dialects of English, other contact-induced, indigenised varieties and pidgins/creoles altogether. Rather, stressing the similarities between them does not only allow to compare ‘AbE’ to other contact-induced varieties around the world, but also helps to see the interconnection between different varieties of ‘AbE’ and Australian creoles as products of ethnic language contact, that is, to adopt what could be called a ‘pan-Australian’ view.

Finally, the close relatedness between creolistics and the study of New Englishes results from the fact that both language types originate in contact situations and that many pidgins and creoles are spoken in regions and countries where English is an official language (such as throughout the Caribbean and West Africa, the southwest Pacific, and also Australia). (Schneider 2003: 236)

2.1.2 Edgar W. Schneider’s dynamic model of New Englishes

Quite similar to the idea presented in the conclusion of chapter 2.1.1, Schneider aims at establishing a link between varieties of English which have often been treated as separate categories. Though acknowledging that distinct types of contact and language transmission may account for variation between new varieties of English, he claims that in the light of a common history of language contact and subsequent identity formation these differentiations play a less important role than is often assumed:

Despite the substantial differences among the indigenous languages and cultures that have come into contact with English in this process, the results are surprisingly similar in many ways, both structurally and sociolinguistically. I claim that these similarities are more than chance results and coincidences; instead, they are products of fundamentally similar contact processes, to be accounted for by theories of communication, accommodation, and identity formation. (2003: 234)

Combining historical and functional aspects with questions of linguistic identity, he argues for a cyclic view of the development of ‘New Englishes’⁷. In his opinion, some synchronically observable differences can be traced back to “[...] consecutive stages in a diachronic process” (2003: 235) of gradually emerging new dialects of English, which are motivated by simultaneously developing new sociolinguistic identities. In addition, Schneider’s model

⁷ Note that Schneider’s definition of ‘New Englishes’ does not include pidgins and creoles.

breaks with the tradition⁸ of distinguishing between ‘New Englishes’ spoken in the so called settler communities (USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and those spoken in other countries like, for example, India by substituting the terminology of ENL-ESL-EFL usually used in this context with what he calls the STL (the settlers’ perspective) and IDG strands (the perspective of indigenous people). Though Schneider acknowledges that the “[...] two perspectives are related to the notions of ‘ENL’ and ‘ESL’ respectively”, IDG and STL strands are not applied to whole nations, but rather to “[...] speech communities, frequently defined along ethnic lines” (2003: 242). Thus, his model has the advantage of accounting for the existence of both language minorities as well as the linguistic situation of multilingual countries characterized by intranational diversity concerning the status of English:

Classifying countries like the US, Australia, and New Zealand as ‘ENL’ or ‘Inner Circle’, as is usually done, ignores the situation, experiences, and language varieties of minorities like Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Aborigines, and Maoris. Conversely, classifying countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, India, or Singapore as ‘ESL’ ignores both the presence of small but influential minorities of English-speaking expatriates and, more importantly, the increasing proportion of indigenous people who grow up speaking some form of English as their mother tongue and fails to do justice to those who consistently use it as a first language. (Schneider 2003: 43).

According to Schneider, the evolutionary cycle of ‘New Englishes’ includes five chronological stages: ‘foundation’, ‘exonormative stabilization’, ‘nativization’, ‘endonormative stabilization’ and ‘differentiation’. Among these, ‘nativization’ and ‘endonormative stabilization’ are especially noteworthy as it is largely during these stages that the emergence of a local norm of English (characterized by substratum influence from the IDG strands) and its gradual acceptance in connection with a newly developing national identity across ethnic boundaries occurs:

It is noteworthy that the new identity construct will give greater prominence to a group’s territory of residence, now understood to be permanent, than to historical background and, to some extent, ethnicity. As the emphasis on territory, and shared territory, by necessity includes indigenous ethnic groups, that is, IDG-strand speakers, the role of ethnicity, and ethnic boundaries themselves, will tend to be redefined and regarded as increasingly less important. (Schneider 2003: 250)

This may well be true for Schneider’s case study of Singapore where English plays a vital role in the process of Singaporean nation-building: It is considered as “[...] an ideal tool for de-ethnicizing the population: it enables multi-ethnic Singaporeans to progressively distance themselves from, and eventually rid themselves of, their diverse ethnic-ness towards a uniform Singaporean-ness” (Lick and Alsagoff 1998: 209). However, there are several interconnected reasons why his theory of an emerging Australian identity across ethnic

⁸ Though Kachru harshly criticizes the use of the ENL-ESL-EFL distinction, commenting on his model of ‘Three Concentric Circles of English’ Schneider convincingly argues that “[...]it is obvious that in terms of their member countries, the three circles largely correspond to the ENL/ESL/EFL distinction” (2003: 237).

boundaries, which finds its linguistic expression in ‘mAusE’, can be challenged. The following quotation will serve to illustrate some of the differences between the situations in Australia and Schneider’s other case studies (e.g. English in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore):

In changes resulting from imperfect learning of a second language, the TL is not so much accepting the changes as giving in to them, since it is the shifting speakers, not the original TL speakers, who initiate the changes. Of course attitudinal factors can influence the degree to which original TL speakers will imitate the altered TL as spoken by shifting speakers, but such attitudes do not seem to protect a TL from interference if the shifting group⁹ is numerically strong. (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 43).

In contrast to the situation in his other case studies, Schneider acknowledges that in Australia and New Zealand “[...] the STL strand has prevailed, at least quantitatively, as indigenous populations have been subjugated [...]” (2003: 266). However, Aborigines do not only constitute a minority in terms of population number, a fact which – at least in the beginning of the colony - was to some extent due to massacres. They also remain a socially marginalized group until the present day since racial segregation, though not an institutionalised one, is still the reality from a societal point of view¹⁰, especially in the more rural areas of Australia. Following Thomason and Kaufman’s argumentation, Aborigines thus cannot be considered as ethnic agents initiating language shift, at least not to the same extent as indigenous inhabitants in Schneider’s other case studies. I would rather argue that there is a fundamental difference between the situation in Australia and Schneider’s other ‘New Englishes’, both from a social as well as from a linguistic point of view. While the social difference that I perceive has already been explained, the linguistic difference lies in the fact that imperfect learning played a role in the development of e.g. ‘Singapore English’ or ‘Indian English’¹¹, but not in the case of ‘mAusE’, where language change can perhaps better be described as a case of borrowing: in contrast to indigenised varieties like ‘Hong Kong English’ and ‘Singapore English’, which clearly show substratum influence in both their phonology and lexicon (and morphology/syntax to some extent), Aboriginal languages have exclusively influenced the lexicon of ‘mAusE’. Thomason and Kaufman see this kind of interference as typical of borrowing in contrast to interference through imperfect learning:

⁹ As already mentioned in chapter 2.1.1, shift is not a necessary condition in these cases.

¹⁰ This should not imply that the relationship between Aborigines and White Australians is necessarily a hostile one. Rather, they appear to live in different social spheres defined to some extent along ethnic lines. This seems to be especially the case in urban areas, where the majority of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians live. While Aboriginal culture, language and rights are officially acknowledged wherever possible, true social integration still seems to be lagging behind. At least, that is the impression that I personally gained while staying in an urban area for a longer period of time, where I had various opportunities of discussing the subject with my non-Indigenous Australian friends.

¹¹ Compare Thomason (2001: 75) cited on page 5 of this thesis, who explicitly mentions India as a case in which the TL₂ has become ‘fixed’.

[...] unlike borrowing, interference through imperfect learning does **not** begin with vocabulary: it begins instead with sounds and syntax, and sometimes includes morphology as well before words from the shifting group's original language appear in the TL. (1988: 39)

In my opinion, the idea of linguistic accommodation crucial to Schneider's model (Schneider 2003: 246) can therefore not be applied in the present context. Neither did White Australians extensively adopt linguistic features of Aborigines' versions of English, nor did the latter give up those features of their "TL₂" which were not incorporated into the settlers' TL₁. In other words, a TL₃ in the sense of a linguistic 'compromise' between the STL and IDG strands did not evolve, neither through the linguistic mechanism of 'negotiation' (Thomason 2001: 142), nor through 'passive familiarity'¹²:

In the formation of TL₃, the more or less unified language of an emerging integrated community, original TL speakers do not [...] learn to speak TL₂; but they hear TL₂ spoken around them and talk to TL₂ speakers, and eventually their TL₁ variety changes through passive familiarity with TL₂. Members of the shifting group, meanwhile, give up those TL₂ features that are not adopted by the original TL speaker group, and the outcome is TL₃. (Thomason 2001: 142)

In general, 'mAusE' mostly borrowed such words from Aboriginal languages for which no English counterpart existed prior to colonization, namely names for plants, animals and Aboriginal culture. (Please refer to the appendix for a detailed discussion of Aboriginal loanwords in 'mAusE'.)

However, there IS a variety of English in Australia that shows substratum interference: 'Aboriginal English'.

As in any language contact situation, then, there is pressure from each language upon the others. The pressure of the need to express Aboriginal concepts and experience has a strong influence on English, but only on the English of Aboriginal speakers; these pressures have little effect on the English of mainstream non-Aboriginal speakers. Thus, a specialised variety of English arises among Aboriginal speakers [...]. (Harkins 1994: 169)

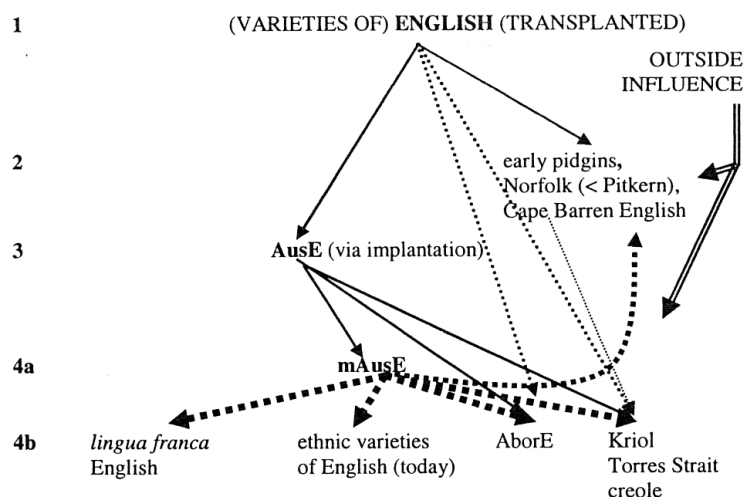
From the point of view of contact-induced language change, I would therefore argue that 'Aboriginal English' is better compared with 'New Englishes' like 'Indian English' (see also chapter 2.1.1 where such a parallel was drawn). Labelling 'AbE' an ethnic IDG strand and not a 'New English' to a certain amount hides this fact. The only reason for doing so would be to once again focus on nation states, an idea which Schneider himself has criticized. However, his argument that 'White Australian English' (though he does not give the variety this label, this is what it actually is, a STL strand the structure of which has so far only marginally been influenced by Aboriginal languages) is a 'New English' is nevertheless also reasonable. It

¹² Though TL₃ varieties might well have emerged in some localities where White Australians and Aborigines live in close social contact with each other, the local norm of 'mAusE' cannot (yet) be apprehended as such a TL₃.

constitutes a local norm that is linguistically different from the British one and thus also serves as an expression of a separate sociolinguistic identity. For this reason, whenever the term ‘New English’ will be used in the context of this thesis, it will include both ‘AbE’ and the local national norm referred to as ‘mAusE’. In accordance with Leitner, the label ‘Australian English’ will be reserved for contexts in which an umbrella term for the varieties of English in Australia is needed or to refer to the historical, “[...] transitional variety that emerged after the varieties of English began to settle in Australia” (Leitner 2004: 34), whereas the term ‘mAusE’ will be used to refer to the variety commonly called ‘Australian English’ (the codified STL strand):

mAusE is the language of the mainstream society and that of those who have made it *theirs* – for all purposes or for the restricted, public domains, while they use other varieties of English or other languages altogether elsewhere. As to the other varieties of AusE – pidgins, creoles, AborE, Norfolk¹³, Cape Barren English, English as a *lingua franca* – they are also part of the overall picture of the Australianness of English but are restricted to segments of the society – Aboriginal Australians, migrant NES Australians, or mixed communities [...]” (Leitner 2004: 88)

From this perspective, ‘mAusE’ is only one of the varieties of English currently spoken in Australia, thereby acknowledging the fact that there is “[...] *pluricentricity* inside an *epicentre* [...] the existence of different speech communities within the Australian *speech fellowship*” (Leitner 2004: 33).



source: Leitner (2004: 36)

In general, it could be argued that ‘AbE’ is also an ‘ethnic variety’ of English: it is spoken by a minority of the population and its linguistic structure is partly characterised by language

¹³ Note that, according to Mühlhäusler (p.c.), calling ‘Norfolk’ a variety of ‘AusE’ is to neglect the sociolinguistic fact that ‘Norfolk’ is perceived by its speakers as a kind of ‘antilanguage’ by means of which they seek to distance themselves from ‘AusE’ or, to use Leitner’s words, their presumed ‘Australianness’.

contact involving some degree of ‘imperfect learning’. However, ‘AbE’ is accorded a separate ‘category’ in the diagram above, which is due to the fact that, in contrast to other ethnic varieties of English in the Australian context, it is a variety which developed through the contact of English with indigenous languages following the colonisation of Australia. This is also the reason why ‘AbE’ will be called a ‘New English’ in the context of this thesis, though the label ‘ethnic variety’, taken in its literal sense, would be applicable as well. Generally, there are two reasons why varieties of English used by Aboriginals all over Australia can be subsumed under the label ‘Aboriginal English’ despite the fact that more than 250 different indigenous languages were spoken prior to colonisation: first, the majority of Australian languages are classified as ‘Pama Nyungan’ languages¹⁴ as they exhibit a range of similar linguistic structures, which subsequently formed the linguistic substrate for present-day varieties of ‘AbE’. Second, a pan-Australian view is advocated by the fact that linguistic innovations were extensively diffused along the stock routes and during the construction of telegraph lines, resulting in similarities between varieties of ‘AbE’ (Mühlhäusler, p.c.).

2.1.3 Discourses on English and linguistic attitudes

The majority of recent linguistic literature conceives of English as a pluricentric language, acknowledging the existence of local norms. “In the real world of Englishes there are native speakers of specific world varieties of Englishes, *Singaporean English*; *Chinese English*; *Indian English*; *Scottish English*; and *American English*.” (Kachru 2005: 210). However, this position can be distinguished from two other theoretical approaches which do not take the heterogeneity of English into account: the discourses of ‘English as an International Language (EIL)’, and ‘English as a killer language’ (cf. Schneider 2003: 233).

Focussing on the function of English as a neutral tool for international communication implies the necessity to define a standard. However, as “[...] it is under discussion to what extent a “common core” or a putatively homogeneous variety called “International English” exists [...]” (Kortmann and Schneider 2004: 2), it is most likely that proponents of this concept have either the British or the American standard in mind when talking about the reference linguistic

¹⁴ When talking about Australian Indigenous Languages, linguists traditionally distinguish between ‘Pama-Nyungan’ and ‘Non-Pama-Nyungan’ languages. While ‘Pama-Nyungan’ languages constitute the majority of indigenous languages and can be found in nearly all parts of Australia, the number of ‘Non-Pama-Nyungan’ languages is limited to approximately fifty (cf. Harvey 2003: 504-512), and they are exclusively spoken in the northern regions of the Northern Territory and in the Kimberleys. Extensive studies of varieties of English resulting from the contact of ‘Non-Pama Nyungan’ languages and English need yet to be undertaken.

variety¹⁵. Additionally, the discourse of ‘English as an International Language’ is not concerned with questions of social, linguistic and cultural identity of speakers, but it is motivated by pragmatic and economic considerations¹⁶.

The discourse of ‘English as a killer language’ focuses on the detrimental effect that the imposition or the deliberate adoption of English has on the linguistic ecology of colonised countries, often leading to massive language shift and the consequent loss of indigenous languages. Moreover, the concept of ‘linguistic imperialism’ as presented by Alastair Pennycook¹⁷ is closely linked with the idea of a so called ‘colonisation of the mind’ and the subsequent loss not only of one’s language, but also of the culture it expresses.

Thus, faced with the hegemony of English, you become willing to use English and tend to keep yourself away from your own language. In other words, you tend to identify with English and dissociate from your own language. You glorify English and its culture while stigmatising and devaluing your own language and culture. It may sound a bit too extreme, but you are enslaved to English and its culture. This is the colonization of the mind. As you get colonized and dissolved into the hegemony of English, you are not even aware of your cultural identity being engulfed into the Anglo-American cultural frame of reference and not even understand you are supporting the hegemony of English. (Tsuda 1997: 24)

Mühlhäusler observed that “[...] the big topics of our age (among them AIDS, unemployment, and the environment) are argued from three main perspectives: a moral, an economic and a scientific one” (Mühlhäusler 2003: 143). While the economic discourse of ‘English as an International Language’ and the moral discourse of ‘English as a killer language’ are mutually exclusive in their radical forms, the discourse of the ‘New Englishes’ may be used as a metaphor reconciling the two contradictory ideologies: Not only does this concept satisfy, at least to some extent, the call for linguistic and cultural diversity, but it simultaneously legitimises the use of English as a linguistic tool necessary for the participation in global affairs. The clash of different attitudes and the ‘reconciliatory’ effect that the concept of ‘New Englishes’ can have becomes apparent in Kachru’s description of the situation in Asia:

True, there still is ambivalence about the presence of the English language as a two-ton gorilla in Asia’s traditional linguistic ecology. Also clearly articulated, however, is celebration of the medium that has internationalised the Asian mantras of resistance, autonomy and regional values and identities. There is palpable excitement about what was earlier essentially a colonial linguistic weapon now turned to represent various dimensions of Asianness. (Kachru 2005: xv)

¹⁵ In the context of this thesis, the term ‘International English’ does not refer to more or less artificial ‘sublanguages’ like aviation English or maritime English, but to the target norm postulated in learner materials and used in the domains of international business and, to some extent, politics.

¹⁶ ‘Basic English’, developed by Ogden and Richards in the 1930s and taught to learners of English in e.g. China and Melanesia, is a good example of a variety of English designed for predominantly economic purposes.

¹⁷ Pennycook, Alastair (1998). *English and the discourses of colonialism*. London: Routledge.

However, the idea of ‘New Englishes’ is relatively new, and speech communities may differ in the extent to which they acknowledge the existence of a new variety and conceive of it as an expression of their own culture. In Singapore, for example, ‘Singlish’ is arguably “[...] the sub-variety which is indigenously functional (indigenous variety) and gives a sense of identity to the users as belonging to the Singaporean speech community” (Pakir 1991:115). Nevertheless, ‘Singlish’ is condemned by Singapore government officials, who favour what is called ‘Standard Singapore English’, an endonormative variety that is linguistically more similar to ‘British English’. “On the cline of compatibility, Standard Singapore English is more compatible with Standard British English and Colloquial Singapore English (or Singlish) is least compatible with even colloquial forms of standard British English” (Pakir 1997: 177). That is not to say that a ‘New English’ needs to be very different from ‘British’ or ‘American English’ per definition – Blair and Collins mention in their article on “Language and Identity in Australia” that “[t]he slightest difference in language may be detected by listeners and perceived to have social significance.” (Blair and Collins 2001: 3) –, what is important to note is the fact that the variety linguistically closer to the exonormative standard is preferred in public contexts. This linguistic policy clearly seems to be motivated by pragmatic considerations, thereby indicating that the idea of ‘English as an International language’ is more important than the idea of English as a local variety, which, to use Pakir’s words again, ‘belongs’ to Singaporeans.

Linguistic pragmatism is a logical extension of pragmatism: just as the forces of the marketplace dictate economic issues and choices, so do they determine the worth and fate of languages as economic instruments. English, the language of the global marketplace, is crucial to Singapore’s survival and success in the global economy- hence its dominant, common-language position *vis-à-vis* the other languages used on the island. (Lick and Alsagoff 1998: 202)

Extending the moral discourse of ‘English as a killer language’ to the context of the ‘New Englishes’, one could also argue that Singapore’s orientation towards exonormative standards is a sign of Tsuda’s ‘colonization of the mind’, which often includes the adoption of the view of the ‘other’ regarding one’s own language or linguistic variety. Indeed, it can be observed that people living in former British or American colonies often perceive their variety of English as deprived in comparison with ‘proper’ English, that is, the British or American standard variety of English propagated by the media and language learning material in the post-colonial era. This theory can also easily be applied to the case of ‘African American English’ mentioned in chapter 2.1.1. or indeed to ‘Aboriginal English’ (Muecke 1992: 32).

However, there is a third perspective from which the official attitude towards ‘Singlish’ appears yet in a totally different light. In her article “English for Technology –Yes! English

for culture- No!: Cultural literacy in Singapore”, Catherine Lim argues that rejecting ‘Singlish’, the ‘truly indigenised form of English’, is on a par with rejecting the adoption of the culture that this variety is an expression of:

At one time, the newspapers were full of anxious letters asking what could be done to stop Singaporeans speaking this strange ‘mongrel’ variety, before they became totally unintelligible to the outside world. What was worse was that this whole generation of Singaporeans was more at home with McDonalds and Madonna and Michael Jackson than with the customs of their ancestors. (Lim 1995: 51)

By promoting ‘Standard Singapore English’, which is closer to the exonormative variety of ‘British English’, Singaporeans not only want to make sure that their English remains intelligible in international contexts, but also achieve to maintain their ideological distance from Western culture. However, the fact that the ‘Speak Good English’ movement initiated by the government in 2000 was almost immediately countered by the so called ‘Save Our Singlish’ campaign¹⁸ demonstrates that preserving the instrumental role of English for the sake of economic competitiveness while at the same time rejecting the cultural adaptation to the post-colonial context can be quite a balancing act.

Now that the economic and moral discourses, including the intermediary position of the discourse of the ‘New Englishes’, have been identified, the nature of the scientific discourse needs to be explored. However, it turns out to be very problematic to even postulate the existence of a neutral scientific discourse. As has become obvious when discussing linguists’ approaches to the problem, scientific arguments may be used to justify any of the economic and moral discourses. It thus appears that the discourses adopted by linguists always combine the scientific discourse with at least one of the other discourses. They can therefore hardly be free of moral or economic bias, given that they need to select a range of aspects they want to focus on while neglecting others. “[...] it has recently been pointed out that many seemingly descriptive statements [...] entail culturally biased value judgements, and some scholars doubt whether any language description can be devoid of ideological baggage (Kachru, p.c)” (Schneider 2003: 239). In the same way that the function of language cannot be reduced to being a mere tool of communication, applied linguistics is never only an accumulation of scientific facts: neither of them exists in a social vacuum. In the context of this thesis, I will adopt the scientific discourse of the ‘New Englishes’ and focus on ‘Aboriginal English’ as a linguistic variety in its own right and as an expression of present-day Aboriginality.

¹⁸ “Talkingcock.com: Exercising Free Speech in Singapore since 2000”.
URL: <http://www.talkingcock.com/html/article.php?sid=787>; accessed on 12/04/2007

2.2 ABORIGINAL ENGLISH

2.2.1 Terminological considerations

As already mentioned, the term ‘Aboriginal English’ points to a pluralistic view of English and is therefore part of the discourse of the ‘New Englishes’. ‘AbE’ is a ‘new’ English in that it is a form of English that has only recently been recognized as a “self-contained variet[y]” (Schneider 2003: 235), which can be linguistically distinguished from ‘older’ varieties like ‘British’ and ‘American English’. As in the case of other new varieties, the development of AbE originated in the linguistic and cultural contact situation following British colonial expansion. Aboriginal English may also be compared with other “New Englishes” spoken in parts of Asia, Africa and the Pacific that derive from a history of colonisation involving English. In this regard, it may be seen as an *indigenised* variety of English [...]” (Malcolm 2001: 201). On yet another level, ‘AbE’ can be compared to other ‘New Englishes’ in the sense that it is a socially stigmatised variety. “[...] African American English, in common with Australian Aboriginal English, and perhaps even basilectal Singaporean English, does carry stigma and involves a significant semantic and cultural shift from the metropolitan varieties” (Malcolm 1995: 5).

However, the label ‘AbE’ is problematic from a terminological point of view as, according to Sandefur, it often serves to lump together a wide range of varieties used by Aboriginal people:

A further source of confusion has been the use of the term ‘Aboriginal English’ to refer to any English that comes out of the mouths of Aborigines. Some Aborigines speak Standard Australian English; others speak a variety which is linguistically identical with white non-standard English. Simply because they are Aborigines, however, their English (especially those of the latter group) is often labelled as ‘Aboriginal English’. A distinction should probably be made between English spoken by Aboriginal people that is linguistically identical with ‘white English’, ‘interlanguage English’ and ‘dialectal English’. It would seem to be most productive if the term ‘Aboriginal English’ was restricted in its use to refer collectively to the specific dialectal varieties of English spoken by Aborigines, somewhat analogously with the term ‘American English’ and ‘Australian English’. (Sandefur 1985: 69)

Though I generally agree with Sandefur in that the label ‘Aboriginal English’ is a high-level abstraction of the linguistic reality, there are several problems in connection with his definition. First, though Sandefur criticizes the indiscriminate use of ‘AbE’, he then goes on to suggest a definition of the term that is comparable to the label ‘Australian English’, and he does so without paying attention to the fact that the latter is itself most often used as an umbrella term for numerous varieties. Second, he does not specify in what respects the English spoken by some Aborigines is identical with ‘white English’. Are semantic and pragmatic features of the variety taken into account, or is the degree of identity only

established by a comparison of linguistic surface features (e.g. on the level of phonetics, the lexicon and, to some extent, grammar)? In this context, Harkins cautions against what she calls the ‘pseudo- intelligibility trap’: “Because many deep-level grammatical and semantic differences are not immediately obvious [...] speakers of other dialects of English often assume they correctly understand what is said in Aboriginal English, when in fact, they do not” (1994: 182). Third, Sandefur does not mention the fact that the linguistic repertoire of speakers always includes several codes, which can be constituted by distinct dialects or even different languages. Thus, to say that some Aborigines speak ‘Standard Australian English’ while others speak ‘non-standard English’ is a serious oversimplification. Finally, there is the general linguistic problem of distinguishing between closely-related varieties of one language. Even though the boundaries may have been more or less theoretically defined, what actually counts as sameness or difference in a specific case is much more open to debate (Mühlhäusler p.c.).

2.2.2 The Evolution of Aboriginal English

The ongoing debate about the definition of ‘Aboriginal English’ points to the fact that the English spoken by Australian Aborigines is quite heterogeneous. However, as this diversity is to a large extent the product of the last two centuries, a description of the linguistic contact situation between Aboriginal languages and English, which ultimately gave rise to the development of AbE, can help to better understand the current linguistic situation.

2.2.2.1 The loss of Australian Aboriginal Languages

In the 1960s the last of the traditionally nomadic groups was ‘brought in’ to a more settled lifestyle. Today there are no groups of Australian Aboriginals who live in a totally traditional manner. (Sandefur 1983: 43)

Sandefur not only mentions the ultimately complete breakdown of Aboriginal people’s traditional way of life, but also alludes to the means by which such an ‘abandonment’ of lifestyle was actually brought about: the OALD¹⁹’s main entry for the phrasal verb ‘to bring in’ significantly reads “(of the police) bring sb to a police station to be questioned or charged;

¹⁹ Cowie, A.P. (ed) (1989). *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of current English*. Fourth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

arrest sb". Describing the events following colonisation, other academics more blatantly speak of

[...] a post-contact history of demoralisation, cultural genocide and drastic social change, in which the indigenous people of the continent experienced massacre, relocation, political and social inequality, and intense assimilatory pressures to adopt white lifestyle, language and sociocultural values. (Schmidt 1990:11).

And one could definitely add the fact that, sometimes even before ever having seen a white man, innumerable Aborigines (in some cases whole tribes) died of diseases like small pox brought to the continent by the European convicts and settlers (Mühlhäusler 1996: 12).

The death of speakers as well as dramatic social changes count among the prime reasons for language death. While the connection is obvious in the first case, the gradual extinction of a language being the natural consequence of a dying speech community, drastic social changes have a strong impact on what ecolinguists call the 'linguistic ecology'. As much in the same way as animals and plants depend on their natural habitat for survival, the maintenance of a language is contingent upon the persistence of the linguistic ecology it is part of.

[...] changes in the environment would mean that the cultural and social settings in which a given language had been functioning, usually for a very long time, have been replaced by new and quite different ones as a result of irresistible culture contact and clash, with the traditional language unsuited for readily functioning as a vehicle of expression of the new culture. The newly introduced dangerous animal and plant species mentioned above can be compared with negative and destructive attitudes towards this traditional language by the carriers of the newly introduced culture and speakers of the language serving as its means of expression. (Wurm 1991: 2)

Applying Wurm's observations to the Australian context, it needs to be mentioned that the colonists did not only insist on the Aborigines learning English, often dismissing Australian Indigenous languages as a series of 'grunts', in the course of time, Aborigines themselves often came to consider their own language as not useful for communication in the new social context superimposed on them by the white and consequently stopped teaching their children the traditional languages. "In time, many people came to be ashamed to use their language in public [...] and the continuity of intergenerational transmission was broken" (Malcolm 2001: 207). This adoption of the view of the 'other' has been termed 'the colonisation of the mind' by proponents of the discourse of 'English as a killer language'²⁰, and its mechanisms have already been described in chapter 2.1.3.

Taking these factors leading to language death into account, the present state of Australian Indigenous Languages, though highly deplorable, is not surprising. Of approximately 250

²⁰ See Philipson, Robert (1993). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press for a detailed discussion.

languages spoken by Aborigines in pre-colonial times, only very few remain. The detailed assessment of the situation presented by McConvell and Thieberger in their report for the Australian Department of Environment and Heritage shows that the percentage of Aborigines speaking their own language has dropped from 100% in 1800 to 13% in 1996, that is, from pre-contact times to the present ²¹. In addition, the number of Australian Indigenous languages that are spoken fluently and regularly by all age groups has decreased by 90% since 1800 (McConvell and Thieberger 2001: 2). However, some of the presumably still existing languages can definitely be considered to be on the brink of extinction as their intergenerational transmission link has been broken and only a handful of elderly speakers remain.

Though a detailed discussion about the future prospects of Aboriginal languages is clearly beyond the scope of this thesis, I want to conclude this chapter by drawing attention to the fact that Aboriginal languages – some of them ‘strong’, some of them ‘weak’ and others no longer spoken at all – have become the focus of language revival programmes all over Australia since the 1970s (Amery and Gale forthcoming: 3; Romaine 1991: 7). If the loss of Australian Indigenous languages has been the result of changes in the linguistic ecology, social changes currently under way may lead to the maintenance of Aboriginal languages, or at least prevent their ultimate extinction.

Clearly associated with increased Aboriginal language pride is the use of Aboriginal language to mark Aboriginal identity. With increased awareness of Aboriginal identity and political and social rights in recent years, many Aboriginal languages have assumed a vital contemporary sociolinguistic role for their speakers. (Schmidt 1990:22)

2.2.2.2 The “birth” of a Pidgin

It has been argued in the last chapter that the reasons for the decline of Australian Indigenous languages can be found in the destruction of the traditional linguistic ecology due to the cultural clash between colonists on the one side and Aborigines on the other side. However, while many linguists – especially those working in the Australian and American contexts where Indigenous languages have had a comparatively low linguistic impact on the development of the colonists’ language (Mufwene 2004: 206) – rightly focus on the endangerment of languages resulting from such a cultural clash, Mufwene draws attention to

²¹ Though the first colonists arrived in 1788, large-scale colonisation beyond the area around Sydney only started in 1813 after Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson crossed the Blue Mountains (Troy 1990: 33).

the fact that in the course of history, such situations have often simultaneously given rise to both language birth and death: “Although current research on language birth and death is well grounded in population contacts, the relevant literature does not highlight the fact that these processes usually have occurred under the same, or related, socio-economic conditions identified [...] as “ecological”” (2004: 202). The first languages often to be ‘born’ in contact situations which are characterised by a dramatic cultural clash and the absence of a common language are generally called Pidgin languages. In ecological terms, their ‘birth’ can be described as follows:

A useful technical definition of a weed is any plant that thrives in disturbed soil. [...] Pidgin languages are languages that thrive in a disturbed linguistic ecology, that is, the loss of traditional communication patterns of languages has created a situation where people have to find new linguistic solutions that are viable in the changed circumstances. The emergence of Pidgins illustrates the ingenuity of speakers, and their ability to cope with repeated cultural and linguistic changes. (Mühlhäusler 1996: 13)

In the following, I would like to briefly describe the development of ‘New South Wales Pidgin’ (henceforth NSW Pidgin), an English-based pidgin featuring words and expressions from Aboriginal languages that initially evolved in Sydney, but soon spread to other parts of the continent. As “[t]he origins and development of pidgin languages is a complex issue, of which there is currently much academic debate [...]” (Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler 2003: viii), I will not go into the linguistic details, but concentrate on socio-historical facts.

‘NSW Pidgin’ can clearly be perceived as a viable linguistic response to drastic changes, a language adapted to and therefore useful when dealing with a changed social environment.

NSW Pidgin is the most demonstrable linguistic product of Aboriginal contact with English-speaking colonists. The Aborigines needed to find a way in which to rationalise the major changes that had occurred in their world view as a result of British colonisation. NSW Pidgin in part resulted from their attempt to explain to themselves the new social input and the consequent changes they experienced. It was a new language for a new social context. (Troy 1990: 15)

Initially motivated by the necessity of communication between Aborigines and the colonisers²², who generally did not attempt to learn an Aboriginal language, ‘NSW Pidgin’, linguistically described by David Collins as ‘a barbarous mixture’ of English with the Port Jackson dialect²³ (Baker 1970: 312), was soon also used by Aborigines among each other when talking about the colonists. However, this extension in function resulted in the stabilisation of ‘NSW Pidgin’, which, by 1820 at the latest (Mühlhäusler and Amery 1996:

²² According to Troy, the first colonists comprised convicts, army as well as naval men and a few free settlers, the majority of whom came from England and Ireland (Troy 1990:15).

²³ However, Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler argue that NSW Pidgin not only featured words from the local Aboriginal language Dharug, but also included ‘imported’ items from ‘Chinese Pidgin English’ and ‘Pidgin Portuguese’ (2003: xix).

38), had become a well-established lingua franca used by Aboriginal speakers for intergroup and intragroup communication.

In addition, missions set up by the colonisers in order to ‘civilize’ and proselytise the indigenous population by teaching them English, paradoxically promoted the establishment of ‘NSW Pidgin’. In fact, missions constituted linguistic melting pots as they banded together Aborigines from a vast range of geographical areas who had often been chased off their ancestral lands and spoke quite different languages.

The importance of missions in the development of NSW Pidgin is considerable. Missions brought together Aborigines of different languages and social groups who may not have ordinarily mixed. Furthermore, missions added to the new social and linguistic input Aborigines were experiencing as a result of contact with the colonists. Missionaries initially attempted to assimilate Aborigines into colonial society by ‘teaching’ them about what they saw as the important aspect of British culture – Christianity, work ethics and middle-class British morality. (Troy 1990:26)

Additionally, teaching English was complicated by a whole range of factors, most probably including the Aborigines’ lack of interest. As a result, only few Aborigines learnt English as a target language and even less of them actively maintained this knowledge after they had left school (Troy 1990: 23). Most ironically, English lessons soon became obsolete in several places in New South Wales as in the case of the mission at Lake Macquarie just south of Newcastle, which had been set up in 1824. Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, who had studied the locally spoken Awabakal language quite extensively and had already published a grammar and a spelling book, included the following remarks in the preface to his translation of the gospel of St Luke:

Circumstances, which no human being could control, brought the mission to a final termination on December 31, 1841, when the mission ceased, not from any want of support from the Government, nor from any inclination on my own part to retire from the work, but solely from the sad fact that the aborigines themselves had then become almost extinct, for I had actually outlived a very large majority of the blacks, more especially of those with whom I had been associated for seventeen years. (Dixon *et al.* 1990:24)

Though knowledge about the colonists, and subsequently also ‘NSW Pidgin’, was transmitted via “[t]raditional trade routes and information networks [which] covertly and overtly connected Aborigines all over Australia (in some areas the routes are still operating)” (Troy 1990:2), the spread of ‘NSW Pidgin’ to other geographical areas of the Australian continent was to a large extent concomitant with the movement of the frontier and especially the following geographical expansion of the pastoral industry.

As white settlers spread through the continent they took this pidgin with them for talking to the new tribes they encountered. The settlers thought that they were talking ‘the Aboriginal language’ and the Aborigines were under the misapprehension that they were being taught the white man’s language. In this way a number of Port Jackson words (and some from other south-eastern languages) were spread far afield and some, such as *yarraman* ‘horse’, were borrowed from this pidgin into Australian languages spoken thousands of miles from Sydney. (Dixon *et al.* 1990: 27)

Since the developments and local diversification of pidgins in other areas of Australia are also quite complex, a detailed discussion of the latter would clearly exceed the framework of this thesis. In this context, it should suffice to mention that linguists working on early contact varieties like ‘South Australian Pidgin English’ (henceforth SAPE) (Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler 2003) and Pidgin English in Queensland (Dutton 1983) agree that ‘NSW Pidgin’ has played a major role in the evolution of both pidgins. While Dutton claims that Pidgin English in Queensland was, indeed, “[...] a direct descendant of New South Wales Pidgin English and not a separate development [...]” (1983: 109), Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler similarly describes the linguistic relationship between ‘NSW Pidgin’ and ‘SAPE’ as follows:

Through the writings of Moorhouse and Edward John Eyre²⁴, it is clear that the influence of NSWPE²⁵ was particularly strong in [the period between 1836 and the 1850s]: stock routes running along the River Murray were heavily travelled, suggesting that cattlemen from the east were instrumental in its diffusion to South Australia. Indeed, as the etymological entries in this dictionary show, the vast majority of SAPE forms are derived from NSWPE²⁶. (2003: xi)

Today, this linguistic heritage is evident in the creoles as well as in those varieties of ‘AbE’ which have genetically developed from a pidgin. “These days aspects of SAPE continue to live on in various forms: in the Far North it can be traced to contemporary Cattle Station English, and it is fossilised in NE²⁷ and other Aboriginal Englishes.” (Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler 2003: xiii).

²⁴ Moorhouse, M. (1843). “Annual report of the Aborigines Department for the year ending 30th September 1843. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia*. 1990, vol.28, pt 1, 56-62.

Eyre, E. J. (1842-44). *Resident Magistrate’s court notebook*. Moorundie, State Records GRG 4/133

²⁵ ‘New South Wales Pidgin English’

²⁶ Most of the Aboriginal words and expressions incorporated into ‘New South Wales Pidgin’, and hence into other pidgin varieties, came from Dharug, the language formerly spoken in Sydney, and Wiradjuri spoken in large parts of New South Wales, the reason being that these were the first regions to be colonised.

²⁷ Nunga English

2.2.3 The present-day situation

Mühlhäusler states that although some Aborigines living in remote areas have somehow resisted the adoption of English as a lingua franca and instead use an Aboriginal koine²⁸ for purposes of wider communication, the majority of Aborigines today uses either English ('mAusE' and/or 'Aboriginal English') or one of the Australian Creoles in their everyday communication (1996:14). While it is estimated that 'Kriol' – which is "[...] spoken in a band across the Top End from the Kimberley across the northern part of the Northern Territory and into north-western Queensland" – and 'Torres Strait Creole', used in the Torres Strait and Cape York, have 20,000 and 15,000 speakers respectively (SSABSA 1996:214), the majority of Australian Aborigines speaks English as a first or at least as a second language (Mühlhäusler 1996:14).

As in traditional times, multilingual/ multidialectal speakers are a wide-spread phenomenon, and individuals may have several of the varieties just mentioned as well as additional Aboriginal languages at their command. "In addition to Kriol, some Kriol speaking Aborigines also speak StAusE²⁹, and many speak a variety of AE³⁰ as well" (Sandefur 1983: 49). These linguistic varieties are closely related to each other as they are all 'English'³¹ in a sense, and as the common definition of 'Aboriginal English' as a speech continuum constituted by a vast amount of regionally different varieties demonstrates, the linguistic boundaries between them can thus become quite blurred. "Varieties of Aboriginal English range from something that is virtually identical to Standard Australian English in everything but accent, through to pure creole, which is so remote from Standard Australian English as to be mutually unintelligible [...]" (Burridge and Mulder 1998: 287).

This definition of 'AbE' points to the existence of a post-creole continuum of the sort found in other creole-speaking areas in the world. However, the genetic evolution of today's 'off-springs' of English in Australia is much more complicated. Though linguists agree that 'NSW Pidgin' has probably directly given rise to the majority of pidgins and creoles that have ever

²⁸ A koine is an 'amalgam' of dialects of the same or closely related languages which evolved through processes of simplification and dialect levelling (e.g. Dhuwaya at Yirrkala in North East Arnhemland and Kunwinjku in Western Arnhemland).

²⁹ **Spoken** Standard Australian English (StAusE) can be understood as a synonym for 'mAusE' in this context.

³⁰ 'Aboriginal English'

³¹ In the preface to their *Handbook of Varieties of English*, Schneider and Kortmann justify the inclusion of pidgins and creoles with the following words:

"In accepting English-oriented pidgins and Creoles in the present context, we adopt a trend of recent research to consider them as contact varieties closely related to, possibly to be categorized as varieties of , their respective superstrate languages" (2004: 3).

been spoken in Australia since 1788 (with the possible exception of the pidgin spoken in the Bass Strait and pidgins spoken in various locations in Western Australia (Mühlhäusler and Amery 1996: 33)), it is highly controversial whether 'AbE' can generally be assumed to be the result of a process of decreolisation:

In some Northern communities where earlier extended pidgins have been creolised, Aboriginal English has emerged as a post-creole continuum, though as Sandefur [...] points out with reference to Kriol, not necessarily as a continuum in the process of decreolisation. In these Northern locations, then, Aboriginal English is a variety which chronologically follows the development of creoles. (Kaldor and Malcolm 1991: 69)

It is not clear, at the present stage of knowledge about Aboriginal English, whether a full cycle of pidginization-creolization-decreolization has occurred everywhere in Australia, including places where there is no trace of a Creole today. In many areas there may have been a transition from pidgin to a non-standard form of English closer to Standard Australian English without an intervening stage of creolization. (Sandefur 1983: 55)

But not all varieties of Aboriginal English have developed through depidginisation or decreolization. In some areas Aboriginal people have grown up speaking English as their first language, and they have 'Aboriginalised' this English with influences from other Aboriginal varieties (including Kriol in some areas) so that it is an integral part of Aboriginal culture. (Eades 1996: 133)

As the examples show, varieties of 'AbE' may have evolved from either a creole or a pidgin or in fact not be genetically related to any of these contact varieties at all. The latter may especially be the case in areas generally referred to as "settled Australia", including New South Wales, where 'NSW Pidgin' was quickly replaced by English (possibly because of dramatic depopulation). Kaldor and Malcolm report that in the case of the Aboriginal language Ngiyampaa, the language shift occurred "[...] within the lifetime of the oldest generation still alive in the eighties" (Kaldor and Malcolm 1991: 69). However, the fact that younger speakers are also said to retain some words derived from Ngiyampaa or from pidgin English hints at the difficulty of ruling out the possible evolution of contemporary Aboriginal varieties of English from 'NSW Pidgin' in local cases where no detailed historical documents are available.

For some Aborigines English is a foreign language. This is an obvious case in which the English spoken by Aboriginals today is definitely not the result of depidginisation or decreolisation. While learning the target language, these people develop individual interlanguages, with deviations from the target norm being possibly due to interference with creole or their Aboriginal mother tongues. Especially in the case of creole, interlanguage varieties might in some cases share a high amount of linguistic features with dialects of

English used by Aborigines³², but they are not stable, “[...] society-based normalized variet[ies] of speech” (Sandefur 1985: 73). As already mentioned in chapter 2.2.1, Sandefur argues that these interlanguage varieties – as well as varieties of English which are ‘identical’ to either ‘Standard Australian English’ or ‘non-standard Australian English’ – should not be subsumed under the label ‘Aboriginal English’ (Sandefur 1985:69). Though excluding interlanguage varieties because of the reasons previously mentioned probably does make sense in an academic discourse, it is arguably not very useful in an actual social context. As already mentioned, the distinction between individual interlanguages and stabilised Aboriginal English dialects can be quite tricky. This probably means that the difference is neither perceived by a white Australian, nor by the speaker himself, who might consider his form of English as an expression of his Aboriginality. In her study of ‘Aboriginal English’ in Alice Springs, Jean Harkins convincingly argues that even in cases where English is a foreign language, deviations from the ‘target norm’ are not necessarily due to learners’ errors. They may, indeed, also be explained by the fact that ‘mAuseE’ does not provide the linguistic role model or, to use Milroy and Milroy’s words, there is a discrepancy between the ‘social norm’ (standardized ‘mAuseE’) and the ‘community norm’ (‘AbE’) (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 108):

It is normal in the process of language learning, for people to bring the conceptual categories of their first language into the new language, and only gradually to absorb the different categories of the target language.[...] But the Aboriginal usages described here are not just a learners’ interlanguage, a stage between Arrernte or Luritja as a first language, and full mastery of a standard English identical to that of the non-Aboriginal population. English, to Aboriginal people in Alice Springs, is much more than that. It is a language in which they seek to express their personal, social and cultural realities, their own conceptual categories. And these realities and categories are different from those of non-Aboriginal speakers of English. (Harkins 1994: 168)

To conclude the discussion, it can be said that the linguistic repertoire of the vast majority of Australian Aborigines today includes at least one of the following varieties: ‘Kriol’, ‘Torres Strait Creole’ or ‘Aboriginal English’. In recent years, these varieties have come to be regarded as expressions of Aboriginality and have consequently been included in the Aboriginal Languages Association’s constitution as modern Aboriginal languages (Sandefur 1983: 46).

But Aboriginal English is now playing an important role in the pan-Australian identity of many people. Until recently, AE has been seen as a necessary tool for widespread communication, but as a language variety of which many Aboriginal people were embarrassed or ashamed. Indeed, many saw it as a kind of ‘bad English’. In the 1990s, many Aboriginal people throughout the country are acknowledging that their own kind of English is an important symbol of their Aboriginal identity. Not only does it facilitate inter-cultural communication between Aboriginal people, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but it is a constant identity marker. (Eades 1996: 134)

³² Yet, even in cases where a variety of ‘Aboriginal English’ has developed by depidginisation or decreolisation, this is disputed as “[...] the effect of substrate influence on pidgins is a regularly debated topic in the field of pidgin and creole linguistics; [...]” (Troy 1990: 5).

The homogenizing effects that the development of such a pan-Australian identity might have on the varieties used by Aboriginal speakers becomes evident when we take into account that language is primarily a social phenomenon that can never be adequately contemplated without paying attention to the fact that it constitutes an essential part of the speakers' social identity. "The number of languages spoken in any part of the world is not a function of the number of people living there, but rather of the number of distinct sociocultural groups, their geographic spread and their intercommunication" (Dixon 1991: 231)³³. From this point of view then, it is not very surprising that several linguists studying 'AbE' have argued that there is a process of koinéisation under way, "[...] whereby the culturally integrated, increasingly mobile, and nationally-oriented speech community of Aboriginal Australia is expressing its perceived commonality in a reduction or attrition of variants, although retaining some degree of stylistic and regional variation" (Malcolm 2001: 214).

2.3 STUDIES OF ABORIGINAL ENGLISH

The aim of this chapter is to first provide a rough overview of the linguistic investigations that have been conducted in the field of Aboriginal English so far, and then to give a brief description of those particular studies that will serve as the main basis of comparison with my own data in subsequent chapters. Before I start, however, a preliminary note seems to be advisable. The attentive reader will soon realize that some of the authors and studies, though listed in this context, are not cited in the following chapters of this thesis. There are two reasons why this is the case: on the one hand, including the entire body of studies would definitely exceed the scope of this thesis, and on the other hand, a good portion of the latter are either bachelor, master or PhD theses, the only example of which is held at the university where they were authored. If some of them are mentioned in the present context as well as in the bibliography of this thesis, it is for the sake of completeness. However, the following list is by no means extensive but rather represents a personal selection of studies of 'AbE' (see Kaldor and Malcolm (1991: 68) for a more exhaustive presentation).

³³ Note, however, that this hypothesis contrasts with the interdependence of biodiversity and linguistic diversity propagated by ecolinguists. For example, a brief look at Tindale's map showing the distribution of Aboriginal languages in Australia suggests that the highest concentration of languages can be found in the tropical northern areas and in regions with moderate climate and rainfall, while linguistic diversity is comparatively low e.g. in the Western Desert areas of Australia (for more details and examples see Maffi, Luisa (ed.) (2001). *On Biocultural Diversity*. Washington, London: Smithsonian Institution Press)

Studies of ‘AbE’ reach back to the 1970s and do not only differ from each other in terms of regional focus; they were often conducted with varying aims in mind. While some of them present investigations into the origins of ‘AbE’ and its genetic or present relationship to pidgins and creoles (Jernudd 1971, Flint 1972, Dutton 1983, Sandefur 1983 and 1985, Troy 1990, Mühlhäusler 1996, Mühlhäusler and Amery 1996, Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler 2003), others are concerned with more practical issues like, for example, education (Flint 1968, Department of Education (Queensland) 1972, Eagleson, Kaldor and Malcolm 1982, Malcolm 1991, 1994b and 1995, Cahill 2000). It is significant that the latter studies – with the exception of Cahill (2000), which is really an instruction book for teachers containing but few linguistic data – are similar to each other in that they not only focus on educational issues, but do so by giving a detailed linguistic description of ‘AbE’, which they consider as an indispensable basis for ameliorating the situation and opportunities of Aboriginal students in the academic context. In general, descriptive studies of specific varieties of ‘AbE’ constitute by far the biggest part of the ongoing research into ‘AbE’ and have by now been conducted for a whole range of geographical locations: while the ‘Queensland Speech survey’ directed by E.H. Flint focused on varieties of ‘AbE spoken in Queensland’ (Readdy 1961, Dutton 1964 and 1965, Alexander 1965 and 1968, Flint 1968,), Kaldor and Malcolm concentrated their research efforts on the investigation of the speech of Western Australian Aboriginal primary school children (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b). Studies of New South Wales varieties of ‘AbE’ include Eagleson (1978 and 1982b), Sharpe (1990), as well as Hitchen (1992). In addition, the varieties of ‘AbE’ used in Adelaide, Alice Springs, Melbourne and South-east Queensland have been described by Wilson (1996), Harkins (1994), Fesl (1977) and Eades (1983) respectively. Some authors have furthermore limited their focus of research to either more particular structural elements of ‘AbE’ (including, for instance, prosody (Flint 1970), verb morphology (Malcolm 1996) or the lexicon (Arthur 1990 and 1996, Dixon *et al.* 1990) or the study of discourse genres and ethnography of communication (Malcolm 1980-82, 1991 and 1994a, Malcolm and Rochecouste 2000, Malcom and Sharifian 2002, Muecke 1981a and 1983, Eades 1991, Sansom 1980). The latter have been of particular interest in recent years as linguists have realized that, apart from a lack of mutual intelligibility due to different linguistic surface patterns (including accent and morphosyntax rules), miscommunication between Aboriginals and White Australians is often enhanced by distinct strategies of communication and rules of social appropriateness associated with them. Eades and Koch have convincingly identified the latter as a major reason for communication problems in law courts (e.g. Eades 1994 and Koch 1990). To conclude this brief overview of studies of ‘AbE’,

the growing number of articles attempting a general linguistic description of ‘AbE’ across regional variation should be mentioned (Eades 1996, Malcolm 2004a and 2004b, Kaldor and Malcolm 1991, Malcolm and Kosciieleki 1997). In the context of this thesis, they are important for two reasons. As they are often published in works featuring descriptions of other regional and ethnic varieties of English, they allow to see ‘AbE’ from the comparative perspective of world Englishes. What is more important, however, is the fact that they seem to assume the existence or perhaps emergence of a ‘common core of AbE’. In this context, Kaldor and Malcolm’s conclusion is quite telling:

In spite of the seeming wealth of material available today, however, it is still quite difficult to provide a representative description of all the varieties of Aboriginal English all over the continent. The difficulties stem from the fact that individual researchers have concentrated on very different aspects of Aboriginal English. The picture today is like a jigsaw puzzle from which many pieces are still missing, but in which some major patterns are detectable. (Kaldor and Malcolm 1991: 68)

Apart from comparing the data to the more general descriptions of ‘AbE’ just mentioned, the following studies of specific varieties of ‘AbE’ will be of special importance for the discussion of linguistic structures detailed in chapter 4.1: Malcolm and Kaldor (1982b), Eagleson (1982b), Sharpe (1990), Harkins (1994) and Wilson (1996)³⁴.

Assuming the role of a participant-observer, Harkins (1994) describes the linguistic situation and variety of ‘AbE’ spoken at Yipirinya School in Alice Springs (henceforth ‘YAE’). While language choice in this multilingual setting, and therefore also the status of ‘YAE’, is a complex issue in that it is governed by strict social rules – including one’s own group identification, the other participants in the speech situation as well as the topic of conversation (Harkins 1994: 25) –, to determine the linguistic nature of ‘YAE’ seems to be an even more difficult task. Though ‘YAE’ is neither a pidgin or creole nor an interlanguage, “[...] some of its distinctive features may be traced to each of the above mentioned sources” (Harkins 1994:180). Though ‘YAE’ is a local variety of ‘AbE’ used in Alice Springs, Harkins believes that, due to the structural likeness of Aboriginal languages and the degree of cultural commonness and similarities between English-based pidgins in different parts of Australia, ‘YAE’ shares many characteristics with other varieties of ‘AbE’ (1994: 186). From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, ‘YAE’ functions as a bridge: “[Aboriginals of Alice Springs] want to use it “two-ways”: to get knowledge, information and things of value

³⁴ Brief descriptions of studies which will be especially relevant in other contexts of this thesis can be found in the corresponding chapters.

from the non-Aboriginal world, and to communicate **to** that world what they, as Aboriginal people, think, need, want and have to say” (Harkins 1994: 5).

In the framework of their Western Australian survey of ‘AbE’ in country and remote areas from 1973 to 1977, Malcolm and Kaldor’s research team visited 38 primary schools located in significant areas all over Western Australia (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 78)³⁵. Part of the data they elicited was obtained by recording classroom sessions and informal group chats of about 3-4 students, including Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal groups of school children. In addition, they conducted individual interviews with some of the students in order to test their use of grammatical structures. In contrast to Harkins’ study, for all but bilingual children, a variety of ‘AbE’ was the mother tongue (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 110). However, the two studies can still be compared in that Kaldor and Malcolm’s participants also showed an awareness of the speech situation which manifested itself in lect switching:

Many children are skilled at switching varieties according to the requirements of the situation. Most speakers tend to move in the direction of SAE when speaking with the teacher, at school on a school topic, and away from SAE when talking to other speakers of Aboriginal English in informal situations. (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 110)

Similar to the studies just presented, Wilson undertakes the linguistic description of a local variety of ‘AbE’ spoken by Aboriginal school children by contrasting his data with ‘Standard Australian English’ (Wilson 1996: 28). For the students of Alberton Primary school in metropolitan Adelaide who participated in the study, ‘Nunga English’, the local variety of ‘AbE’, is a mother tongue (Wilson 1996: 91). Wilson detected that his informants often switched from ‘Nunga English’ to another form of non-standard English or ‘Standard Australian English’. Though a variety of methods were used for data elicitation – including participant observation, small group interviews, retrospective participant commentary and, most importantly in this context, audio tape recordings of naturalistic interaction amongst Nunga children and between Nunga children and non-Aboriginal adults in a number of different settings (Wilson 1996: 24) – he still remained unsure as to the exact impact of social, situational or personal factors on linguistic choice (1996: 91). In conclusion, he found that the ‘Nunga English’ used at Alberton was an acrolectal variety of ‘AbE’, “[...] characterised by an absence of features that mark the “heavy” or basilectal varieties in the more remote areas” (1996: 91), though it also shared a considerable number of linguistic features with the latter when contrasted with ‘Standard Australian English’. In addition, he claimed that the

³⁵ The variety they investigated will hence be referred to as ‘WAACE’ (Western Australian Aboriginal Children’s English).

specifically local character of ‘Nunga English’ was due to a high number of lexical borrowings from traditional Aboriginal languages.

Like Wilson, Eagleson (1982b) studied the variety of ‘AbE’ used by Aboriginal school children living in a metropolitan area, in his case the Sydney suburbs Redfern and La Perouse. In contrast to Wilson, however, in his analysis of more or less informal conversations between a researcher and a small group of children, Eagleson found that the speech of these urban Aborigines was not different from the non-standard English used by White Australians living in the same social environment (1982b: 138). He therefore concluded that, due to the daily contact with members of the white community, the variety of English that Sydney Aboriginals used did “[...] not spring from contact with Aboriginal languages. On the contrary it is the same as that spoken by a section of the white community and has been learnt from that section with which the Aborigines have closest association” (1982b: 160).

Sharpe’s investigation into the English of students in Wilcannia, a small town of 700-1000 inhabitants in New South Wales (1990: 233), can be compared to both Wilson’s and Eagleson’s studies. She maintains that, though English in Wilcannia is “[...] recognisably an Aboriginal English dialect, [it] is not very different from working-class or rural Australian English” (1990: 241). In her opinion, the varieties of English used by the Aboriginal pupils, which she studied using the participant-observer method, ranged from standard English, through working-class non-standard English to a more strongly marked form of ‘AbE’ (1990: 235) particularly characterised by differences in prosody and phonology. In addition, some of the ‘Aboriginal’ features occurred in the speech of non-Aboriginals, and there was generally no communication problem between members of the respective social groups (Sharpe 1990: 234).

3. METHODS AND DATA

3.1 THE DATA

3.1.1 Informants

In contrast to the studies of ‘AbE’ just described, which had been almost exclusively conducted in an academic environment, the main informants interviewed in the data to be analysed in the experimental part of this thesis are senior adults whose mother tongue is a

variety of English and the presumably youngest of whom is over forty years old. However, the present data is seen as comparable to the other studies since “[c]hildren [...] do not learn to speak in a vacuum. As well as peers, parents, grandparents, older siblings and the community in general exert a pervasive influence. Children’s language is to a very large degree a reflection of the language used in the immediate environment” (Eagleson 1982b: 117).

The interviews were conducted by Frank Povah, who had been given a grant by the Australian Folk Trust to record Aboriginal folklore. In February 1990, he subsequently taped approximately 6 ½ hours of data, interviewing Aboriginal senior adults in central New South Wales (for more detailed information on locations and traditional language groups the informants identified with, please refer to chapter 4.2.3). His personal aim was to elicit data on Aboriginal mythological creatures in order to prove that, though many Aborigines of East Australia led a life not “altogether too different from rural and city Australians” (Povah, transcript 1 in the appendix), the old traditions were still very much alive.

When recording people for research purposes, protection of privacy is always an ethical issue not to be neglected. However, in some cases, and especially if informants demand that their name be mentioned, making the data anonymous is on a par with refusing to give credit to the people who provided the information. In the same vein, Sansom rightly states that “[t]he act of gratuitously naming people in a book robs them (and their descendants) of degrees of freedom in the business of making and remaking their own pasts” (Sansom 2001: 104). In listing the names of his Aboriginal interviewees in the following, I comply with Frank Povah’s demand that all researchers making use of his data mention ALL of its sources: Beryl Adams, Audrey Freeburn and her family, Paul Gordon, Vivienne Griffin, Ray and Valda and Rita Keed, Nancy King, Glen Morris, Denny Riley, Beverley and Keith Smith, and Joyce Williams.

3.1.2 Informal speech

Studies of non-standard spoken language depend on the availability of recorded informal speech as non-standard linguistic features are often stigmatised or considered inappropriate in formal situations and can thus hardly be elicited in the public sphere.

There is [...] a commonality, in communicative terms between schools, classrooms, law courts, offices of government departments and anywhere where there are interactions in which the non-Aboriginal interlocutor defines the terms of communication. All of these settings will be associated with behaviour patterns which will not evidence the communicative competence of many Aboriginal people. (Malcolm 1994b: 150).

However, even if interviews take place in a familiar setting enhancing a relaxed atmosphere (e.g. the interviewee's house in Povah's case), the informant's use of natural spontaneous speech is by no means guaranteed. One of the most prominent obstacles in recording naturalistic data has been called the 'observer's paradox' by sociolinguist William Labov. According to the latter, "[...] the presence of the linguist (whether actively participating in a dialogue or acting as a silent observer) will exercise an influence on the way people talk [...]" (Crystal 2003a: 323).

This influence is especially obvious in an interview where the interviewer "normally defines the terms of communication", to use Malcolm's words again. However, Saville-Troike reminds us that the ethnographic interview is open ended and carries as few preconceptions with it as possible and that questions are inserted at "[...] natural points in the flow rather than [following] a rigid schedule" (1989: 123). The interviews conducted by Frank Povah could well be counted as ethnographic in this sense as his interviewing techniques are in accordance with Saville-Troike's rules: Though his primary aim is to elicit information on Aboriginal mythological creatures, in most cases, he does not interrupt his informants' speech if he or she changes to another topic of conversation. In addition, some of the "interviews" are really conversations between several Aboriginal informants during the recordings of which the researcher merely functioned as a more or less silent observer (e.g. transcript 5 in the appendix). A brief look at the transcripts included in the appendix of this thesis suffice to say that the "clear two-part structure", "lack of interruptions and little fluctuation in tessitura and loudness", which are so typical of interviews (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 136) are present only in the initial stages of the interview before the informant takes control of the conversation.

Furthermore, Malcolm draws attention to the fact that the ethnicity of the interviewer might also influence the speech variety used by Aboriginal informants. Indeed, the role that ethnicity plays in the context of the observer paradox is a controversial issue which has been discussed for quite some time. While some researchers, including Malcolm, maintain that ethnicity does have an impact, others claim that this is not the case:

The MELP (Measure of English Language Proficiency) study conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics in 1975 found no significant effect from interviewer ethnicity on the quality of data collected [...], and the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan has found that non-matched interviewers conducting social survey research secure better and more reliable data than do ethnically matched interviewers using the respondents' language. (Saville-Troike 1989: 113)

If anything, such contrasting views testify to the fact that, given the ethnicity of the researcher, the effects of the observer paradox on the Aboriginal participants' speech cannot altogether be ruled out in the present context.

3.1.3 Transcription of the Data

Though Frank Povah provided transcripts of the data alongside his original tapes, these mainly concentrated on the content of the recordings and were not detailed enough to allow for a linguistic analysis, which made a second transcription including such discourse features as turn-taking, hesitations and back-channelling as well as phonetic and prosodic features necessary. In addition, this second transcription gave me the opportunity to compare my own interpretation of the data with Povah's, which was especially interesting at the interface of phonetics and morphology (please refer to chapter 4.1.2.3 for more information).

As transcribing naturalistic speech data is a very time-consuming task, only part of the 6 ½ hours of recordings could be transcribed in the context of this thesis. The resulting transcripts are included in the appendix. They were created by using the transcription programme 'Transana'³⁶, which allows the simultaneous display of acoustic data and transcript. The symbols used to indicate prosodic and discourse features follow the conventions of a transcription system called 'GAT- Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem' that was developed by German linguists for the analysis of natural discourse (please refer to the disc included in the appendix for a legend of the symbols used in the transcripts). For want of a better model to graphically represent 'AbE', I follow Malcolm and Wilson's example in using an "impressionistically modified conventional English orthography" (Wilson 1996: 13). Phrases or words which have been singled out for a phonetic analysis of the data were transcribed using the IPA code.

³⁶ University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Education Research. *Transana: Qualitative analysis software for video and audio data*. URL: <http://www.transana.org>; accessed on 14/04/2007.

In addition, I concur with Wilson's claim that, for the sake of simplicity of data representation, it is useful to "[...] reduce lengthy conversational turns to a series of shorter components" (1996: 11). However, segmenting spontaneous speech by searching for clear syntactic clause boundaries is often considerably complicated by the existence of unfinished sentences, interruptions and hesitations etc. For that reason, I have tried to focus on tone units which, "[...] being seen as equivalent to the message the speaker wishes to convey correspon[d] more closely to what the speaker does with speech" (Kreckel 1981: 65). The latter claim could be substantiated by the empirical results yielded by Kreckel's study as it showed that family members and non-family members "[...] segment audible speech into tone units when instructed to indicate where one message ends and the next one begins" (1981: 257). A tone unit is determined by both syntactic and prosodic features, with intonation contours at the end of these units playing a significant role (Kreckel 1981: 67). In general, they can be conceived of as phonemic clauses characterised by two features:

First by one or two centres of phonological prominence termed nuclei and, secondly, by boundaries signalled by the point of discontinuity where the changes of patterns of voice, pitch, rhythm and loudness ends and their values level off again in the beginning of the next tone unit. (Kreckel 1981: 69).

However, this does not contradict my own observation that tone units were often repeated, presumably to prosodically signal semantic coherence between parts of an utterance (see chapter 4.1.1.2 for further details).

3.2 METHODS

3.2.1 Structure-centred description

3.2.1.1 The comparative approach

A study of pluricentric languages is inherently comparative: Each epi-centre must be contrasted with other epi-centres. Since mAusE and its speech community form an epi-centre, the study of its social make-up, uses and expressions is comparative. The presence of sub-communities throws up further questions: How does the English of (many) Aborigines, i.e. AborE, how do creoles like *Kriol*, how do migrant forms of English, tie into that *langue*₁ and its speech community? Is the Australian speech community perhaps less integrative than one has liked to think? Is it itself a fellowship? (Leitner 2004: 17)

Elsewhere Leitner argues for pluricentricity in the Australian epi-centre (Leitner 2004: 33; cf. chapter 2.1.2 of this thesis), that is, the existence of an Australian speech fellowship comprising several speech communities, including 'AbE'. As a matter of fact, linguists concerned with the study of 'AbE' have more often than not chosen a comparative approach

when describing the linguistic structure of this Australian variety of English, though the majority of them seems to be well aware of the fact that this procedure is all but genuine since it prevents the creation of an emic account of varieties of ‘AbE’ as rule-governed systems in their own right. In addition, it may also leave the reader with the impression that ‘AbE’ and its varieties are deviant and therefore constitute deficient forms of English.

To make things even worse, linguists are often conscious of the fact that they even do not compare like with like.

In comparing varieties of a language such as English, it is necessary to be clear about what is being compared with what. The scarcity of studies of standard spoken English has meant that the “standard” with which many non-standard varieties have been compared is an atypically formalised variety. The results of such comparisons can be quite misleading [...]. (Harkins 1994: 193)

By calling the ‘standard’ an “atypically formalised variety”, Harkins alludes to the fact that one of the major contrasts between non-standard varieties like ‘AbE’ and the ‘standard’ lies in the fact that the latter is to a large extent a “grapholect” (Wilson 1996: 27) since “[m]ore than anywhere else, SE³⁷ is to be found in print” (Crystal 2003b: 110). According to Milroy and Milroy, the reason why non-standard varieties are still “measured” against the written standard must be sought in the scarcity of studies of spoken language in general:

We have noted that the most fully described and codified forms of language are those appropriate to public, formal and, especially, written usage. One effect of this has been a neglect of the structure and social dynamics of spoken forms and hence a tendency (in the absence of adequate descriptions of speech) to evaluate spoken usage on the model of written usage. (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 54)

In the Australian context, the linguistic basis for comparing extra-territorial and regional dialects of English is ‘Standard Australian English’ (henceforth ‘SAE’), which “[...] has acquired social prestige, through its use in government, law, education and the media, and so is used as a source of syntactic, lexical and phonological norms” (Wilson 1996: 26). Following the argumentation that ‘Standard English’ is mostly associated with the written medium, it may be surprising that Wilson considers ‘SAE’ as a reference for pronunciation. His decision may be explained by the fact that spoken language is not limited to the spontaneous register, but also comprises formal styles, which are, for example, used by news speakers or politicians delivering a public speech. Significantly, this style is also often referred to as ‘written-to-be-spoken’. However, it should be noted that the codification and standardisation of ‘Standard Australian English’ is not only very recent, it has in general been more concerned with questions of orthography and writing style:

³⁷ Standard English

The Australian government's intervention into the linguistic form of Australian English dates back nearly twenty years to the publication of the first *Australian Government Style Manual* in 1966, which has served ever since as a reference for "authors, editors and printers of Australian government publications". (Peters and Delbridge 1989: 128)

Although the Macquarie Dictionary provides phonetic transcriptions, according to the same authors, "[...] it is unlikely to exercise much influence on the pronunciation of the majority of the population" (Peters and Delbridge 1989: 133). To conclude this section, it should once again be emphasized that 'SAE' is not synonymous with Leitner's 'mAusE'. Though the generally conservative character of standards when compared to spoken speech plays only a marginal role in the Australian context as 'SAE' has only lately been codified, in contrast to 'SAE', 'mAusE' refers more to the spoken medium. This spoken medium is, however, only insufficiently documented, with the possible exception of its phonology (see chapter 4.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of 'mAusE' phonology).

Given that the studies presented in chapter 2.3 that form the main basis of comparison with the data to be analysed in chapter 4.1 mostly focus on the differences between varieties of 'AbE' and 'Standard Australian English' (see Wilson above), for the sake of comparability 'Standard Australian English' will also sometimes be used as a reference variety in the context of this thesis. In addition, differences between the varieties used in the data and 'Standard Australian English' that can be traced back to the spoken and written medium respectively will be discussed and references to 'mAusE' will be made whenever possible.

3.2.1.2 Communicative competence and linguistic variables

So far, it has been argued that 'Australian English' is merely an umbrella term covering a number of different varieties of English spoken, and in the case of 'SAE' predominantly written, in Australia. Similarly, 'AbE' has also been defined as an abstract term capturing a whole range of ethnic varieties of English spoken by Aboriginal people. However, variability is not limited to the societal context, but can be found instead in the speech of individuals. In the following, I will briefly comment on the idea of communicative competence and introduce the notion of the linguistic variable.

Milroy and Milroy define the term ‘communicative competence’ coined by Dell Hymes as follows:

It is in fact, quite clear that all speakers vary their language very extensively according to situation; there are [...] no single-style speakers. The capacity of persons to select and recognise the language variety appropriate to the occasion is known as their *communicative competence*. (1985: 118).

However, the possibility of adapting one’s speech to a specific social setting presupposes the existence of a ‘linguistic repertoire’ comprising different codes, that is styles, dialects or even languages between which an individual may switch according to principles of linguistic appropriateness³⁸. In the context of ‘AbE’, this means that, for example, an Aboriginal speaker living in country or remote areas may not only be located at any point along the linguistic speech continuum between ‘Kriol’ and ‘SAE’, but that “[...] the same speaker may move in one or another direction along the continuum, depending on the occasion and the person being spoken to” (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 78). Furthermore, the notion of ‘communicative competence’ and ‘linguistic repertoire’ are important in the context of this thesis as they directly relate to what has been argued in chapter 3.1.2: the situation of the ‘interview’ and the concomitant ‘observer’s paradox’ obviously play a crucial part in the informants’ choice of a specific code. Unfortunately for the study of communicative competence, the interview was the only method used for data gathering, and informants were not recorded in different situations. However, as was already mentioned in chapter 3.1.2, the style of the individual interviews differs not only in that some of them are in fact conversations between several people in the presence of the interviewer, while others are rather monologues of single informants interrupted only by occasional questions and comments on the part of the interviewer. Style may, indeed, vary within a single interview, depending on how much the informant is in control of the situation. The analysis in chapter 4.1 will therefore include both initial and middle passages of the interviews in order to detect any shifts in style.

Another aspect of variation in spoken speech is the existence of what Labov has called a ‘linguistic variable’, “[...]a linguistic element which appears in different forms (or variants) in the speech community” (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 93). According to Crystal, linguistic variables are “[...] most subject to social or STYLISTIC variation, and thus most susceptible

³⁸ Coming back to what has been argued in the previous chapter, this obviously includes written and spoken styles that have somewhat misleadingly been identified as ‘elaborated’ and ‘restricted’ codes respectively: “Note also that the distinction we are suggesting between writing as relatively *context-free* and speech as relatively *context-tied* is the same as one of those made by Bernstein (1971, etc.) between ‘elaborated’ and ‘restricted’ codes [...]” (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 64).

to change in the long term” (2003a: 488). In the tradition of sociolinguistics following William Labov, special attention is often paid to the quantitative analysis of linguistic variables, in which case the occurrence of a single variant is calculated as a proportion of its maximal possible use. However, given the fact that a detailed quantitative analysis would indeed be very time-consuming, it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, a qualitative analysis will be conducted focusing on the existence, or alternatively non-existence, of specific variants of a linguistic variable in the speech of informants. As this procedure is in accordance with other studies of ‘AbE’ that have concentrated on a qualitative analysis of their data, it serves to facilitate the comparison of previous results with those of the present study. To conclude this section, it should be mentioned that although attention will be paid to the relationship between the use of a variant and the stylistic context in which it is used wherever possible, limited personal information on the Aboriginal participants’ profession/economic status and education prevents a thorough investigation into possible social variation beyond the gender distinction.

3.2.2 Ethnography of communication

A structuralist description – which will constitute the first part of the following data analysis– is mostly concerned with the study of phonemes and morphemes as well as the syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules that determine their arrangement in speech. While such an analysis purely operates within the boundaries of language itself, the ethnography of communication as initiated by Dell Hymes in 1972 focuses on the interaction of language and social life, that is the dependence of meaning on the communicative event in which it is embedded. The ethnographic study of society is a necessary pre-requisite for understanding language. We need to understand the socio-cultural contexts of speakers and situations and look beyond isolated instances of language use to the use of language within interaction. Language is impossible to separate from context – it is continually both reflecting and creating aspects of context (Eades 1988: 97).

However, this is not to imply that research should rely either on the one or the other method since they are not conceived of as being exclusive approaches to the analysis of spoken data:

Although it is a basic tenet in this field that a perspective which views language only as a static units of lexicon, phonology, and grammar is totally inadequate, these do constitute a very important type of data within the broader domain. [...] Skills in ethnography of communication are probably best added to skills in linguistic analysis in its narrower sense in order to assure that this component is not neglected or misinterpreted. (Saville-Troike 1989: 117)

The basic aim of an ethnography of communication is to give an account of “[...] the social and linguistic elements which combine to produce the society’s speech events [and to relate them] in a systematic way” (Malcolm 1980-82: 54):

Hymes also demonstrated in 1972 [...] how a basically taxonomic approach to the analysis of the components of a communicative event could, as he put it, ‘bring out the parallelism in organisation of... events’, showing how a cultural common thread might unite such apparently disparate events as the shaman’s retribution ritual, a girl’s puberty rite and the testing of children. (Malcolm 1994b: 153)

This taxonomic approach comprises the analysis of eight basic components of a speech event, which constitutes “Hymes’s basic unit of analysis [that] may be quite an extensive stretch of discourse, but is analytically parallel to the *sentence* as a basic syntactic unit” (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 119). To facilitate the application of the method, these components have often been described by the acronym SPEAKING. They include the *situation* – or more specifically the setting and scene of a speech event –, the *participants*, the intended and actual outcomes generally referred to as *ends*, the *act sequence*, including message form and message content, the *key*, *instrumentality*, meaning the forms of speech and the channel by which they are transmitted, the *norms of interpretation and interaction* as well as the *genre*.

Malcolm (1980-82) provides a preliminary ethnography of communication for Aboriginal communities, in which he identifies a number of speech events common to that social group and shows how aspects of Aboriginal culture can be related to the eight speech components postulated by Hymes. To mention one example, talking about the *speaker* (a subcategory of the component of *participants*), Malcolm draws attention to the fact that in (traditional) Aboriginal society the eligibility to speak to certain persons was restrained by so called ‘avoidance relationships’ (1980-82: 69). A typical example of this is the communication between a man and his mother-in-law, in which context an intermediary person may do the speaking. Eades explains that

[o]lder people in southeast Queensland today remember that there was strict avoidance between a man and his mother-in-law until about the 1950s. They remember that in their childhood a man would never directly address, face toward, or give food to, his mother-in-law. Conversations between a man and his mother-in-law would take place through a third, intermediary person in a stylised way [...] While many Aboriginal families today no longer observed such strict avoidance, there is still some continuity in that many men avoid direct conversations with their mother-in-law. (1988: 103)

Some languages even dispose of a so called ‘mother-in-law register’, a style of speech in which only a part of the vocabulary of a language is actively used (Rob Amery p.c.). The reason behind this lies possibly in the fact that the remaining vocabulary has a greater

functional and semantic load, thereby allowing for a higher degree of ambiguity and indirectness, which speakers may deem appropriate in such communicative events.

Given the limited scope of this thesis and the set of data available, it is obviously impossible to address all of the items mentioned in Malcolm (1980-82). In addition, an extensive ethnographic study following Malcolm's model would not only require a prolonged stay in an Aboriginal community as well as a detailed knowledge of Aboriginal culture, but also presuppose that this person was to some degree accepted as a member of the social group since many of the culturally distinct features of communicative events can probably only be observed in intra-group interaction. According to Saville-Troike, the interviews analysed in this thesis constitute nevertheless a valuable corpus of data as

[i]nterviewing may contribute to a wider range of cultural information, and may include collection of kinship schedules, information on important religious and community events, and elicitation of folktales, historical narratives, songs, exposition of 'how to' in relation to various aspects of technical knowledge, and descriptions of encounters among members of the community in different contexts. (1989: 123)

As Frank Povah's self-explained motivation in recording the data was indeed the elicitation of folktales, the ethnographic analysis undertaken in this study will focus on the narrative event. This communicative event is to be "[...] understood as an instance of socio-communicative verbal interaction in which stories are told and shared" (Klapproth 2004:28) and which, according to Malcolm (1980-82: 92), is an important genre of Aboriginal society. It has often been noted that Aboriginal narratives are distinct in that they exhibit "[...] (a) recurrent semantic and formal patterning [...], (b) evidence of speakers' use of indigenous schemas in associative responses as well as in processing oral narrative, and (c) schema maintenance in discourse in non-traditional settings and in the context of non-traditional subjects" (Malcolm and Sharifian 2002: 167). Taking these ideas into consideration, I will attempt a narrative analysis of the data within the framework of an ethnography of communication by way of comparing my own observations with the findings of other studies. Special importance will additionally be given to the existence of cultural metaphors in the sense of socially assumed knowledge and the question to what extent the narratives in the data can be considered as a kind of 'oral history'.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 STRUCTURE-CENTRED DESCRIPTION

4.1.1 Phonology

4.1.1.1 Segmental Phonology

Since the phonetic analysis of a large corpus of data is a quite time-consuming task, the number of features investigated in the context of this thesis needed to be limited. Given that “[t]he rising diphthongs in AusE and NZE are significantly different from other dialects of English”, their phonetic realisation in the data will be analysed in the following, with the exception of the rising diphthong /ɔɪ/, which shows the least degree of variation (Burridge 2004: 1091). Furthermore, the occurrence of variants of the centring diphthongs /ɪə/ and /eə/ as well as the phonetic realisations of /i/ and the short front vowels /ɛ/ and /æ/ will be discussed. The analysis of consonantal features will then focus on the pronunciations of /ɪŋ/ and /h/ on the one hand and the process of consonant cluster reduction on the other hand, with the latter falling into the domain of morphophonemics. In the following, I will start the discussion of diphthongs by first giving a brief overview of their realisations in ‘mAusE’, followed by the presentation of my own findings and a comparison with the results yielded by other studies of ‘AbE’. It should be mentioned that my own findings are based on an auditory analysis of parts of the data only and should therefore be considered as merely indicating certain tendencies, the definitive confirmation of which would require further study. In addition, the phonetic analysis of the data had to be limited to the features listed above as a complete study of all vowels and consonants is beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.1.1.1.1. Diphthongs

Mitchell and Delbridge (1965) identified three accent types for Australian speakers, based primarily on how individuals pronounced the six vowel sounds that occur in the words HAY, HE, HIGH, HOE, HOW and WHO. The three accent types, referred to as “Broad”, “General” and “Cultivated”, represent divisions across a range of continuous acoustic variation [...] (Cox and Palethorpe 2001: 17)

The number of detailed phonetic studies of ‘mAusE’ is quite limited, so that Mitchell and Delbridge’s differentiation between ‘Cultivated’, ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ Australian accents is still widely in use. One exception is Horvath’s study of Sydney English published in 1985, in

which she used a statistical method, namely principal component analysis and variable rule analysis, to identify four instead of the three sociolects proposed by Mitchell and Delbridge. Rather than dismissing the traditional distinction altogether, Horvath, however, uses the labels ‘Cultivated’, ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ as criteria for her own classification. The difference between the two studies lies in the fact that in contrast to Mitchell and Delbridge’s accents, Horvath’s sociolects are differentiated by the quantity with which speakers use a phonetic variant and not by their absolute presence or absence:

[...] no speaker used only Broad, General or Cultivated vowels but each variety consisted of a mix of all of the vowel pronunciations; the Broad variety used more ‘broad’ vowels and the Cultivated used more ‘cultivated’ vowels, but all speakers often used ‘general’ vowels. No variety existed in a ‘pure’ form. (Horvath 2004: 633)

It is thus that the phonetic variants are probably best described as forming a continuum, with the Cultivated and Broad variants constituting opposite poles. An individual speaker can then be located on his continuum according to the number of ‘Cultivated’, ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ variants found in his speech.

Table 1 provides an overview of the diphthongs and their phonetic variants in the three social accents as presented in Horvath (1985):

Table 1: Diphthongs and their phonetic variants in Australian accents

RP	/i/	/eɪ/	/oʊ/	/aɪ/	/aʊ/	/ɪə/	/ɛə/
Cultivated	[ɪɪ]	[ɛɪ], [eɪ]	[oʊ]	[aɪ]	[aʊ] [aɫʊ]	[ɪə]	[ɛə]
General	[əɪ]	[ʌɪ]	[ʌʊ]	[ɒɪ]	[æʊ]	[ɪ ^ə]	[ɛ ^ə]
Broad	[ə ^ɪ ɪ]	[ʌ ^ɪ ɪ], [ʌɫɪ]	[ʌ ^ɪ ʊ], [ʌɫʊ], [ʌɫwɪ]	[ɒ ^ɪ ɪ]	[æ ^ɪ ʊ], [æ ^ɪ ʊ]	[ɪ:]	[ɛ:]

Taking the phonetic variants presented in table 4 as a basis, a preliminary analysis of the data which is the focus of this study yielded the following results:

Table 2: Speakers³⁹ use of phonetic variants of diphthongs

Speaker	/eɪ/	/aɪ/	/ou/	/aʊ/	/ɪi/	/eə/	/ɪə/
<i>B</i>	C – G	G – B	G	G – B	C	B	B
<i>V</i>	C	G – B	C – G	G	C	B	B
<i>RI</i>	C – G	G	C – G	B	C – G	B	B
<i>R</i>	C – G	G	- ⁴⁰	-	C	B	B
<i>PG</i>	C	G	G	G	C	B	B
<i>A</i>	C – G	G – B	G	G	G	B	B
<i>GM</i>	C – G	G – B	C	G	C	B	B
<i>DR</i>	C – G	G – B	C – G	G – B	C – G	B	B
<i>VI</i>	C – G	G – B	C – G	B	C – G	B	B
<i>N</i>	C – G	G	G	G – B	C – G	B	B
<i>Be</i>	G – B	B	G	B	G	B	B
<i>J</i>	C – G	G – B	C – G	G – B	G	B	B

Rather than claiming that speakers *PG* and *GM*, for example, use but the ‘General’ variant of the diphthong /aʊ/, table 2 attempts to show speakers’ predilection for certain variants.

Indeed, the fact that speakers *PG* and *GM* occasionally use the ‘Broad’ or, in the case of speaker *GM*, also the ‘Cultivated’ variant is in accordance with both Horvath’s observation of variability in ‘mAusE’ as well as Wilson’s findings for ‘AbE’ at Alberton Primary School in Adelaide: “Variation in phonemes predictably occurs at Alberton, both within the speech of individual children and between individuals” (Wilson 1996: 33):

Example from transcript 8

312 GM: <<len> that NIGHT⁴¹ he made a FIRE: outSIDE:⁴²->
313 an' he said <<all> now DON'T you come !OUT!⁴³,

428 GM: THEY had all the ↑POWER⁴⁴ TOO,
429 ↓uhm:-
430 same as the 'IGH⁴⁵ iNItiated people.

Example from transcript 7

196 PG: the nex' MORning as we GOT up she took us outSIDE an IN the,
197 (--)
198 oh soft SAND an that aroun' the 'OUSE⁴⁶,
199 (---)
200 she SHOWED us all the little TRACKS little,
201 (-)
202 FOUR toes:,
203 (---)
204 <<p> PEOPle.>

³⁹ Speakers’ names are abbreviated as in the appendix. The abbreviations *C*, *G* and *B* stand for ‘Cultivate’’, ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ variants respectively.

⁴⁰ No finding can be presented in these cases because of a significant lack of evidence.

⁴¹ [nɒ 'ɪt]

⁴² [fɒ 'ɪaʊtsaɪd]

⁴³ [æʊt]

⁴⁴ [pæ 'ʊə]

⁴⁵ [ɒ 'ɪ]

⁴⁶ [æ 'ʊs]

Acknowledging this kind of variability, speakers could nevertheless be placed on the continuum between ‘Cultivated’ and ‘Broad’ mentioned above since the analysis of the data suggests informants are more or less consistent in their overall use of one or two of the variants. Thus, table 2 suggests that speaker *Be* has the “broadest” accent, while speaker *PG*, for example, predominantly uses ‘Cultivated’ or ‘General’ variants of the diphthongs instead of the ‘Broad’ ones. Given that speakers *Be* and *PG* are female and male respectively, this observation is in stark contrast to the general sociolinguistic assumption that women show a predilection for prestigious forms when compared to men: “At the Broad end of the continuum men and the working class predominated while women and the middle class were associated with the Cultivated end. In fact, at the most Cultivated end of the continuum, there were only women” (Horvath 2004: 633).

In addition, a graphic rearrangement of the findings Aboriginal as presented in table 3 gives reasons to doubt the occurrence of the full range of variants in the speech of the informants under study:

Table 3: Summary of Aboriginal speakers’ phonetic realisations of diphthongs

	/eɪ/	/aɪ/	/ou/	/aʊ/	/ɪi/	/eə/	/ɪə/
Cultivated (C)	<i>V, PG</i>		<i>GM</i>		<i>V, R, B, GM, PG</i>		
Cultivated – General (C-G)	<i>R, RI, B, GM, J, A, DR, VI, N</i>		<i>V, RI, DR, VI, J</i>		<i>RI, DR, VI, N</i>		
General (G)	<i>Be</i> (transcript5)	<i>R, RI, PG, N</i>	<i>B, PG, A, Be, N</i>	<i>V, GM, PG, A</i>	<i>A, Be, J</i>		
General – Broad (G-B)		<i>V, GM, DR, J, A, B, VI</i>		<i>B, DR, N, J</i>			
Broad (B)	<i>Be</i> (transcript6)	<i>Be</i>		<i>RI, Be, VI</i>		<i>V, R, RI, B, J, N, Be, PG, GM, DR, VI, A</i>	<i>V, R, RI, B, J, N, Be, PG, GM, DR, VI, A</i>

Table 3 illustrates that the speakers use a subset of the phonetic variants, with the rising diphthongs /eɪ/ and /ou/ as well as /ɪi/ mainly occurring in the ‘Cultivated’ and ‘General’ accents, while /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ are predominantly realised as ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ variants. Furthermore, speakers unanimously seem to favour the ‘Broad’ variants of the centring diphthongs /eə/ and /ɪə/, that is, “[t]he monophthongal variant [normally] associated with working class speakers, older speakers, and men” (Horvath 2004: 633). Despite the fact that the analysis of the data presented in table 2 and 3 shows ‘AbE’ speakers’ realisation of the diphthongs to be quite distinct, it is rather unlikely for a hearer to perceive of this distinction

as a salient characteristic of ‘AbE’, given that the phonetic variants used are the same as those found in the speech of non-Indigenous Australians.

While Harkins (1994) and Sharpe (1990) did not focus on the phonetic realisation of diphthongs in their study, Eaglson – somewhat in contrast to the findings presented above – concludes that

[a]mong the children who are the concern of this study we could find no trace of what might be called an Aboriginal accent. On the contrary *all conformed to the speech patterns of the white community* (my emphasis). Typical of most was the Broad Australian accent (Mitchell and Delbridge 1965) with some moving towards or exhibiting the General Australian accent. There were no instances of the Cultivated accent. (1982b:134)

However, Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b) and Wilson (1996) commented on the distinct realisation of diphthongs by Aboriginal children, and Malcolm (2004a) provides a summary of vowels in ‘AbE’. All of the latter sources concur in the assertion that the centring diphthongs /ɪə/ and /eə/ are most often realised as lengthened monophthongs (e.g. Wilson 1996: 48), thus being in accordance with the results of my own analysis. In addition, the following examples indicate that the monophthongisation of /ɛə/ is most prominent in tone unit-final positions:

Example from transcript 2

354 B: <<h> they ‘real `LITTLE ˈfeller they ‘ARE:,>
355 =they ‘real !‘**AI:!**ry⁴⁷ .

Examples from transcript 5

192 J: <f> [SO:]–
193 i can reMEEmber the DREDGE an’ an’ an’–
194 Everything that wen’ ↑!ON! **there**⁴⁸;>

870 N: when they FOUND⁴⁹ ‘er she was RIGHT⁵⁰ out in the SCRUB?
871 (---)
872 **!NO!where**⁵¹,

Example from transcript 9

248 DR: but ah–
249 there's suPPOSeD to be somethin’ **THERE**⁵²–

The centring diphthong /iə/ is most often realised as /ɪ:/, especially in the word *year*, while the pronunciation /iʌ/ occasionally found by Wilson (1996: 49) occurs but once in the data.

⁴⁷ [ɛ:rɪ]

⁴⁸ [ðɛ:]

⁴⁹ [fæ'und]

⁵⁰ [rɒɪt]

⁵¹ [nʌʊwe:]

⁵² [ðɛ:]

Example from transcript 3

57 V: well '!'YEARS!⁵³ ago '!'SHE! `said `she had actually '!'SEEN! ` 'em;
 58 (---)
 59 `AN: '–
 60 she 'knows where they ^LIVE=an–
 61 the 'PLACE you were des^CRİbin⁵⁴;
 62 (---)
 63 there ~!'EAR!lier⁵⁵,

In addition, a comparison of the three types of accent (C, G and B) with the pronunciation of rising diphthongs presented in Malcolm (2004a: 663-664) reveals that in 'AbE', 'Cultivated' and 'General' variants occur alongside monophthongs, thus testifying to the wide allophonic range of diphthongs in this variety of English. Although Malcolm argues that 'Broad' Australian variants are not dominant in 'AbE', he does not altogether rule out that they may exist. (2004a: 664).

The analysis of the data suggests that monophthongisation of rising diphthongs is not as salient as proposed by Malcolm or at least does not include all kinds of diphthongs. This is especially true for the monophthongisation of /eɪ/ to /e/ and /aʊ/ to /a/ confirmed by Wilson, which indeed occur very rarely in the data:

Examples from transcript 3

124 V: <<p,t> well `YUUrii `man she `CALLED it.>
 125 (---)
 126 <<p>^COvered=in–
 127 (–)
 128 '!'AIR:!⁵⁶ `with 'LONG: 'NAILS:⁵⁷,
 176 R: aBOUT` !TWEN!ty⁵⁸,
 177 (–)
 178 `TWEnty '!'YEARS!⁵⁹ a`go.

However, Wilson also states that “[t]he first vowel in standard [aʊ] may be raised” (1996: 49), resulting in *house* being pronounced as [æʊs]. While this variant is not recorded in Malcolm (2004a), the realisation of /aʊ/ as the monophthong [æ] is. In the data, both the

⁵³ [jɪ:z]

⁵⁴ [dəskrɒɪbn]

⁵⁵ [ðɛrɜ:ɪɪɪ]; note the pronunciation of *there*, which is probably due to phonetic liaison with the following word starting in a vowel.

⁵⁶ [ɛ:]

⁵⁷ [nɛ:ɪs]

⁵⁸ [əbaɪtwɛnrɪ]

⁵⁹ [jɪ:s]

raised and monophthongised variants of [aʊ] are found, sometimes even within the same utterance:

Example from transcript 2

250 B: they 'won't `come in an '!FIGHT! you or any'thing ,
 251 (---)
 252 but you can (.) 'smell 'em they '!'ROUND:⁶⁰!,
 253 (---)
 254 you 'KNOW you 'know they're '!'ROUN'!⁶¹?

Scanning the phonetic transcriptions included in the transcripts of this study, it is interesting to note that /oʊ/ seems to be the rising diphthong most likely to be monophthongised by the Aboriginal informants, followed by monophthongisation of /aʊ/ and /aɪ/. Monophthongisation of /oʊ/ could be found in the speech of all speakers except for speaker *Be* who has been identified earlier as having the “broadest” Australian accent. For all other speakers, it appears that the relationship between monophthongisation of /oʊ/, /aʊ/ and /aɪ/ may be one of implicational scaling: Monophthongisation of the latter only occurs if /oʊ/ and /aʊ/ are also realised as monophthongs, which is, however, only the case for speakers *B*, *A* and *VI*. Furthermore, all speakers who occasionally pronounced /aʊ/ as /æ/ also used monophthongs instead of the rising diphthong /oʊ/. While monophthongisation is salient in the speech of some speakers, it rarely occurs in the speech of others, especially including the utterances of speakers *RI*, *R*, *GM*, *J* and *DR*. It is interesting to note that although only one third of all speakers under investigation was male, three of them already fall into the latter category (*R*, *GM* and *DR*), while the fourth male speaker *PG* was found to monophthongize /oʊ/, but not /aʊ/. It thus appears that monophthongisation of rising diphthongs is predominantly found in the speech of female speakers.

Regarding the linguistic context that may trigger monophthongisation of rising diphthongs, the data suggests that the phonetic environment may indeed play an important role. The following examples illustrate that most cases of monophthongisation are found in mono- or bisyllabic words in which the vowel nucleus is either preceded or followed by a lateral or a nasal:

⁶⁰ [ræʊnd]

⁶¹ [ræ:n]

Examples from transcript 10

444 A: <<all> i was LOOKin roun at the TREES⁶² an all THAT-
 445 (--)
 446 an SOMEthin'-
 447 (-)
 448 Popped up **behin'**⁶³ the ↑!BUSH! there⁶⁴?
 194 A: <<ff> one **!NIGH'**⁶⁵ <<all> we were Sittin' round TALkin' round
 the FIRE⁶⁶,>

Examples from transcript 6

183 VI: COFFEYS that-
 184 lived **around 'ERE'**⁶⁷.
 601 VI: oh there's a LOT of stories about uhm-
 602 <<p, len> people⁶⁸ bein' followd '**OME'**⁶⁹ at NIGHT by these(.)great
 603 big DOGS?>

While the words *old* and *told* are quite often realised as [ɔɪ] and [tɔɪ] respectively as in

Example from transcript 3

725 RI: <<f, len> my ↑!MO!ther,
 726 (--)
 727 ↓!TOL'⁷⁰ me that.>

the monophthong in *home* shows a wider allophonic range and may be pronounced as [ʌ], [ɔ], [ō] or even [æ], that is short unglided vowels as postulated by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b: 83).

Example from transcript 5

357 N: <<f> an i TURNED around an i went BACK ↑!'OME!⁷¹ an->
 358 i didn' LIKE (.) GOin back 'OME,
 359 NO.
 360 (-)
 361 i TURNED around an i come BACK here <<dim> to WEllington to
 LIVE?>
 362 (1.1)
 363 <<all> i wa(s) only ↑!'OME⁷² about a MONTH,
 364 (---)
 365 an I come back to WEllington?>

⁶² [trɛɪs]

⁶³ [beɪɒn]

⁶⁴ [ðɛ:]

⁶⁵ [nɒ:]

⁶⁶ [fɒ'ɪə]

⁶⁷ [əɾæ:ndɪ:]

⁶⁸ [pɪɪpl]

⁶⁹ [ʌm]

⁷⁰ [tɔ:ɪ]

⁷¹ [ōm]

⁷² [ʌm]

Example from transcript 7

392 PG: jus' on !DARK:!,
393 an' you HEAR-
394 =you'll 'ear a VOICE sing out.
395 it's TIME to go 'OME⁷³.
396 (--)
397 an WHEN you 'ear that VOICE-
398 get straight 'OME⁷⁴.

Example from transcript 10

234 A: =the GIRLS often walk up to the PARK !AN! Michael,
235 <<p> that's the !BOY!: 's away at HOME⁷⁵->

The pronunciation of /ou/ as /ʌi/ as in *I don't know* [nʌi] (Wilson 1996: 49) did not surface in the present analysis.

To conclude this section on diphthongs, it should be mentioned that though listed as a feature of 'AbE', Malcolm (2004a: 664) also acknowledges that the monophthongisation of diphthongs is a feature that 'AbE' shares to some extent with 'mAusE'. In general, it thus appears that the speech analysed in this study can be compared to both 'mAusE' and 'AbE', a fact which is not very surprising given the considerable overlap between the varieties in terms of pronunciation shown in Malcolm's list. To what extent the subsystem of phonetic variants illustrated in table 3 constitutes a distinct accent remains very much open to debate.

4.1.1.1.2 Front vowels

Wilson notes that "[a]s many studies have shown, some 'Aboriginal English' vowels have a wider allophonic range than equivalents in the 'Standard Australian' dialect [...]" (1996: 46). While this has been shown in the case of monophthongisation of the diphthong in *home* above, I will briefly concentrate on the realisation of front vowels in the following.

Discussing the phonology of 'AbE vowels', Malcolm argues that:

[...]Aboriginal English may sometimes not observe the opposition between /i/ and /ɪ/ or may simply observe long and short forms of /i/. In addition, there may be no discrimination between the mid front vowels /ɛ/ and /æ/, or between these and the high front vowels. The mid central vowel /ɜ/ is not consistently present. It may alternate with, or be supplanted by, the mid front vowels /ɛ/ or /e/ or the diphthong /eə/. (2004a: 664)

⁷³ [tɒɪmtəɡouɔm]

⁷⁴ [ʌm]

⁷⁵ [hæm]

Example from transcript 6

916 VI: <<rall> they're **!HI!ttin'**⁷⁶ up aGAINST the: the wire NEttin'?'>
935 VI: TRYin'to you know '**Ittin'**⁷⁷ the[TREES],
936 J: <<pp> [knock][the TREES off],>
937 VI: [she SCREAM] 'er 'EAD off].
=they're **!ALL! SCREAm**in'.

Examples from transcript 8

455 GM: <<p> they had the power to '**EAL**⁷⁸ or the power to KILL.>
677 GM: he was a DOCTOR;
678 (---)
679 used to **HEAL**⁷⁹ people;

The examples above show the only instances found in the data for which a non-discrimination between /i/ and /ɪ/ could be argued. While the first example is in contrast to Kaldor and Malcolm's observation that long vowels become shortened as in *creek* being pronounced [krɪk] (1982b: 83), the examples from transcript 8 are in accordance with their finding. However, the non-discrimination between /i/ and /ɪ/ remains a non-salient feature in the speech of Aboriginal informants analysed in this study.

Similar to the case of /i ~ ɪ/ just presented, unrounding of the central vowel /ɜ/ resulting in /ɛ/ - which was also confirmed by Wilson for 'AbE' at Alberton (1996: 47) – occurred but once in the data, while many instances of standard /ɜ/ could be found:

Examples from transcript 2

445 B: <<f, len> sort of <<f> 'green 'EYES:⁸⁰,
446 (---)
447 an' they can '!MAKE! themselves 'look 'like-
448 (-)
449 a'nother ↑!**PER: !son**⁸¹?>
530 B: an: <<f> '!THIS! 'one '!**GIRL!**⁸²;
531 par'Ticular 'GIRL;>

In contrast, cases in which /ɛ/ is used where /æ/ would be pronounced in 'mAusE' abound and can be found for all speakers:

⁷⁶ [hɪ:tn]

⁷⁷ [ɪ:tn]

⁷⁸ [pæʊətəɪɪ]

⁷⁹ [hɪɪ]

⁸⁰ [ɒɪs]

⁸¹ [pɜ:sən]

⁸² [gɛɪ]

Example from transcript 7

145 PG: =DON' (t) -
146 (-)
147 go PLAYin' up in the **SAND'ill**⁸³,
148 like <<all> we Used to GO up there play cowboys an indian (),

Example from transcript 5

59 J: they started that DAM;
60 =what's [YEAR did they start] them **DAM**⁸⁴?
61 N: [started that **DAM**⁸⁵].

However, “counterexamples” exist and testify to the fact that the vowel repertoire of speakers is not generally limited to /ɛ/ in these cases since /æ/ may well occur, sometimes within the same utterance of one speaker:

Example from transcript 3

34 R: well a 'YUUrii `man⁸⁶ (is a) -
35 V: ='YUUrii `man⁸⁷ .
36 (-)
37 <<pp> go `ON .
38 keep () .>
39 R: ~!YOU! don need to ~laugh⁸⁸;
40 (---)
41 as we been 'TOLD,
42 (1.1)
43 a little 'MAN⁸⁹,

While Burrige notes that ‘New Zealand English’ and ‘Australian English’ share a number of vowel mergers, including the neutralisation of the vowels in DRESS and TRAP – that is /ɛ/ and /æ/ respectively – , this phenomenon is said to be limited to prelateral contexts and thus contrasts with the examples given above in which such neutralisation is predominantly found in pre-nasal contexts. In addition, “AusE speakers usually merge these vowels in favour of [æ]” (Burrige 2004: 1090). The occurrence of /ɛ/ in the data thus seems to be more in accordance with Malcolm’s description of ‘AbE’ sounds than with the vowel system of ‘mAusE’. In addition, Sharpe, who studied ‘AbE’ in Wilcannia, notes that:

[a]lthough I did not detect any collapsing of the three front short vowels of standard English into two (as occurs in Alice Springs (Sharpe 1977), and in Cherbourg in my work there in 1969), some teaching staff reported some confusion at times between short /e/ (as in *pet*) and /æ/ (as in *pat*). (1990: 236)

⁸³ [sɛndəɪ]

⁸⁴ [dɛ:m]

⁸⁵ [dɛ:m]

⁸⁶ [mæn]

⁸⁷ [mæn]

⁸⁸ [læf]

⁸⁹ [mɛn]

4.1.1.1.3 Phonetic realisation of word-initial /h/

The non-pronunciation of word-initial /h/ is a feature that has often been commented on in studies of ‘AbE’ (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 83; Wilson 1996: 35; Malcolm and Kosciielecki 1997: 58, Sharpe 1990: 236). Assuming a substratist position, it is often claimed that this feature is due to differences between the consonant systems of English and Australian Indigenous languages.

Most of the phonological properties of Aboriginal English can be attributed to differences between Standard English and Indigenous Australian sound systems, as suggested in many sources (Malcolm 1995a, and Kaldor and Malcolm 1982:81 in relation to WAACE). Eades (1995), for instance, suggests that the absence of /h/ in traditional languages accounts for the extensive initial /h/ deletion and hypercorrection in Aboriginal English. [...]. (Wilson 1996: 34)

Though arguing that Australian Indigenous Languages all have the same phonetic inventory is to simplify matters, it is true that they share a large number of features with each other, one of them being the common “absence “ of the fricative /h/ (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982a: 40). As an example, table 4 shows the consonant system of Banyjima, a language spoken in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Table 4: Consonant system of Banyjima

	bilabial	dental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar
stops	b	th	d	rd	j	k/g
nasals	m	nh	n	rn	ny	ng
laterals		lh	l	rl	ly	
tap/trill			rr			
glides	w			r	y	w

source: Sharp and Thieberger (1992)

Though the substratist position may generally be a useful approach to the description of varieties of ‘AbE’, its status as the only explanation for the non-pronunciation of word initial /h/ must be doubted, given that the deletion of the fricative in these positions is also claimed to be a stereotypical variant of ‘Broad’ Australian English speech (Horvath 1985: 97). In particular, the non-realisation of /h/ was found to be a feature mostly associated with male working-class speakers (Horvath 1985: 103). In addition, Milroy and Milroy argue that

[...] all speakers of English drop [h] regularly in unstressed positions. An example of this very general [h]-dropping, which is not very obvious to listeners, is the pronunciation of the personal pronoun *him* as in ‘JOHN saw him THEN’ where both *John* and *then* are accented. Thus, [...] [h]-dropping occurs regularly in English in specific linguistic contexts, in even the most careful, educated speech. (1985: 93)

An analysis of the data discussed in this study shows that the realisation of word-initial /h/ in stressed syllables shows considerable variation and that both variants, that is, realisation of /h/ as well as /h/-dropping, may occur within the same utterance of a single speaker:

Example from transcript 5

627 N: well SHE was all 'Aɪry but-
628 she was a Wɒmən?
629 P: mmh,
630 N: and:-
631 (---)
632 the MAN was really hAɪry-
633 but he was a ↑MAN?

Example from transcript 8

155 GM: ACTually: a little hAɪry feller come into 'is ↑!'OUSE!⁹⁰ and:-
156 (SCRubbed) 'im-
157 and chucked 'im out↑SIDE,

Example from transcript 7

136 PG: this one NIGHT he se't us home⁹¹ EARly;
137 =he said <<len> LOOK when you 'EAR the TREES:,
138 (---)
139 start to WHISper,>
140 (---)
141 then it's TIME to go HOME he said.
142 =an then WHEN you go 'OME,
143 (---)
144 go STRAIGHT to BED.

While such variability is more or less true for the Aboriginal informants *V*, *B*, *DR*, *PG*, *N*, *GM* and *VI*, speakers *RI*, *R*, *J*, *Be* and *A* show a strong predilection for the standard variant featuring /h/, although /h/-dropping is not altogether absent from their speech:

Example from transcript 10

525 P: what it IN the-
526 in the middle of the DAY?
527 G1: yeah.
528 (2.0)
529 A: an come 'OME⁹² EH,

Example from transcript 6

446 J: <<p,all> co' DIfferent ones that wen'-
447 FIshin' out 'ere ↑!EH!⁹³,
448 =they'd say->
449 (---)
450 <<h,len> caught a big FISH an' it BROKE,
451 'OW⁹⁴ would it break that LINE⁹⁵,>

⁹⁰ [æʊs]

⁹¹ [hʌʊm]

⁹² [ɔm]

⁹³ [adɪjeɪj]

⁹⁴ [æ'ʊ]

It is interesting to note that in the examples above, the non-realisation of /h/ occurs in utterances in which the distinctive ‘AbE’ tag *eh* (Eagleson 1982: 133 and Wilson 1996: 77) is also used. According to Wilson,

Hitchen (1992:57-58) found that /h/ deletion was a marker of Aboriginal speech in Moree and that individual Aboriginal English speakers alter the rate of initial /h/ deletion according to the ‘formality’ of the setting: the less formal the setting, the more frequent the use. He notes (1992:58) that in Moree, ‘formal’ can have both an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal sense, and that the linguistic consequence of one is increased use of Aboriginal English forms, while increased use of Standard English forms occurs in the other. (1996:35)

A change in style seems to be most plausible in the example taken from transcript 10 as the speech of speaker *A* did not feature /h/-dropping up to this point in the interview when one of her children (*GI*) enters the scene. The example from transcript 6 is part of a more or less relaxed conversation between the interviewer *P* and speakers *VI* and *J* about the mythical creature of the bunyip, and it is possible that the presence of the other Aboriginal informant *VI* enhanced the use of /h/-dropping as a feature of ‘AbE’. However, it is noteworthy that speaker *J*, whose speech has generally been found to feature ‘General’ and ‘Broad’ variants alternatively (see table 3), uses only ‘Broad’ variants of the rising diphthongs in this utterance, so that /h/-dropping could as well be interpreted as a characteristic of the ‘Broad’ accent in this context. However, no matter if the non-pronunciation of word-initial /h/ is considered a feature of modern ‘AbE’ or a ‘Broad’ Australian accent, the examples testify to the fact that Aboriginal informants in the study do pronounce word-initial /h/. A strong substratist position, according to which the latter feature is solely due to interference with Indigenous languages and a subsequent lack of capability to pronounce the fricative /h/ can thus not be maintained.

If the deletion of word-initial /h/ is considered as a feature of ‘AbE’, this is even more the case for the often noted occurrence of hypercorrection, that is, the insertion of /h/ where this consonant is not present in ‘mAusE’: “In addition, /h/ is frequently added to words where it does not occur in StE, as in *hant* ‘aunt’, *happle* ‘apple’ (Alexander 1968), *hoval* ‘oval’ and *huncle* ‘uncle’.” (Malcolm 2004a: 667). However, the analysis of the data suggests that as in the case of ‘AbE’ at Alberton in Adelaide, insertion of /h/ is of low frequency for all speakers

⁹⁵ [lɒʔɪn]

(Wilson 1996: 35), with the possible exception of speaker *GM*. Furthermore, the examples illustrate that hypercorrection was only found for male speakers.

Example from transcript 9

302 DR: <<len> OH he's a OUTLAW:?
 303 (1.2)
 304 an HE was (.) CAMPED⁹⁶ on a h-
 305 on a **HISlan'**?

Example from transcript 3

591 R: <<p,all> runs long the **HEDGE** of the;>

Examples from transcript 8

672 GM: a **hol'** GRANDfather joe !WOODS!;
 797 GM: =an' you MAYbe kept goin' **HIN**,

4.1.1.1.4 Final /ɪŋ/

As the following citations illustrate, the substitution of word final /ɪŋ/ by /ɪn/ is another feature that has often been commented on in studies of 'AbE':

The so-called '-ing' words in English appear invariably to end with an alveolar nasal, except for *thing*. The words *nothing*, *Darling* (River) etc. follow this rule, just as do present continuous verb forms [...]. (Sharpe 1990: 236)

The realisation of final velar nasal [ŋ] as alveolar [n] is perhaps the most universal of the features described in this section. Final [ŋ] is usually only heard in a style shift to the standard, and even then it is not frequent. (Wilson 1996: 41)

The nasals, which have counterparts in Aboriginal languages and creoles, generally occur as in StE, except for the common substitution of the allomorph /-an/ for /ɪŋ/, as in /sɪŋan/ 'singing'." (Malcolm 2004a: 666)

Although no instances of the allomorph /-an/ described by Malcolm could be found, the analysis of the data generally confirmed Sharpe and Wilson's observation. Apart from the quite occasional use of the allomorph /ɪŋ/ as in

Example from transcript 3

564 V: <<all> this YOUNger feller he was GOIN' ome⁹⁷ !LATE! an'->
 565 (1.8)
 566 <<all> (he was) **!FRIGH!tening** an' Telling him an'>> ↓OH YOU-
 567 (--)
 568 SOMETHing will GRAP you up goin' up there an' THIS is-

⁹⁶ [kɛ:mpt]

⁹⁷ [gʌvɪnɔmlɛɪtn]

present continuous verb forms regularly featured the allomorph /ɪn/. If the use of /ɪŋ/ in the example above is, however, due to a style shift to the standard as propagated by Wilson can be doubted as speaker V is neither consistent in her use of the standard version, nor does the monophthongised variant of the diphthong /ou/ that she uses in the word *home* suggest such a shift. While the word *thing* was always realised with a final velar nasal, the pronunciation of *something*, *nothing*, *anything* etc. showed considerable variation and is thus in contrast to Sharpe's findings:

Example from transcript 10

398 A: =an THEN the nex' morning i'm hearin' the <<len>!SAME! **!THING!**,
399 that MADE me think there was **!SOME!thin'** moving aROUN' there,>

The pronunciation of final /ŋk/ found by Eagleson (1982b: 135) is of very low frequency and occurred but once in the data, which is not very surprising given that Horvath claims it to be a characteristic primarily of the speech of upper working class Anglos (1985: 103).

Example from transcript 3

1240 V: well it's LIKE they !SAY!,
1241 if you SEE or 'EAR or **anyTHINK**,

To conclude, it should be mentioned that though it is also characteristic of varieties of AbE, variability between [ɪn] and [ɪŋ] seems to be a common feature of non-standard spoken English not only in Australia (Horvath 1985: 103), but in many varieties of English around the world, including, for example, 'African American' and 'General American English':

This pattern is restricted to the suffix *-ing*, that is to words with more than one syllable, so it never occurs in the *-ing* in words with one syllable, such as *sing* and *ring*, to yield **sin* and **rin* respectively. The property of *-ing* (ɪŋ) as being pronounced as *-in* (ɪn) is not restricted to AAE. This pattern is actually found in nonstandard varieties of English as well as in general American English in unstressed syllables. (Green 2002: 122)

However, the gender distinction in the use of the variables that Horvath observed for speakers of 'mAusE' could not be confirmed in the present study.

4.1.1.1.5 Consonant cluster reduction

While Harkins (1994), Malcolm (2004a) and Eagleson (1982b) do not comment on consonant cluster reduction in their studies of 'AbE', this phenomenon is mentioned by Wilson (1996: 42), Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b: 83) and Sharpe (1990: 236). In contrast to Wilson and Kaldor and Malcolm, who observed not only word-final, but also word-initial and -final

consonant cluster reduction in their data, Sharpe notes that this feature is of low frequency in Wilcannia ‘AbE’ and seems to be limited to the conjunction *and*.

Except in the conjunction *and*, clusters such as /nd/ are more often realised as such, without reduction to /n/, as occurs in Alice Springs Aboriginal English. Thus we have /ændz/ for ‘hands’ and /biyaɪndya/ for ‘behind you’ (although the latter speaker had just said /biyain/ for ‘behind’, before elucidating his description). (Sharpe 1990: 236)

Although the analysis of the data discussed in this study confirms Sharpe’s observation in so far as the word *and* is consistently pronounced as /æn/, consonant cluster reduction is far from being limited to this case, but can be found in a range of additional contexts. In general, word-final reduction seems to be most prominent with the consonant clusters /-nd/, /-ld/ and /-st/, which are often pronounced as /n/, /l/ and /s/ respectively. In addition, the analysis suggests that the use of consonant cluster reduction is independent of the gender of the speaker.

Example from transcript 9

376 DR: <<all> it's a PItY the **ol'** MAN wasn' (aLIVE)–

Example from transcript 2

299 B: <<h> `I jus' **wen'** `back **an'** lay ↑DO(WN):⁹⁸?>

While the examples above are far from being an exception, variability is still rather the norm, and therefore standard variants may well occur alongside reduced variants:

Example from transcript 3

105 V: when she ‘**FIRS'**! `seen⁹⁹ it;
106 SHE'S–
107 (–)
108 <<all> `!THOUGHT! it was a:–>
109 (–)
110 ‘SHEEPskin¹⁰⁰ `angin' on a ‘**POST**¹⁰¹.

Example from transcript 7

196 PG: the nex' MORning as we GOT up she took us outSIDE an IN the,
197 (–)
198 oh soft **SAND** an that **aroun'** the 'OUSE¹⁰²,

While the examples above would suggest that standard forms predominantly occur at the end of an utterance or in stressed syllables, examples which contrast with this assumption can easily be found, too:

⁹⁸ [dæˈu]

⁹⁹ [sɪɪn]

¹⁰⁰ [ʃɪpskɪn]

¹⁰¹ [poust]

¹⁰² [æˈus]

Example from transcript 3

747 RI: an then !I! was (.) talkin' TO (.) a !LIN!guis';

In accordance with Wilson (1996: 43), consonant cluster reduction occasionally occurred word-medially, but it was of low frequency.

Example from transcript 2

161 B: '!YOU! can be jus' <<len>`WAL:kin' a`LONG:-
162 an `!NEX! minute `they'll jus' `come a`LONG:.>
163 (-)
164 there there's ↑!FRIEN!'ly `ones.

Example from transcript 3

82 V: she `WAnned to `!take! me up an' `show me `where they ↑WERE?

In addition to the substratist position, which would argue that the reduction of consonant clusters is due to their conspicuous absence in Australian Indigenous languages, with the typical syllable patterns of the latter languages being CV and CVC (SSABSA 1996: 103), there are two other general approaches by which consonant cluster reduction could be explained, namely voicing generalization and sonority. In her excellent study of 'African American English', Lisa Green explains that:

[a]ccording to the voicing generalization, clusters such as *st* in *fast* and *nd* in *pound* are predicted to be reduced to *s* and *n*, respectively, because the consonants forming the clusters have the same voicing value, whereas clusters such as *nt* in *paint* and *mp* in *jump* are predicted to remain intact because the consonants forming the clusters have different voicing values. (2002: 111)

Whereas the voicing generalization is based on the voicing value of word final consonants (e.g., *s* and *t* have the same voicing value), an alternative explanation is based on the intensity of loudness of sounds, a property referred to as sonority. Some sound (such as *n* and *m*) are more sonorous or intense than other sounds (such as *d* and *b*). [...] placing the consonants forming the clusters on a sonority scale¹⁰³ [explains why] some clusters (such as *st* and *nd*) do not surface because the consonants forming them are too close in sonority. (2002: 114)

Voicing generalisation and sonority provide, indeed, valid explanations for the cases of consonant cluster reduction presented in the examples above as the clusters /-nd/, /-ld/ and /-st/ discussed in this context consist of consonants with the same voicing value that are additionally located on quite different points of the sonority scale. Furthermore, cases of consonant cluster reduction in negated auxiliaries like *didn'* and *couldn'*, which abound in the present data, are accounted for by the fact that "[i]n auxiliaries, the *n't* cluster in *ain't*, *can't*, and *don't* are not usually fully produced, so the words are pronounced as *ain'*, *cain'* and *don'* without the final *t*. This is not unusual for function words such as auxiliaries" (Green

¹⁰³ Sonority scale according to Green (2003: 15); from more sonorous to less sonorous:
r and l m,n, ng z,v s,f b,d,g p,t,k

2002: 114). One may add that it is probably neither unusual for unstressed words in fast connected speech in general.

Furthermore, Milroy and Milroy (1985) already observed that the deletion of final /t/ is a feature which is by no means limited to non-standard spoken English, but may instead occur even in the speech of news speakers, that is, written-to-be-spoken language:

The actual facts of /t/ deletion in English have been documented in a descriptive account of the modern spoken language, designed principally to help foreign learners understand the forms of the language which they hear from educated speakers such as broadcasters and university lecturers. Brown (1977) has analysed deletion of /t/ between consonants in the speech of BBC news readers. This can hardly be called ‘rapid’ or ‘careless’ speech, but nevertheless, the following examples are listed as phrases where /t/ is deleted: ‘first three’; ‘last year’; ‘most recent’; ‘interest rates’; ‘West German’; [...]. (1985: 101)

4.1.1.1.6 Miscellaneous

To conclude this chapter on segmental phonology, I will briefly discuss three additional consonantal features often mentioned in studies of ‘AbE’, but the typical ‘AbE’ realisations of which are of low frequency in my own data.

- *Fricatives and affricates*

According to Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b: 82), Wilson (1996: 36-42) and Malcolm (2004a: 665), fricatives and affricates may be realised as stops in ‘AbE’, which is often attributed to the fact that the phonetic inventories of Australian Indigenous languages (cf. table 7: consonant system of Banyjima) do not feature those sounds:

The category of sounds employed by English and known in phonetics as ‘fricatives’ (friction sounds) and ‘affricates’ (a combination of stop and friction sounds) is lacking in the sound inventories of almost all Aboriginal languages. Thus the following English sounds have no counterparts: the fricatives /f/ (fish), /v/ (van), /θ/ (thin), /ð/ (this), /s/ (sun), /ʃ/ (shoe), /z/ (zero), /ʒ/ (pleasure); and the affricates /tʃ/ (child) and /dʒ/ (joke). (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982a: 40)

Standard pronunciation clearly constitutes the norm in the data under discussion, and only three instances in which an interdental fricative was replaced by an alveolar stop could be found. This is in accordance with Wilson who suggested that “[t]here are many instances in the data of the standard use of /ð/ [...]” (1996: 37).

Examples from transcript 2

747 B: you **TINK** it's a big RUBber comin' up a=!TY:re!¹⁰⁴ ?
774 B: =they used to see !ALL! different **TING** AH ,

Example from transcript 6

501 VI: **although**¹⁰⁵ DAD's caught a COD;

While contrasting with Eagleson's observation that the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ may be realised as /f/ and /v/ respectively (1982b: 135), the pronunciation in the examples above can be compared to Kaldor and Malcolm's findings for 'WAACE', that is, the "substitution" of interdental fricatives by alveolar plosives (Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 82). However, Wilson notes that "[t]he realisation of initial dental fricative /ð/ as the alveolar stop /d/ is a feature shared with other dialects of English [...]" (1996: 37).

As to the realisation of labiodental fricatives /f/ and /v/ as bilabial stops, only one example could be found in the data, which is again attributed to speaker *B*.

Example from transcript 2

83 B: the great ↑!PAIN!ter¹⁰⁶ `you ↑HAVE¹⁰⁷?

Kaldor and Malcolm observed that in 'WAACE' "[...] the fricatives *s* [s] and *sh* [ʃ] are not usually replaced by the nearest stop sound. Occasionally, they are inter-changed" (1982b: 82). While [ʃ] is not replaced by [s] in the data under discussion, the opposite variant can sometimes be heard in the speech of speakers *B*, *VI*, *V*, *GM* and *N*.

Example from transcript 3

667 V: <<dim> TELL us when we was kids up ↑!THERE!,>
668 (2.0)
669 not to be !FRIGH!tened of the !DARK!-
670 **unLESS**¹⁰⁸ you <<len> did something WRONG.>
671 (---)
672 **COS**¹⁰⁹ you got-
673 (-)
674 somebody WATChing?

Example from transcript 2

368 B: !WE! wen' up ~!LA:S! ~year¹¹⁰;

¹⁰⁴ [tɒɪə]

¹⁰⁵ [ɒldəʊ]

¹⁰⁶ [pʌɪndə]

¹⁰⁷ [hæb]

¹⁰⁸ [ʌnlɛʃ]

¹⁰⁹ [kɔʃ]

¹¹⁰ [lɑ:ʃjɪ:]

The latter example is especially interesting in that it additionally shows consonant cluster reduction as discussed in the preceding section of this chapter.

Concerning the pronunciation of affricates, Kaldor and Malcolm argue that they “[...] may be rendered in a variety of ways” (1982b: 82), including palatal stops found in the sound system of Australian Indigenous languages (cf. table 4) or the reduction of word-initial [tʃ] to [ʃ].

Example from transcript 10

535 A: =<<all> this nothin' to do WITH-
!CREAtures!¹¹¹–

Example from transcript 8

67 GM: !LI!ttle THING he !SAID! was A:-
68 small 'AIry man.
69 =JUMP¹¹² on the (.) his !BACK!.

Example from transcript 6

1006 P: [yeah].
1007 VI: [THAT] one little PATCH¹¹³ they look AFter?

In contrast to Kaldor and Malcolm's findings, the examples show that reduction to [ʃ] occurs word-medially and word-finally in the data.

- *Voicing of stops*

Malcolm argues that “[t]he distinction between voiced and voiceless stops is not strongly maintained, with the general exception of when they are in the initial position [...]” (2004a: 665). Again, this feature of ‘AbE’ is often attributed to interference with Australian Indigenous languages which do not distinguish between voiced and voiceless stops (SSABSA 1996: 91). In the data discussed in this study, this feature could be found in the speech of almost all speakers.

Example from transcript 7

93 PG: a good MATE o'¹¹⁴ mine–

However, Wilson notes that the voicing of voiceless stops in intervocalic positions is rather due to processes of assimilation which are also common in other varieties of spoken English (Wilson 1996:40). The same is most probably true for the voicing of /t/ in cases where it is preceded by the nasal /n/:

¹¹¹ [krɪʃəs]

¹¹² [dʒʌmp]

¹¹³ [pæʃ]

¹¹⁴ [əɡʊdmeɪrəmɪn]

Example from transcript 9

95 DR: if you took DOGS: up there like HUNtin'¹¹⁵?

In contrast to Wilson (1996: 36) and Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b: 82), devoicing of final alveolar fricatives and plosives could not be observed.

4.1.1.2 Non-segmental phonology

A range of suprasegmental features of Aboriginal English, drawn from investigations covering the period from 1960 to 1990, have been noted by Hitchen (1992). The features contrast with Standard Australian English, and include different voice quality (soft at low volume, harsh at high), different speech rhythm, wider variation in pitch, different intonation pattern (more even stress and intensity, initial peak of intensity, no stress on important function words, different stress pattern with words), faster rate of utterance, sharper definition of syllabification (elision of some syllables), and frequent use of rising pitch (used for particular questions). (Wilson 1996: 30)

The citation illustrates that studies of 'AbE' have often briefly commented on suprasegmental features of AbE, which signals a general awareness of the fact that prosodic patterns can, indeed, constitute distinctive dialect markers and disputably function as an index of speaker ethnicity (Green 2002: 124). The study of suprasegmental features has nevertheless largely been neglected, with the exception of Flint, who observed that "[r]ate of articulation and duration [...] have an important effect upon the perception of pitch and intensity variation patterns" (1970: 717) and may in fact influence the mutual intelligibility of 'AbE' and 'mAusE'. The reason why researchers have often been reluctant to focus on prosodic patterns probably lies in the fact that distinctive intonation, though auditorily well perceptible, is hard to actually pin down. Wichmann, who has extensively studied discourse intonation, mentions that she "[...] so often hear[s] discourse analysts utter a resigned sigh, and a remark to the effect that intonation is so important too, but...it's so messy/it's hard to get hold of/I haven't got an ear for it" (Wichmann 2000: 1). Furthermore, it should be noted that the study of prosodic patterns is quite time-consuming as it requires not only a basic transcription of spoken data, but a very fine-grained transcript including, for example, the annotation of intonation contours. It is mainly for this reason that a detailed description of suprasegmental features in the data is beyond the scope of this thesis, though fast utterance of speech and a wide pitch range were noted for some speakers, especially in connection with personal narratives, in which a change in intonation contour (Muecke 1981b: 4), pitch, utterance of speech and voice quality is often used to signal direct speech and/or differentiate between different persons as in the following example:

¹¹⁵ [hʌndn]

Example from transcript 3

467 V: and -
468 I said <<t,len> ↓!OH! don' be Silly,>
468 <<h,all> he said <<h,> !NO! he was !STAN:!din' there->
469 =<<h,all> he said he was lookin' straight UP to 'im.>
470 (--)
471 <<all> an=!E! didn' know !WHAT! to do-
472 SO he turned aROUN'¹¹⁶ an''e ↑RAN?>

For reasons of practicability, the description of prosodic patterns needed to be limited to only a few aspects. In the following, I will briefly discuss syllable-timing and the use of pauses, intonational and phonetic parallelism as well as a phenomenon called ‘High Rising Tone’. In this context, I will focus on discourse intonation, that is “the interface between intonation and discourse” (Wichmann 2000: 1), and attempt to illustrate how prosodic and phonetic variation can be exploited by speakers to create cohesion in spoken texts. Before I start, it should be mentioned that the discussion of syllable-timing will be limited to transcripts 2 and 3 as time did not allow me to additionally transcribe the speech of all other speakers in such detail as to permit investigation into that subject matter.

4.1.1.2.1 High rising tone

That the phenomenon of ‘High rising tone’ is alternatively called ‘Australian Questioning Intonation’ (AQI) already alludes to the fact that the use of rising tones in declarative clauses (Horvath 1985: 17) is a feature commonly associated with ‘mAusE’. Furthermore, the following citation illustrates that it is generally not perceived as a distinct prosodic feature of ‘AbE’: “The high final level intonation of Aboriginal English [...] enhances narrative effect. Unlike the high rise terminal of Australian English, it is level, not rising, and does not function as an attention holding device” (Malcolm 2004a: 664). In contrast to Malcolm’s statement, ‘High Rising Tone’ (hence ‘HRT’) could, however, be found for all speakers in the corpus, whereas a high final level intonation was not detected. The observation that ‘HRT’ predominantly occurred in narratives is in accordance with Horvath’s findings that “[d]escriptions and narratives are the most favourable environments for the occurrence of HRTs; opinions and factual texts are unfavourable environments and explanatory text types neither favour nor disfavour HRTs” and that “[...]extended turns (multi-clausal) most favour the use of HRT” (1985: 122). The following example from transcript 5 is representative of the use of ‘HRT’ in the data and will therefore be quoted in its full length:

¹¹⁶ [əɾæn]

Example from transcript 5

905 N: <<hesitating> (now) THEY (.) 'AD a (.) like->
 906 (--)
 907 <<f> MUM an' DAD 'ad a (.) !'ORSE!,
 908 well !DAD! 'ad a horse TRAINED?>
 910 (---)
 911 to KEEP¹¹⁷ an'-
 912 Follow (.) the !CHIL!dren?
 913 (---)
 914 the 'ORSE Followed-
 915 'er INTO the ↑SCRUB?
 916 an' DAD an' MUM (.) FOOTED it OUT?
 917 (---)
 918 <<p> an' ↑FOUND 'er?>
 919 (1.2)
 920 an'-
 921 (---)
 922 <<all> (afterWARDS) they were wondering why SHE was->
 923 <<f> so FAR into the ↑SCRUB?
 924 (---)
 925 an' DIDN' know 'er way ↑BACK?>
 926 (---)
 927 an' when they LOOKED up the-
 928 <<dim> the willy WAGtail,
 929 Sittin' on the ↑BRANCH?>
 930 (1.2)
 931 an' !I!'ve I've-
 932 (---)
 933 !WHEN! i-
 934 (---)
 935 <<f> even !NOW!,
 936 i STILL don't beLIEVE¹¹⁸ in 'em.>

In my opinion, it is significant that the passage finishes with a falling intonation contour, while all preceding spoken sentences end with a 'HRT', thereby signalling textual cohesion through tonal parallelism (Wichmann 2000: 86). Wichmann also speaks of a 'paratone' in this context, that is "[...] a prosodic, paragraph-like unit based on *boundary* phenomena [...]" (2000: 105). The utterance in line 907, which is made prosodically prominent by heightened loudness, unambiguously marks the beginning of the spoken 'paragraph'. According to Wichmann, the paragraph would end in line 929 as "[...] low pitch and a lengthy pause followed by a high onset" (Wichmann 2000: 106) are mostly perceived as the boundaries of a paratone. In fact, lines 935 and 936 do not only prosodically mark a new onset, they are also distinct in content as they do not refer to a narrative past but are anchored in the present narrative situation. As a kind of 'narrative evaluation' (see chapter 4.2.5.1 for a more detailed description of narratives) they do, however, form part of the narrative in a sense. In my

¹¹⁷ [kəɪp]

¹¹⁸ According to Frank Povah's transcripts, 'believe' means 'trust' in this context. Please refer to chapter 4.1.2 for a brief discussion of the meaning of 'AbE' lexemes.

opinion, this is signalled by the falling tone in line 936, which functions as a marker of final closure.

Rather than signalling powerlessness or deference – an assumption which seems not too far-fetched given the different social status of non-Aboriginal interviewer and Aboriginal informant in the context of this study–, in addition to creating textual coherence, ‘HRT’ is said to ensure narrative involvement on the part of the hearer:

Labov claims that one of the important characteristics of narratives is that they seek evaluation from the listeners: the listeners are a critical element in the successful telling of a narrative. It is possible that HRTs are a way of ensuring that the listener is actively engaged in the unfolding narrative. (Horvath 1985: 130)

Furthermore, it has been argued that ‘HRT’ plays an important role in turn-taking as it is a means of negotiating floor-holding and of indicating ‘one’s state of talk’: “If a hearer can acknowledge and give over a turn at talk, so too a speaker can request permission from the hearer to continue at talk and it is just this that HRTs may be doing” (Horvath 1985: 131).

4.1.1.2.2 Vowel harmonisation as an aspect of discourse phonology

‘HRT’ is by far not the only means of creating cohesion in spoken texts. In the following, I will give some examples of how cohesion can also be achieved by phonetic variation, thereby attempting to provide a functional explanation for at least some cases of phonetic variation presented in chapter 4.1.1.1. Similar to ‘HRT’, this feature has not been mentioned in studies of ‘AbE’ so the following brief discussion is merely based on my own observations.

Example from transcript 5

373 J: <<p> HE don' even (THINK about it).
374 () had (.) !**HEAPS!**¹¹⁹ of **THESE** peas¹²⁰.
375 i think he PLANTed a LOT?>

According to table 3, speaker *J* uses the ‘Cultivated’ and ‘General’ variants of /i/ alternatively. Utterances like the one above, in which only one of the phonetic variants of the repertoire of a speaker is chosen, occur alongside instances of variable use. However, such cases of assimilation are not limited to adjacent words, but may exceed the boundaries of spoken sentences to create some kind of parallelism that is often also reflected in the syntax, given that repetitive patterns abound in the data.

¹¹⁹ [həɪps]

¹²⁰ [ðəɪzpeɪz]

Example from transcript 3

321 (---)
 322 V: <<p> he said an'> ^!WHEN! 'e 'eard 'me ^COmin',
 323 (---)
 324 RI: ^YEAH:,
 325 V: =he ^CLOSE down the ^FIRE¹²¹;
 326 RI: ='HE saw a ^FAIR 'bit,
 327 ^DIdn' 'HE?
 328 [^JOE]-
 329 V: [AN:] he said he ^!WAS!¹²² 'round the ^FIRE 'e SAID an' then-
 330 RI: <<p> 'mmh.
 331 V: ^!FIRE!¹²³ blazed ^up (until) the ^rabbits disap!PEAR:!¹²⁴.

Alternatively, speakers may adopt a similar pronunciation for a number of vowels in a whole 'spoken paragraph' to signal textual cohesion. This may sometimes even include additional phonetic variants that divert from their general usage. This is the case in the example taken from transcript 10, in which the vowels in *goes* and *growls* are realised as the short vowel [æ].

Example from transcript 2

66 (1.7)
 67 B: ^!YEAH! (i) 'ad 'a-
 68 had a ^NOther <<len> ^!DARK! ^feller ^lined¹²⁵ up ^!TOO!,
 69 for a ^WHILE¹²⁶ an='(to);
 70 (---)
 71 to have a ↓!YARN! ↑to?
 72 (---)
 73 <<f> ^!HE!'s ^been all a ^!ROUN'!¹²⁷.>

Example from transcript 10

251 (---)
 252 A <<soft, h> it doesn't DO any but U'y¹²⁸ sits in the PARK of 'em?
 253 it GOES ROUN'¹²⁹-
 254 (-)
 255 CIRCles roun'¹³⁰ in FRON' of 'em an' an' an' SITS there->
 256 a a it !SITS! and it !GROWLS!¹³¹?
 257 (1.4)

Apart from signalling cohesion within a paragraph, alternation of variants may as well be used to mark the beginning of a new passage. In the following example, the change in voice quality in line 216 is accompanied by a change in pronunciation of the diphthong /aɪ/ as the

¹²¹ [hɪkloʊzdaʊnθəfɒ'ɪ]

¹²² [wɒz]

¹²³ [fɒ'ɪə]

¹²⁴ [dɪsəpɪ:]

¹²⁵ [lɒ'ɪnd]

¹²⁶ [wɒ:ɪ]

¹²⁷ [əɪɛ:n]

¹²⁸ [ju:wɪ]

¹²⁹ [gæʊsræn]

¹³⁰ [ræn]

¹³¹ [grʌ~æʊɪs]

narrative moves from an introductory sequence locating the protagonist in space to a more detailed description of events:

Example from transcript 2

210 B: =<<all> she used to ˈWALK from-
 211 =ˈOH i' be 'ˈbout¹³² from ˈERE ;
 212 ˈrigh'¹³³ to the ˈDAM ,
 213 =to come ↑'OME¹³⁴ ?
 214 =in the ↑NIGH'¹³⁵?>
 215 (--)
 216 <<t> moon`light ˈNIGHT¹³⁶ -
 217 (--)
 218 she'd ˈwalk a ˈLONG,>

To conclude this section, it could then be argued that variability in form – as presented in chapter 4.1.1.1. – is often motivated rather than arbitrary and that a wide allophonic range of vowels can be genuinely exploited by speakers for purposes of text cohesion.

4.1.1.2.3 Speech rhythm: syllable-timing and the use of pauses

While distinctive stress patterns for words – especially including stress on initial syllables as mentioned by Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b: 84) and Wilson (1996: 31) – were not observed in the data¹³⁷, syllable-timing as a prosodic feature of ‘AbE’ was noted for speaker *B* and to a lesser extent also for speaker *V*. This contrasts with Malcolm’s claim that this pattern is limited to speakers of ‘AbE’ living in the Western Desert areas because Indigenous languages in that region tend towards syllable-timing (2004a: 666). In transcript 2, syllable-timing was accompanied by a slow down in pace and sometimes served to achieve equal “importance” of the parts of an utterance:

Example from transcript 2:

109 B: ˈOH: <<all> ˈhe ˈwanna to ˈsit down with=me for ↑!'OURS:!¹³⁸ an'
 110 ˈ!TALK! about it>-
 111 =but ˈI was ˈTOO ˈ!TIRED:!
 112 (---)
 113 P: yeah ,
 114 B: =been away ˈ!CHI!ppin';

¹³² [bæʊt]

¹³³ [wɑɪ]

¹³⁴ [ʌʊm]

¹³⁵ [nɒ:]

¹³⁶ [munlɒɪtnɒɪt]

¹³⁷ This is not to argue that instances of distinct word stress patterns may occur. However, if they do exist, they were not significant enough to be instantaneously noted by the author of this study during the process of transcription.

¹³⁸ [ɛ:ps]

While the first part of *B*'s utterance is almost realised as a single stress pattern, which is in accordance with Wilson's finding in the Alberton data (1996: 31), the subordinate clause in line 111 is characterised by syllable-timing and syntactically paralleled in line 114. Thus, the auditory perception is one of equal weighting of information achieved by a slower utterance of speech and a different speech rhythm.

Syllable-timing may additionally be used for emphasis. As in the passage quoted above, it is accompanied by a flat level intonation.

Example from transcript 2:

146 B: =an the 'OL':¹³⁹ people 'reckon 'they 'live 'among->
147 in the ↑!TOI!lets?
148 (--)
149 in the ↑!'OLE:!¹⁴⁰?

Example from transcript 3

331 V: '!FIRE!¹⁴¹ blazed 'up (until) the 'rabbits disap!PEAR:!¹⁴².

It is furthermore significant that speaker *B* repeatedly uses syllable-timing to mark the end of a spoken paragraph, thereby creating a common pattern of closure for narrative passages within the interview.

Examples from transcript 2

228 B: 'only little'!SHORT:!'feller got'!REAL!'long(.)'white !BEARD!¹⁴³;
348 B: <<len,f>she REckon he's got '!REAL:!'!STRONG:!'!airy '!ARM!;>
413 B: MISSED the little 'FELler an' '!'it the'TREE an''break his 'ARM;

In addition, it should be noted that all of the short narratives marked by this type of rhythmic and intonational closure relate to the same topic, that is, encounters between Aboriginal people and the mythical creatures called 'hairy men' (the meaning of such cases of instantiation will be discussed in chapter 4.2). If a prosodic pattern may, however, be reserved for one narrative topic which then contrasts with other topics, remains to be investigated. The different intonational closure in the following example taken from a narrative about another mythical creature, namely the 'Yuurii womans', suggests that this might be an interesting field for further research.

¹³⁹ [ɔ:ɪ]

¹⁴⁰ [ɔ:ʊ]

¹⁴¹ [fɒ'ɪə]

¹⁴² [disəpi:]

¹⁴³ [rɪ:lɔŋwɒɪdbɛɪ:d]

Example from transcript 2

554 B: but ˈDaphne was ˈBACK at -
555 (---)
556 the bloody ˈCAM¹⁴⁴ ?
557 (1.6)
558 P: <<p> THUS (it) was the ˈ!YUU!ri ˈWoman .>
559 B: THAT was a ˈ!YUU!ri=ˈWoman .

Concerning the use of pauses, it should be mentioned that their function is often neglected in discourse analysis. However, the following example demonstrates that they contribute to speech rhythm in an important way.

Example from transcript 3

758 RI: SO-
759 (1.2)
760 <<len> AUnty emy ALso tol¹⁴⁵ ME (.) aBOU'->
761 (---)
762 if Any STRAnger¹⁴⁶ CAME-
763 (---)
764 to a ˈ!CAMP:!¹⁴⁷,
765 (---)
766 one of the elders would GO: an' SIT back to BACK,
767 (---)
768 <<p> with that PER:SON,>
769 (---)
770 AN'::-
771 to !SEARCH! him OUT¹⁴⁸,
772 (1.1)
773 to !FIND! out what sort of !PER!son he was-
774 (---)
775 an': to what FAmily he be!ˈLONGED! to;

In the example, a common pattern of speech rhythm is created in that short utterances alternate with pauses of approximately equal length, thereby signalling the textual cohesion of the utterance. Note that this example is only an excerpt of a longer passage exhibiting this technique, which actually ranges from line 698 to line 811. It includes in fact two short descriptions of the same traditional cultural practice of establishing the kin relationship of a person with the wider community. Their parallel content is thus underlined by an identical pattern of speech rhythm.

¹⁴⁴ [kɛ:m]

¹⁴⁵ [tɔ:ɪ]

¹⁴⁶ [streɪ~ʌɪndʒə]

¹⁴⁷ [kɛ:mp]

¹⁴⁸ [ɛɒ]

4.1.1.3 Summary of the findings

The phonological analysis presented in chapters 4.1.1.1 suggests that the variety of ‘AbE’ investigated in this study can well be compared to both ‘mAusE’ and other varieties of ‘AbE’. Furthermore, it has been argued that a precise distinction between ‘mAusE’ and varieties of ‘AbE’ is often complicated by the fact that phonological features claimed to be characteristic of AbE can also be found in varieties of ‘mAusE’. This is, for example, especially the case for the phenomenon of ‘h-dropping’, the realisation of word-final /-ing/, the voicing of plosives and consonant cluster reduction. In contrast, the avoidance of fricatives, which would suggest interference with the consonant system of Australian Indigenous languages, is of considerably low frequency in the data. Overlap between phonological features of ‘mAusE’ and ‘AbE’ was additionally observed in the domain of diphthongs since monophthongisation of rising and centring diphthongs is not only common in varieties of ‘AbE’, but also regularly occurs in the ‘Broad’ Australian accent. However, it was argued that speakers in the data used a subset of phonetic variants of diphthongs normally found in the accents of ‘mAusE’ and that monophthongisation of rising diphthongs seems to follow a pattern of implicational scaling. In addition, the merging of the front vowels /æ/ and /ɛ/ was in accordance with other studies of ‘AbE’, whereas cases of non-discrimination between /i/ and /ɪ/ and the absence of /ɜ/ were limited to only a few instances in the data.

Apart from the fact that phonological variability rather constitutes the norm, an observation which confirms the findings of other studies of ‘AbE’, speakers could be ranged on a continuum according to their predilection for specific variants. In this context, speaker *Be* was found to have the “broadest” ‘mAusE’ accent, while the speech of speaker *B* exhibited the highest amount of features said to be distinct of ‘AbE’, including a wide allophonic range of diphthongs and the occasional use of syllable-timing, which were shown to serve the purpose of creating coherence in passages of oral narrative. While speakers *B*, *VI*, *A* and *V* sometimes opted for non-standard variants, including monophthongisation of rising diphthongs and the occasional use of distinct fricatives, such features were absent from the speech of speakers *Be*, *J*, *RI* and *R*. In addition, claims in connection with gender distinction in the use of certain variants could not be maintained. If anything, male speakers seemed to favour the more prestigious standard variants, given that their overall use of the monophthongised variants of rising diphthongs was of considerably low frequency. In addition, they were also the only

speakers for whom the use of hypercorrection in connection with “h-dropping” could be confirmed.

In conclusion, it should be noted that a substratist position in the sense of attributing the use of non-standard features in the data to interference with Australian Indigenous languages cannot be maintained as standard variants could be found in the speech of all speakers. In general, the phonological study found that because ‘mAusE’ and ‘AbE’ in the data share many features, research is confronted with not only one but two overlapping continua. As a result, the boundary between the range of ‘mAusE’ accents from ‘Cultivated’ and ‘General’ to ‘Broad’ on the one hand and the continuum between an acrolectal and a more basilectal variety of ‘AbE’ on the other hand becomes considerably blurred. It is thus that arguing in favour of the existence of a distinct accent of ‘AbE’ is rather complicated. However, the following quotation illustrates that the problem of distinctiveness is a dilemma that is not new to the study of ‘AbE’:

[...] Eagleson (1982:134) maintained he could find “no trace of what might be called an Aboriginal accent”, yet he did identify pronunciation features, including the “intrusive” glottal fricative /h/, which he felt were “not the least distinctive of Aboriginal speakers [but which] seem more pervasive among them [and which] persist into older age groups. (Wilson 1996:33)

The prosodic analysis of the data has revealed that suprasegmental features including high rise tone, vowel harmonisation, syllable-timing and the use of pauses were important means of structuring oral discourse. Therefore, it may be argued that rather than stressing distinctiveness in form, the functional motivation of the latter in creating textual cohesion should be taken into account. From this point of view, it is then not the forms themselves, which may well be to some extent identical with the ones used by non-Indigenous Australians, but their distinctive use that seems to be important.

4.1.2 Lexicon

The lexicon of varieties of ‘AbE’ has often been found to include loanwords from Australian Indigenous languages, the use of which functions as a marker of local Aboriginal identity (cf. Wilson 1996: 91). A list of such loanwords that occur in the data is included in the appendix, and their linguistic origins are provided within the limits of sources available to the author of this study.



source: Eades (1981)

Most of these loanwords were mentioned by some of the Aboriginal informants in the initial stages of the interview, where they were either elicited by the interviewer or voluntarily provided by the informants themselves. This is in accordance with Eagleson's observation in the study of Sydney 'AbE' that "[...] the words are not in general use; and that in the city area in particular, some who use them do so self-consciously for the most part and not spontaneously" (1982b: 137).

Example from transcript 9

50 DR: well START off with a: (.)<<len> say a !FISH! is a !GUU!ya?>
 51 (1.3)
 52 <<len> a goAnna is a girraWAR?>
 53 (1.8)
 54 uhm:::-
 55 (2.8)
 56 <<len> a WMan,>
 57 THAT's a full grown WMan,
 58 <<len> they call 'em MAWbang?>

In contrast, examples of a semantically distinct use of 'mAusE' words as recorded in Arthur (1990 and 1996) abound in the data. Although an analysis of the lexicon of varieties of 'AbE' is an interesting field of study, it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis and has to be postponed to further research. Only a few of the semantic concepts illustrating "[...] the survival of [Aboriginal] traditions and the perceptions of life arising from them – understandings that are now expressed in the new language of Aboriginal Australia" (Arthur 1996: 10) will be presented in the following.

One of the semantic fields that has probably most often been commented on in the context of studies of 'Aboriginal English' is the vocabulary relating to the concept of kin. In contrast to

the Western idea of the nuclear family, the semantic range of kin terms is extensive in Aboriginal society, including, for example, a senior teacher, who might well be referred to as ‘aunty’ (Rob Amery p.c.).

Thus, the words *father*, *mother*, *sister* or *brother* might include father’s brother, mother’s sister, or parallel cousins. Kin terms could even include people who were of no blood relation but who had, for example, the same social obligations to the person as a parent or sibling. This terminology reflected the role of kinship in traditional society as a network of obligation and reciprocation holding society together. (Arthur 1990: 33)

While both ‘uncle’ and ‘aunty’ are frequently used in the data according to Aboriginal concepts of kinship, the following example taken from transcript 3 illustrates that the term ‘brother’ might refer to an uncle and that ‘cousin’ in the ‘AbE’ sense relates to persons of the same age who have the status of siblings regardless of their blood relation.

2034 R: COUsins of MINE come UP-
 2035 <<all> ah NONE of me UNcle,>
 2036 (1.2)
 2037 <<f> but !RAISED! as -
 2038 as !BRO!ther.>

In addition, it should be mentioned that “[...] Aborigines may identify themselves as Aboriginal to Europeans, but among other Aborigines one’s identity is distinctly familiar and social – a person is, for example, ‘one of the Smith girls’ or ‘one of the Millers’” (Schwab 1988: 80).

Example from transcript 3

1181 RI: <<f> MY=uhm (.) GRANDmother;
 1182 had the mar↑!KELLS!>
 1183 (---)
 1184 an' then-
 1185 she bore the !SO!lomon children.

Furthermore, Harkins’ observation that “[o]ld as in *old man*, *old woman* carries connotations of respect not present in non-Aboriginal usage” (Harkins 1996: 156) is in accordance with my own findings as illustrated in the following example taken from transcript 4:

260 J: poor old granny MAY used to TAKE me-
 261 (-)
 262 with 'er FIshin';

To conclude this brief discussion of the lexicon of ‘AbE’, the reflection of the Aboriginal concern with the spiritual world as mirrored in the use of specific lexical items should be mentioned. According to Arthur,

[...] the spiritual and the physical are coterminus. The spiritual world is everywhere manifested in the physical. It is manifested in **clever** people, [...] and it is present in ritual, where to perform a ceremony such as to **sing** someone, has a physical effect carried out by spiritual powers. [...] This connectedness of the spiritual and physical is also found in words which relate to knowledge, so that the **story** of the place may contain both mythical and historical facts. (1996: 10)

The term ‘clever’ is a recurring lexical item throughout the data, and the contexts in which it is used illustrate the spiritual/physical power accorded to the person identified as ‘clever’.

Example from transcript 8

670 GM: <<len> WELL there's a:-
671 (1.3)
672 a hol' GRANDfather joe !WOODS!;
673 (---)
674 who lived in !WALcha!;
675 (1.2)
676 an' he was a very (.) CLEver;
677 he was a DOCTOR;
678 (---)
679 used to HEAL people;

Example from transcript 3

353 V: =`HE was a ^CLEverman-
354 RI: =[`yeah].
355 V: <<all> [he]'s `most probably `COULD sit `down an' talk to
the`!YUU!rii `man;

Both the semantic concept of Aboriginal ‘community/famil’ and the co-existence of the physical and spiritual world will play an important role in the ethnographic analysis to be presented in chapter 4.2.

4.1.3 Morphosyntax

Eagleson states that

[f]or the language in a given area to be recognised as a distinct dialect there must be evidence of variation in all the three areas of grammar, lexis and phonology. Variation in pronunciation alone is not sufficient. Instead, this more limited type of variation is known as *accent*. A person may be found differing in accent from others but agreeing with them in the grammatical and lexical features. This is true, for instance, of many in the Australian community: some have a Broad Australian accent, others have a General accent, but they have no other differences in language. (1982a:11)

After having investigated the accent and use of vocabulary of the Aboriginal speakers in the data, I will now turn to the analysis of morpho-syntactical features. Given the limited scope of this thesis, only some aspects of grammar will be discussed in the following, including plural marking, the use of pronouns and the realisation of the verb phrase.

4.1.3.1 The noun phrase

4.1.3.1.1 Number

Zero plural marking seems to be a widespread feature of ‘AbE’ and has been commented on in a number of studies (Malcolm and Kosciielecki 1997: 62; Sharpe 1990: 238; Wilson 1996: 60; Kaldor and Malcolm 1982b: 85; Harkins 1994: 42-48). However, all of the authors just listed found that speakers predominantly used the standard plural forms and that zero plural marking can therefore not adequately be described by interference with Australian Indigenous languages. Referring to speakers of ‘AbE’ in Alice Springs, Harkins argues that:

[i]f these speakers consequently found it difficult to learn to use plural –s , or developed a variety of English in which it was never used, it would be a straightforward case of first-language interference. But for these speakers, plural marking with –s is simply optional, not invariant as it is for most non-Aboriginal speakers, and this looks like part of a more complex language-contact phenomenon than simple interference. (1994: 46)

She goes on to suggest that rather than being merely optional, plural marking in ‘AbE’ in Alice Springs may simply follow different rules. In this context, she maintains that the principle of semantic indeterminacy should be taken into account in that “[t]here may be cases where the speaker’s concept of the thing spoken of is not specified for singular or plural, and where it is therefore more accurate **not** to specify number in the noun phrase” (1994: 47)¹⁴⁹. She admits, however, that due to the language contact situation between English and Australian Indigenous languages, ‘AbE’ in Alice Springs might be a special case. Convergence with standard English as found in the speech of urban Aborigines (Eagleson 1982b) rather suggests that “[...]variability in [the use of plural marking] does not seem a likely candidate for adoption as a social marker of Aboriginal identity” (Harkins 1994: 48).

The results of the present study confirm this hypothesis since zero plural marking was limited to only a few cases in the speech of speakers *B* and *VI*.

Example from transcript 2

1924 B: there's (TWO) of them THINGS .
1925 (3.9)
1926 you get WARnin' !EH! ;
1927 (--)
1928 you get WARnin' for MANY thing .

¹⁴⁹ Similar to the concept of unspecified number, Harkins additionally suggests a category of unspecified definiteness: “The difference between the implied definiteness of *the* (“I think one can know...”) and the more explicit definiteness of *that*, *them* (“one can know...”) parallels the difference between *alan* and *one* above. *Them* has the additional plural component (“one can say this about another thing...”), [...]” (Harkins 1994: 63). The fact that Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b:86) is the only other study in which the use of *one* is mentioned suggests that it is a feature typical of rural and/or more basilectal varieties of ‘AbE’ like ‘WAACE’ and ‘YAE’. Of the speakers investigated in this study, speaker *B* is the only one to make considerable use of *them* and *one*. Given the limited scope of this thesis, this feature will, however, not be discussed in more detail.

In addition, standard plural marking even occurred in phonetic contexts in which the principles of voicing generalisation and/or sonority explained in chapter 4.1.1.1.5 would suggest consonant cluster reduction:

73 DR: =an' I wen' out there WITH 'im when 'e's TRAppin' **RAbbits**?

However, speaker *B*'s use of plural marking is noteworthy in that she occasionally added the plural allomorph {-s} to nouns which have suppletive plurals or are not marked for plural in the standard (cf. Sharpe 1990: 238; Wilson 1996: 61):

Examples from transcript 2

1156 B: PREtty **WOmans** ;
 1157 lovely LONG (H)AIR:: ;

 1211 B: =LIKE in THEY time ;
 1212 =all the m **mans** around THEY time ;
 1213 =used to go to DIfferent ,
 1214 (---)
 1215 !HOME!stead an do all the **WORKS**: an that .

4.1.3.1.2 Pronouns

In her study of 'YAE', Harkins states that:

[t]he pronoun system also reflects the conceptual categories of the speakers of a language. For this reason, the changes and additions that Aboriginal speakers make to the English pronoun system assume particular significance. The elimination of the obligatory gender distinction, and the adding of dual and second-person plural forms to the English paradigm results in a system almost identical to the Arrernte and Luritja pronoun system [...]. (1994: 51)

While the use of 'e as a general form corresponding to the third person singular pronouns *he*, *she* and *it* was confirmed by Kaldor and Malcolm for 'WAACE' (1982b: 86) and to some extent also by Wilson (1996: 54)¹⁵⁰, it is not mentioned by Eagleson (1982b) and Sharpe (1990). In the same vein, dual and second-person plural pronouns formed by the suffixes *-two* and *-mob* respectively seem to be limited to more basilectal varieties of 'AbE' like 'YAE'¹⁵¹. However, Sharpe and Wilson reported the use of the non-standard dual and plural pronouns *me-n-you* and *youse* (Sharpe 1990: 235; Wilson 1996: 54), the latter of which is a common feature of colloquial forms of English (Milroy and Milroy 1985:85) including 'mAusE'. Although Eagleson did not observe the use of the dual pronoun *me-n-you*, the pronoun *youse* and constructions like *Me and Tommy* regularly occurred in the Sydney data. Concerning the

¹⁵⁰ Wilson only found one instance in his data in which the use of 'e did not refer to a male person. However, he claims that this is due to limitations in his data rather than to the non-existence of a gender-neutral pronoun 'e in the speech of Aboriginal children at Alberton.

¹⁵¹ Although they did not surface in his own data, Wilson, however, claims that such non-standard pronouns are generally used in Adelaide Nunga contexts.

latter construction, Eagleson argues that “[t]he object form constitutes a strong rival to the subject form in these coordinated subjects, especially with the first person” (1982b: 128). As to the use of possessive pronouns, studies of ‘AbE’ have reported quite common usage of standard forms (Wilson 1996: 57), and Harkins suggests that “[p]ronunciation sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between *you* and *your*, *they* and *their*” (1994: 55).

An analysis of the use of pronouns indicates that the data under discussion can to some extent be compared to the studies of ‘AbE’ just mentioned. While the data contained no instances of the gender neutral pronoun ‘e, nor of the dual and plural pronouns formed by the suffixes –*two* and –*mob* respectively, speakers *B* and *GM* occasionally used the plural pronoun *youse*. The highest amount of non-standard usage, however, was found in the domain of possessive pronouns since almost all informants – with the exception of speakers *RI*, *Be* and *J* – used the object pronoun *me* instead of *my*, although they did so to different degrees. While the object pronoun surfaced only occasionally in the speech of speakers *V*, *R* and *DR*, it constituted the major variant used by speakers *B*, *VI*, *A*, *PG*, *N* and *GM*. The use of the object pronoun in this context is thought to be a feature shared with other non-standard varieties of English, and it is somewhat curious that it has not been reported in any of the other studies of ‘AbE’. Further non-standard possessive pronouns were again almost exclusively found in the speech of speaker *B*.

Examples from transcript 2

348 B: <<len,f>she REckon he's got ^!REAL:! ^!STRONG:! ^'airy ^!ARM!;>
 349 (---)
 350 <<all,p> hu ^bigger a ^BIG ^than ^me'n ^YOUR;>

 952 B: <<len> **they** SPEECH an CULture ;>

 1139 B: like **HE'n** mates THEN ;

In addition, the use of resumptive pronouns was confirmed for all speakers and is thus in accordance with other studies of ‘AbE’ (e.g. Wilson 1996: 56; Harkins 1994: 53; Eagleson 1982b: 134; Malcolm and Koscielecki 1997: 63). However, it is once again a feature that ‘AbE’ shares with other varieties of English. Eagleson describes the function of resumptive pronouns as follows:

Behind this structure seems to lie the fact that the noun group holds the focus in the mind of the speaker. The device of duplication by allowing the noun group to be set apart from the rest of the utterance brings emphasis on it and reflects the importance it has for the speaker. Perhaps through this device, the speaker is hoping also to fix the noun group in the mind of the listener before continuing. It is possible also that there may be problems of memory span and general control over structures, especially where these are complex and elaborate [...]. (1982b: 134)

4.1.3.2 The verb phrase

Harkins (1994:76) provides a list of grammatical features of ‘AbE’ traditionally described in the literature, which she found to be highly stereotypical. These include non-standard past tense forms, the *is/are* and *was/were* agreement, the third person singular agreement, the omission of copula in existential and equational sentence structures and the absence of auxiliaries *to be* and *to have*. The occasional use of these features in addition to standard variants was also reported in the studies used as the basis of comparison with my own data, namely Kaldor and Malcolm (1982b), Eagleson (1982b), Wilson (1996), Sharpe (1990) and Malcolm and Kosciielecki (1997). In addition to the fact that they are also commonly found in non-Aboriginal non-standard English, Eagleson (1982b: 125) and Harkins suggest that their ostensible occurrence is due to their low functional load and the audibility of certain sounds rather than to differences in the conceptual system:

Aboriginal English uses the same verb endings as standard English does for marking tense (e.g. present *walk, walks*, past *walked*) and aspect (e.g. progressive *be walking*). I suggest that the system of tense and aspect is basically the same as the standard English one, and that the apparent differences are more phonological than grammatical. The weak status of certain *-s*, *-v* and *-r* at the end of words (e.g. *She speak(s)*, *He ('s) biting*, *The boys ('ve or 're) gone*). (Harkins 1994: 74)

Taking these observations into account, it is not surprising that all of the features mentioned above surfaced in the present analysis. While regularization in the domain of subject-verb agreement and the use of past participle instead of past tense forms occurred fairly regularly with all speakers, the occasional omission of the copula *to be* was only observed for speaker B.

Example from transcript 2

129 B: <<f,all> yeah they 'not `YO: 'wii,
130 they ↑!LIKE!¹⁵² `YO 'wii,>
131 P: ye[ah::],
132 B: <<f,all> [but] THEY ˈlike(em) little ^!MI!dgeth.>

Although non-standard use of third person singular agreement regularly involved the omission of {-s}¹⁵³, this morpheme was sometimes added in the first person singular (Eagleson 1982b: 127).

446 V: <<all> he (said) i **GETS** 'ome;>
447 (-)
448 he got to the PAR'-
449 (1.4)
450 COR:ner 'ere?

¹⁵² [ɪd:k]

¹⁵³ It should be mentioned that instances of standard usage far outnumbered non-standard usage in this context. This is in stark contrast to Malcolm (1996: 151), whose informants showed “[...] an overwhelming preference (90%) for the unmarked form over the marked (10%).”

451 (-)
 452 <<<t> goin' THAT way?>
 453 (1.1)
 454 <<p,h> TURN around 'E-
 455 (-)
 456 wen' to LIGHT a SMOKE,>
 457 (1.2)
 458 <<f> an he SAYS: that-
 459 (-)
 460 i LOOK-
 461 (---)
 462 <<h>HE says an '!ERE:!'s that little feller
 !STAN:!din'there->
 463 (--)
 464 <<h,p> he said an' 'E 'ad a REAL long BEARD:??>

In addition, the example illustrates the variable use of present and past tense forms found in narratives. Eagleson argues that, rather than indicating “[...] a different way of structuring experience, such as the absence of a sense of time, etc.” (1982b: 137), switches between past tense and what is often called the ‘historic present’ can be explained by the speaker’s orientation to his or her topic:

This is not basically the use of the present tense instead of the past, but rather the episode has been made concrete again. The speaker has, as it were, put the clock back and has returned to the episode, in a sense reliving or recreating it. It has become vitally real again. As often as not the speaker himself is involved in the action, or he was greatly excited by it when he first witnessed its representation in a film, etc. The appearance of the present tense reveals the outlook of the speaker, and rapid switches from the past to present and back again reflect his rapidly changing sense of close involvement. In this characteristic Aboriginal speakers are no different from their white counterparts. (1982b: 153)

In conclusion, it can then be argued that the informants’ use of morpho-syntactical forms is well within the boundaries of non-standard English usage and does not indicate any difference in the underlying grammatical system. This observation is significant in that it raises considerable doubts as to the status of this variety of urban ‘AbE’ as a distinct dialect in its own right (cf. p.81). However, recent studies in the field of discourse analysis suggest that a mere structural analysis of such surface features is insufficient for a correct description of non-standard dialects since it may obscure the existence of distinct ‘deep structures’. Referring to ‘African American English’, Lisa Green rightly states that:

[s]yntactic and phonological patterns alone cannot sufficiently characterize AAE. Speakers manipulate common strategies of conversational interaction, and they adhere to rules of speaking in using speech events such as call and response in religious as well as secular contexts. Rhetorical strategies may be more prominent than syntactic and phonological features in speech events such as rap and sermons [...] although features from those components may very well **surface** (my emphasis) in speech events. (2002: 134-135)

Taking this observation into account, chapter 4.2 will be concerned with an ethnographic analysis of the data. In this context, special focus will be given to narrative schemas and the genre of oral history.

4.2 ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

4.2.1 Genre

While, from a Western scientific perspective, the speech event investigated here might be classified as an ethnographic interview (see chapter 3.2.2), from an Aboriginal point of view it is possibly best described as a conversation featuring what is often referred to as ‘yarning’ as it “[...] includes narratives which recount personal or vicarious experience. Yarns [...] slip in and out of conversations, often without notice or ceremony [...]” (Malcolm and Rochecouste 2000: 267). In confirmation of this hypothesis, speaker *B* states halfway through the “interview” that:

Example from transcript 2

915 B: THIS is (.) (a GOODS) ol’ YARN: you KNOW ,

In addition to the fact that yarns may often be told for the purpose of “relaxing in company” , that is social interaction for its own sake (Malcolm 1980-82: 76), it has often been mentioned that narratives constitute a powerful means of encoding social values as well as a culturally-specific worldview.

[...]narrative practice creates conceptual worlds, worlds in which the members of a culture understand themselves and the people, things and events that surround them. Narrative practice, I maintained, creates and reiterates such structure of coherence and it is through such conceptions of how the world coheres that we are able to make sense of our human experience. (Klapproth 2004: 309)

This is arguably of heightened importance in orally-based cultures like Aboriginal society, which – in the absence of a written medium – heavily rely on oral narratives for the intergenerational transmission and maintenance of culture.

The Australian Aboriginal worldview is deeply rooted in what might be called a fundamentally narrative understanding of the universe. Traditionally, Aboriginal cultural knowledge is structured and transmitted in narrative form. (Klapproth 2004: 66)

However, though allusions to traditional stories do surface in the data and will be discussed at a later stage, the following citation illustrates that they are never explicitly identified as such by the narrator:

Example from transcript 2

1033 P: DID they Ever ;
1031 ever TELL you aNY: -
1032 (--)
1033 (coughing)
1034 Any of the their -
1035 (-)
1036 their !OLD! STOrY of the DREAMtime STOries an THAT all ,
1037 (---)
1038 <<whispering> ()
1039 B: (sniffing)

1040 (1.9)
 1041 NO::: ?
 1042 (--)
 1043 just only little THINGS like THAT:?

Rather than referring to a remote past, narratives in the data are personalised and anchored in the present in that the narrators themselves or a familiar person of the community act as protagonists. The result of this strategy is the creation of a specific instantiation of the story, which serves to reaffirm the continued validity of the cultural concept often encoded in narratives (see chapter 4.2.5 for an example of such instantiation). Taking this idea into account, I argue that the data may well be understood as an example of Aboriginal oral history comparable to recently published (auto)biographies or ‘life story things’ as Roy Kelly – an Aboriginal man of the Darwin fringe camp whose “biography” was recorded by the linguist Basil Sansom – would have it:

What Roy Kelly called ‘life story thing’ is a sort of story to be located within an Aboriginal epistemology, and it is not to be taken as a westerner’s ‘for instance’ since it is not representative of some concept or trend of thought. Rather, life story thing is **instantiation** (my emphasis). Sometimes, life story thing can transfer a proposition stored in what Alfred Schutz would recognise as a cultural ‘stock of knowledge’ to that which Michael Polyani establishes as ‘personal knowledge’. This, in local terms, would be to transfer an item from ‘What them-fella (specified) all sayin’ to ‘This thing/business I got myself’. In terms of our everyday speech, such a shift is a shift from the command of well-accredited hearsay to personal attestation of experience of a primary event. [...] Always, life story thing is subtended by story – either a received and sourced story or a story drawn directly from life experience. (Sansom 2001: 119)

Reflecting on the cultural concept underlying the autobiographic genre, Sansom states that “[t]he life – the whole life which, as a construct, we distinguish as curriculum vitae and recognise in autobiography, biography, obituary and so forth – is no natural or eternal form” (2001: 99). In contrast to the Western genre of autobiography, which presupposes not only the concept of the individual self, but also in a sense postulates its primacy over the community, “[...] indigenous narrators seldom represent their lives in terms of an ‘I’ but rather of ‘we’, and emphasise relationships with family, kin and others; their accounts often seem fragmented and discontinuous; and they only infrequently reveal any sense of agency and self-reflection” (Attwood and Magowan 2001: 4). Applying this observation to the data, it is significant that stories are sometimes “repeated” in so far as a specific event is not only told from the perspective of the first person narrator, that is, the Aboriginal informant being interviewed, but that almost the same experience may additionally be attributed to another person (mostly a relative in the wider sense of Aboriginal kinship). In cases in which several speakers are present, a story line may be adopted by another person who subsequently renders an instantiation of the yarn. Alternatively, informants often relate their stories as joint experiences, that is, from a communal point of view that finds its linguistic expression either

in the extensive use of the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ or in a discursive strategy which has been referred to as ‘collaborative narration’ (see chapter 4.2.5.1 for a more detailed discussion of discourse strategies):

Two or more speakers may collaborate in a narration or exposition, with one prompting, corroborating, extending, clarifying and expressing concurrence with the other. In Aboriginal yarnning situations listeners are free to contribute to the on-going talk and this is not seen as interruption but rather as helping the narrator to tell his or her story [...]. (Malcolm and Rochecouste 2000: 270)

In addition, narratives may be preceded by a reference to the cultural wisdom transmitted to them by what the informants called “the old people”.

Example from transcript 3

758 RI: SO-
759 (1.2)
760 <<len> AUnty emy ALso tol' ME (.) aBOU'->

In the example above, the significance of this point of reference goes as far as constituting the beginning as well as the end of speaker *RI*'s narrative description in that, using a discursive strategy called symmetrical framing, she concludes her story with an utterance that reflects the opening passage just cited:

809 RI: <<p> it was JUST ah: some of the THINGS that-
810 (---)
811 aunty emy (.) always TALKED about.

Apart from permitting the narrator(s) to create communal stories based on their own experience and that of their wider kin, the strategy of instantiation found in what may be called ‘family histories’ rather than autobiographies¹⁵⁴ additionally allows for the incorporation of colonial and post-colonial history into more or less traditional stories. Relating to Klapproth's assertion that narratives are a powerful means of understanding the world and coming to terms with human experience, I would therefore argue that it is by narrative instantiation that Indigenous Australian people do not only make sense of their experiences following colonisation but also achieve to transcend cultural dislocation and rupture by creating some kind of coherent continuation of the past in the postcolonial era. In my opinion, it is significant that these remarks on the narrative practice of Indigenous Australians echo in some sense what has already been argued at an earlier stage of this thesis in connection with the rise of ‘NSW Pidgin’ as a precursor of some varieties of ‘AbE’:

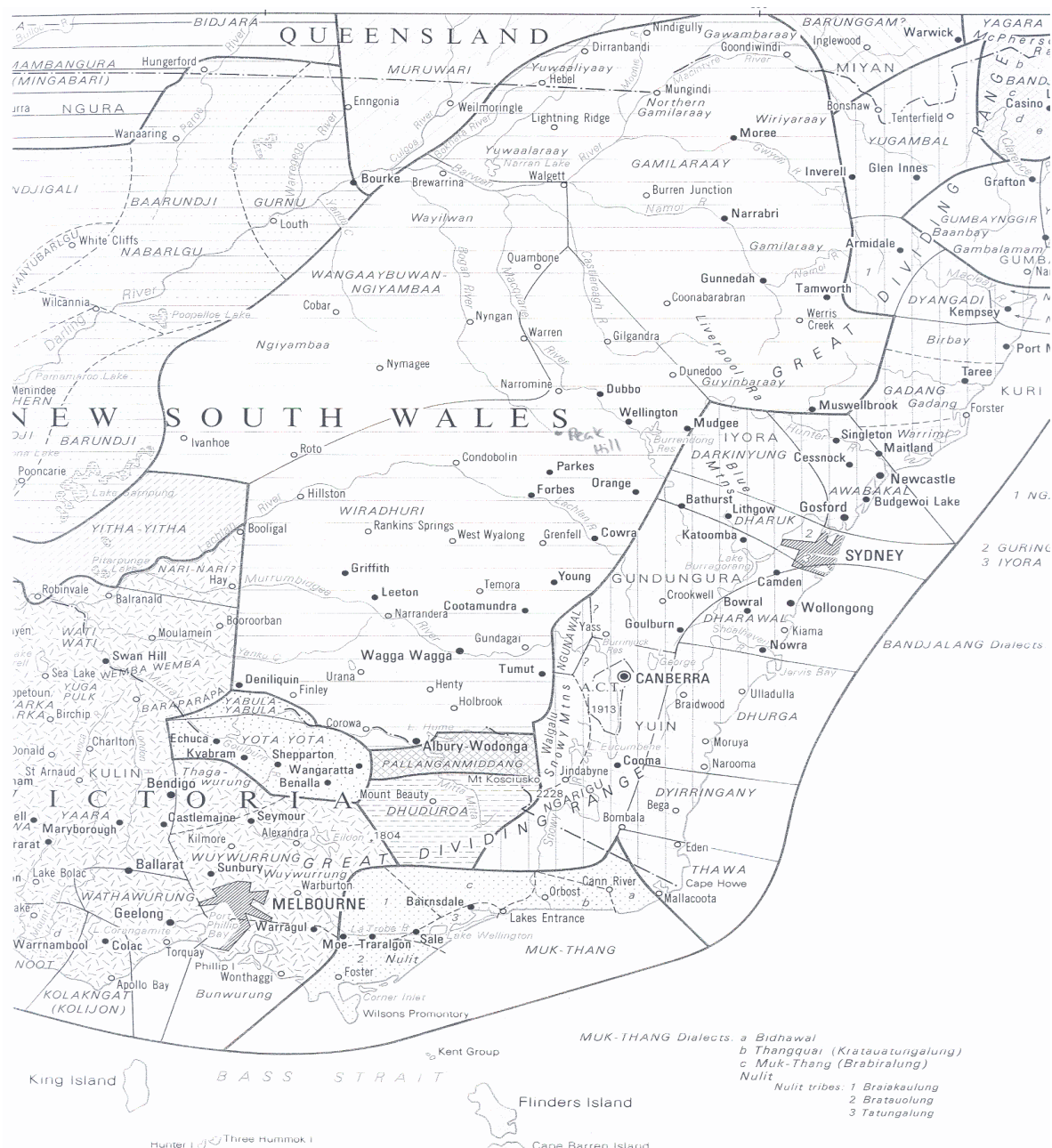
¹⁵⁴ In accordance with Arnold Krupat, a linguist who has extensively studied the “autobiographic” genre of Native Americans, Sansom hypothesises that “[...] ‘communally orientated cultures’ will not yield vita as a genre” (Sansom 2001: 101).

NSW Pidgin is the most demonstrable linguistic product of Aboriginal contact with English-speaking colonists. The Aborigines needed to find a way in which to rationalise the major changes that had occurred in their world view as a result of British colonisation. NSW Pidgin in part resulted from their attempt to explain to themselves the new social input and the consequent changes they experienced. It was a new language for a new social context. (Troy 1990: 15)

4.2.2 Situation

4.2.2.1 Setting

As already mentioned in chapter 3.1.1, the narratives investigated in the context of this thesis were recorded by the non-Indigenous anthropologist Frank Povah during his stay in New South Wales from February to May 1990. While he did not consistently include information concerning the exact local setting of recording in every case, some of the places are explicitly mentioned as, for example, Peak Hill, Wellington and Muswellbrook. Given that geographic location plays a quite important role for Indigenous Australians, the informants often referred to additional places where they had stayed for some period in their lives or which they identified as settings of specific events in connection with their narratives. The following list of places is not exclusive but rather provides a general overview of the locations which are most frequently mentioned in the data: Collarenebri, Coonamble, Condobolin, Cowra, Dubbo, Wellington, Orange, Brewarrina, Peak Hill, Gulargambone and Gadooga. The map on the next page shows that all of these towns are located in central New South Wales.



source: Wurm (1972)

4.2.2.2 Scene

4.2.2.2.1 Place

In chapter 2.2.2.2, which discussed the emergence of ‘NSW Pidgin’, it has already been mentioned that, after having conquered Sydney, the colonists entered the more central parts of New South Wales via the Blue Mountains in 1813. As a result, rural central New South Wales was not only the first region to be colonised, but it also subsequently became the scene for

violent encounters between the colonists and Australian Indigenous people in the fight for land, of which Bruce Elder's *Blood on the Wattle: Massacres and Maltreatment of Australian Aborigines since 1788* published in 1988 gives a detailed account. In the following period, the region became an important area for the farming and pastoral industries. Now mostly evicted from their ancestral lands and "rounded up" in missions or reserves, the indigenous population became however only gradually involved in these industries. Starting with a description of the far west, Jeremy Beckett depicts New South Wales as

[...] a region of semi-arid plains, mainly given over to sheep grazing and supporting only a sparse population. The region's only large town is Broken Hill, a mining centre of about 30,000 inhabitants; the rest are small commercial and servicing centres for the pastoral hinterland: only Bourke, Cobar and Condobolin exceed 2,000, while the three townships of the Corner (the extreme northwest of the State), together boast no more than 250. East of the Bogan and south of the Lachland Rivers, sheep grazing gradually gives way to wheat farming, while at Mildura and Griffith there is fruit growing. (1988: 117)

This observation is significant in the context of this thesis in so far as the 'old mission days' and the farming and pastoral industries play an important role in the oral histories presented in the data where they are often referred to as the sites of specific events. While speakers *B* and *J* explicitly mention that they were born on the reserve in Collaranabri and Nanamaa Mission near Wellington respectively, accounts of such places are common to all informants. It is interesting to note that the picture they draw of the missions, though it is not always a negative one despite the concomitant loss of Indigenous languages and culture, often contrasts with their depiction of the life as workers on the stations, which is predominantly positive and might even be called to some extent "romantic".

Example from transcript 2

```
1211 B:      =LIKE in THEY time ;
1212          =all the m mans around THEY time ;
1213          =used to go to Different ,
1214          (---)
1215          !HOME!stead an do all the WORKS: an that .
1216          (-)
1217          an THEY'd stay out for MONTHS an MONTHS ?
1218          (1.2)
1219          <<f> you get the BOYS NOW -
1220          an the YOUNG MANS NOW -
1221          they won' DO it ; >
```

While it is presumably quite normal for elderly people to romanticise the past times of their childhood, Beckett, however, argues that in the case of New South Wales Aboriginal people, the glorification of the "old days" when men were still working on stations is due to the fact that the lifestyle in connection with such an employment had much more in common with their traditional nomadic way of life and additionally provided them with an opportunity to distance themselves from the values of an emerging modern society living in urban centres:

Instead of emulating the industry, thrift and regard for property and comfort of middle class Europeans – with whom they had little contact – they took as their model the nineteenth century pastoral workers, whose way of life presented many parallels to their own. This ‘nomad tribe’ took little account of property or thrift, preferring to squander their earnings in prodigality and drunkenness; they changed their jobs frequently, affecting a sturdy independence, and took what was almost pride in enduring rough food and conditions; generosity to friends was perhaps their cardinal virtue. Few Europeans live this way today, and those who do are not highly regarded by the more settled section of the population; however, it has been carried on by Aborigines for several generations, with the difference that they are more or less settled in one place and have large families. (Beckett 1988: 117)

In the same vein, Diane Barwick states that

[t]he Aboriginal subculture, developed in a rural setting, maintains certain features which are both adaptive extensions of traditional norms and typical characteristics of migratory workers, [...] All such worker groups have closed communities, but the basis of recruitment, of belonging, is different here, for Aborigines are recruited by birth. (1988: 29)

4.2.2.2.2 Time

Given the frequent reference to the “old mission days”, the oral histories of the informants deal with a time frame spanning from the present to the pastoralist era of the mid nineteenth century. In addition, I would argue that the technique of instantiation explained in chapter 4.2.1 allows them to somehow bridge the gap between the more recent and the remote past of what is often referred to as the ‘dreamtime’¹⁵⁵. Although the narratives in the corpus can be distinguished from traditional myths featuring ancestral beings in that “[...] key figures are identified as particular kin of the living, usually with remembered names (including English names)”, Sutton draws attention to the fact that generally calling such stories “[...] historical narrative [...] has its drawbacks, for some such stories are interwoven with events of the Dreaming [...]” (1988: 256). The result may often be a continuous sequence of history, semi-historic legend and unmixed myth, the boundaries between which are considerably blurred (1988: 257). While instances of instantiated myths could not be observed in the data, informants nevertheless quite often referred to mythical creatures and the encounters between them and human beings, thereby relating their own experience and that of their kin to these passed down ‘stories’.

¹⁵⁵ The term “dreamtime” is an attempt to translate the Pitjantjatjara word “tjukurpa” into English. Although the latter has widely been adopted in Aboriginal contexts, it should be noted that “[...] the entities called Dreamings over so much of north and central Australia are instead called ‘Stories’ in a large area of northeast Australia, and ‘Histories’ in northern South Australia.” (Sutton 1988: 252)

4.2.3 Participants

4.2.3.1 Addresser/Sender

When conducting an ethnographic analysis, one often differentiates between an addresser and a sender:

The communicator of the information may not be its source, and the hearer of a message is not necessarily its addressee. We use the term 'sender', then, to refer to the speaker who is not the source of the message, and we shall use the term 'addresser' to refer to the speaker who is the source of the message. (Malcolm 1980-82: 68)

In the context of traditional Aboriginal society, this distinction is highly important as knowledge is regarded as a property and is therefore restricted in that only acknowledged members of a community may assume the role of so called 'custodians of the word': "Knowledge in Aboriginal society carries with it a sense of personal trust which is not so prominent in general Australian society. To know something is associated with being entrusted to it" (Malcolm 1980-82: 69). In the present context in which a non-Indigenous interviewer seeks not only knowledge of personal experiences but also tries to elicit traditional folktales, this means that the sender, that is the Aboriginal informant, needs to be socially entitled to give an outside version of the group's word. As far as information concerning other living persons than the informant is concerned, such permission may not always be given as is illustrated by the following examples:

Example from transcript 3

1986 V: an THAT was the one she was TALkin' about-
1987 R: <<f> common THING?>
1988 V: =x¹⁵⁶ was TALkin' about,
1989 it was supPOSED to be-
1990 out the TAPE,

Example from transcript 2

1536 P: <<pp> COULD you[()]>
1537 B: [but]I not whether you be ALLOWED to TAPE this;
1538 you KNOW ,
1539 P: =[no].
1540 B: [this] is !TRUE! ,
1541 (--)
1542 P: yeah .
1543 well THAT'S right .
1544 <<dim> yeah we (MIGHTN'T ()) .
1545 B: you STUdy -
1546 (--)
1547 that wasn't an OL' people .

¹⁵⁶ The name was deleted for reasons of privacy.

In contrast, a distinction between addresser and sender is not necessary in the case of the non-Indigenous interviewer.

Concerning the personality of the informants, it should be mentioned that, though none of them presumably speaks an Australian Indigenous language fluently, they still seem to identify strongly with specific traditional language groups.

Table 5: Informants affiliation to certain language groups¹⁵⁷

<i>Informant</i>	<i>Language group (and/or place of birth)</i>
<i>B</i>	(Collarenebri) ¹⁵⁸
<i>J</i>	Wiradhuri ¹⁵⁹ (Nanamaa Mission near Wellington)
<i>N</i>	Wiradhuri (Gulargambone)
<i>VI</i>	Wiradhuri (Sydney)
<i>PG</i>	Ngiyambaa (Brewarrina)
<i>GM</i>	Dyangadi (Kempsey)
<i>DR</i>	Wiradhuri/Wangaaybuwan
<i>A</i>	Wiradhuri (Penrith)

A comparison of the geographical locations mentioned in table 5 with the map on page 88 reveals that the place of birth does not necessarily indicate an affiliation to a certain language group. While, for example, Penrith is located in the area referred to as Dharuk, speaker *A* still identifies as Wiradhuri. The complexity of language affiliation and identity is mirrored in the following example from transcript 7. Identifying as Ngyjambaa, that is, the language affiliation of his grandmother, speaker *PG* describes his genealogy in the following words:

Example from transcript 7

1 PG: REAlly;
2 i supPOSE,
3 the CLOsest¹⁶⁰ of the of the of the (.) BLOOD line¹⁶¹?
4 P: yeah.
5 PG: =ngiyAMpaa?
6 (--)
7 but me GRANDfather WAS-
8 (-)
9 muuraWArii?
10 (---)
11 on me FAtHer's SIDE¹⁶²?
12 (---)

¹⁵⁷ Some of the informants could not be included in the following table as they did not explicitly mention their affiliation or place of birth. While information concerning speaker *Be* is totally missing, the data suggests that speakers *V*, *RI*, *R* have lived in the area around Peak Hill for quite some time, that is, Wiradhuri country.

¹⁵⁸ According to the map on page 88, Collarenebri is situated in Gamilaraay country.

¹⁵⁹ In the absence of a common writing system for Australian Indigenous languages, the spelling of language groups is quite controversial. For practical reasons, the version adopted here is in accordance with the one used in the map on page 88. Note, however, that there are a number of other spelling variants, including, for example, the ones used in Tindale's map.

¹⁶⁰ [kɪɻʉzəs]

¹⁶¹ As indicated in Frank Povah's transcript of the interview, speaker *PG* refers to his grandmother in this instance. The tape, however, only starts with the utterance given in the example.

¹⁶² [sɪɪd]

13 P: <<p> from QUEENSland.>
 14 (---)
 15 PG: <<p> YEAH;
 16 from QUEENSland (.)WOolamaRINGle,
 17 (--) (sound of knocking)
 18 around that AREa, >
 19 (1.4)
 20 AND:-
 21 on me MOther's SIDE,
 22 BAAkinjii.

Language affiliation being a quite complicated issue that cannot be dealt with in the context of this thesis in any more detail, I would like to conclude this section with a citation from Leitner (2006):

Die Abstammung wurde über die väterliche oder mütterliche Seite bestimmt. In weiten Bereichen waren Gruppen patrilineal strukturiert. Es gab aber auch matrilineale and <ambilineale> Gruppen. Ambilineal waren solche, bei denen die väterliche oder mütterliche Linie, ja sogar die Umstände, in denen ein Kind aufwuchs, wichtig war. (44)

4.2.3.2 Addressee/Hearer

While it is unknown who actually listened to the tapes or read the included transcripts, “hearers” obviously include the persons present during the recording sessions, that is, the non-Indigenous interviewer as well as the Aboriginal informants. However, it has already been mentioned at the beginning of the last section that addressee and hearer are not necessarily identical, and it could also be added that speakers may have different addressees in mind. While the Aboriginal informants in the interviews do not directly address the question of an intended audience, the interviewer mentions non-Indigenous children in this context.

Example from transcript 1

278 P: i've !AIMED! the book MAINly at !CHIL!dren ;
 279 (---)
 280 or !YOU!nger PEOPle because i FEEL that if THEY can -
 281 (-)
 282 because (.) at SCHOOL they're STARTing to !LEARN! about the
 283 aborIgINES and and THEY () Actually -
 284 (---)
 285 a LOT more sympaTHEtic to -
 286 toWARD them than their PAREnts and !GRAND!parents are ;
 287 =espEcially their !GRAND!parents .

Although not explicitly stated, there seems to be a connection between Povah’s original aim of eliciting “fairy tales” as he calls it and his primary audience, which is not surprising given that this genre has been declared “children’s stuff” in modern Western society. Somewhat in contrast to this observation, Povah also argues that his recordings and transcripts may help to give some credence to urban Aboriginal claims concerning the continuation of their culture,

which would imply the wider Australian society to be included in the intended audience. This observation, however, directly leads us to the question of ‘intended outcome’, which is intrinsically linked to ‘addressee’ as well as ‘genre’ in the present context.

4.2.4 Ends

4.2.4.1 Intended Outcomes

A form of literature akin to biography and autobiography, often this is a heavily edited literature written and revised in conjunction with a European and its message is one of understanding and tolerance, which may be a good thing in regard to an Indigenous place in a multicultural Australia and with the stated aim of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation of bringing all people together in mutual understanding in what will be a new republic. (Mudrooroo 1997: 16)

Although the ‘life story things’ that are the focus of this thesis were not edited since the oral recordings were merely transcribed and not compiled for their inclusion in a book, it may be argued that, similar to Aboriginal autobiographies written in English – of which Sally Morgan’s *My Place* and Glenyse Ward’s *Wandering Girl* (1988) are good examples -, the oral histories in the data can well be interpreted in the context of reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians since one of their intended outcomes is arguably the sharing of cultures. Sharing of culture is considered as a necessary step on the way to reconciliation as it creates understanding as a prerequisite for the acceptance of Indigenous culture as a truly Australian heritage of the wider community (Mudrooroo 1997: 2). However, Indigenous culture is today no longer limited to its traditional sense, but includes the experiences of the colonial and postcolonial era. I would therefore like to argue that it is thus that the sharing of traditional culture (of which the revelation of a part of the mythical stories surrounding the Australian emblem of Uluru in recent years is a good example) is comparable to the telling of life stories. In addition, the concern with ‘family history’ is common to both traditional myths and life stories in the sense that they represent Indigenous interpretations of the past. Sutton convincingly argues that:

[...] urban history construction is remarkably similar in function to the Dreaming. The past is also the present, as one of its aspects. The past is not transcendent or remote, but underpins and echoes present and continuing reality. Just as the Dreaming is the person, in one facet of its complex nature, the Aboriginal person is likewise the historical Aborigine – not merely the survivor but the embodiment of the scarifying processes of conquest, dispossession, resettlement, missionisation and welfarism. (1988: 261)

It is in this context that, referring to the oral histories in particular, Attwood and Magowan state that “[i]ndigenous history-making has also challenged the discipline of history because

much of it takes the form of oral narrative” (2001: 4). As already mentioned in the discussion of ‘genre’, life stories as oral histories are a means of both managing the recent past and asserting the continuation of traditional cultural values. However, they can also be considered as an attempt of “redressing the balance” since they are to some extent designed to compete with the non-Indigenous version of the colonisation of Australia as a ‘terra nullius’: a country assumedly not inhabited by civilised people that could therefore legally be taken and settled by the colonists. To conclude, it should be mentioned that the idea of ‘terra nullius’ has been only recently officially debunked, given that up to the 1970s Australian Indigenous people were not regarded as citizens with equal rights. The following decades, however, have seen a rise in people’s pride and reassertion of Aboriginality, of which Indigenous life stories are but one expression.

Their self-consciousness has also stimulated a search for their own history. They seek knowledge of the traditional culture, and of the remote ancestors who conquered a continent with digging stick and spear. They realise their own role as carriers of a folk history composed of memories and legends of a century of European contact, and listen with respect and attention to their elders’ recollections of the forebears who pioneered and farmed the Aboriginal reserves. (Barwick 1988: 32)

4.2.4.2 Actual Outcomes

The actual outcome of the communicative event analysed in this ethnographic analysis is difficult to establish. While the tapes and transcripts provided by Frank Povah are an obvious material outcome of the recording sessions, it has already been mentioned that the actual hearers/readers remain largely unknown. However, part of the original transcripts can be found on a website called ‘Dean Harrison’s Australian Yowie Research’, where they are included in an article called “Aboriginal legends” written by Cassandra Hamilton, one of the website’s contributors¹⁶³. Unfortunately, the passages are falsely attributed to Frank Povah himself, while the Aboriginal persons who actually provided the information remain totally unmentioned. Research on the internet additionally yielded that more than one of the Aboriginal informants seems to be currently involved in some way in the transmission of oral history and Aboriginal narratives. While this sustains the arguments presented in the section on ‘intended outcomes’, I will not go into further detail here for obvious reasons of privacy.

¹⁶³ Hamilton, Cassandra. “Australian Yowie Research: Aboriginal Legends”.
URL: http://www.yowiehunters.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=206=&Itemid=148;
accessed on 28/03/2007.

4.2.5 Act Sequence

While the last sections of this chapter have been largely concerned with the definition of Indigenous oral history or ‘life story thing’ and its function in the postcolonial context, I will now focus on the linguistic nature and content of the narratives. In my opinion, they are not only important as pieces of contemporary oral history, but as a genre, they are primarily predestined for the sharing of culture.

Storytelling is a relational act between (at least) one narrator and one narratee, the most fundamental purpose of which is the **communicative sharing** (my emphasis) of *narrative world*. In particular [...], the storytelling act involves the construction of a subjectively evaluated conceptual world, which is intersubjectively shared between narrator and narratee. This sharing of the narrated world takes place within the framework of the shared experience of participating in the *narrative event*. (Klapproth 2004: 105)

The first part of this chapter is therefore dedicated to the discourse analysis of some selected narratives, or yarns as they may be called. In this context, special attention will be given to the use of discursual features and strategies as well as culturally distinct schemata and the creation of narrative involvement. In a second step, the relation of these yarns with traditional Aboriginal beliefs will be investigated, taking the mythical creatures commonly referred to as the ‘bunyip’ and the ‘yowie’ as examples.

4.2.5.1 Message Form

Yarns often slip in and out of conversations without prior notice or ceremony. However, this is not to say that the narrative itself is void of conversational interaction between narrator and listeners. First of all, although the narration of a yarn often implies a more extended turn of a speaker than would normally be expected in a conversation, his or her permission of holding the floor is based on negotiation with the listener. This permission is most often implicitly granted in that the narrator’s utterance is not interrupted, with the listeners’ contribution being limited to so called ‘backchanneling signals’. ¹⁶⁴

The audience’s non-participation in the storytelling act is only *apparent*, as the audience’s minimal (or even zero) communicative contribution is indeed a (marked) type of communicative participation and is an essential factor operating on the turn-taking system, thus decisively influencing the ongoing communicative exchange. In the narrative event, the audience has voluntarily granted the narrator an extended turn, and throughout the storytelling act the narrator remains aware that he or she has to make his/her contribution interesting enough so as to hold the floor. (Klapproth 2004: 128)

¹⁶⁴ Note, however, that in ‘AbE’ narrative discourse, ‘collaborative narration’ may be used as a discursive strategy by the participants in the narrative situation.

However, the narrator may also explicitly ask permission for an extended turn as in the following example (please refer to the appendix for a quotation of the complete passage):

Example from transcript 3

253 R: I know '!HE! said 'he was '!TAlk!in' 'bout-
254 (-)
255 the '!MA!gical ^PEOple.
256 (-)
257 RI: <<p> `mmh.>
258 (1.6)
259 R: <<p> **carry on 'WITH,>**

Second, Muecke stresses the narratee's role in the process of yarning, claiming that

[...] contemporary Aboriginal oral narration is constituted by a kind of dialogue between speaker and listener. The positions of speaker and listener are constantly shifting in relation to the text being produced. Meaning is generated by the repetitive and alternative stressing of relationships between speaker and listener, text and context (where context also includes the previous literary tradition), speakers and text and speakers and context. (1981b: 2)

Focussing on the alternation of narrative functions at the level of clause, he convincingly demonstrates that narrative discourse is structured by the alternation between three 'frames', including the 'performative', the 'narrative' and the 'dramatic frame'. While the last two pertain to the 'narrated world' and function on the intra-textual level, it is the 'performative frame' which allows the narrator to refer to the narrative situation in so far as he or she may evaluate the narrative and/or directly address his or her listeners:

The narrative frame encloses talk that is typically in the third person, but can be in the first person if one is telling a story about oneself. The narrator now talks to the story rather than to the listener, but regularly re-emerges into the performance frame to refer to the listener, to a place, a person or another event, or even just to pause and say 'you know' or to laugh with the listener. (Muecke 1981b: 6)

In an actual narrative analysis, the distinction between the three frames is made possible by the reference to one of six different functions that a clause may fulfil in the process of narration. The latter are identified as 'meta-narrative', 'formulaic', 'narrative', 'elaborative', 'repetitive' and 'dramatic', with 'meta-narrative' and 'formulaic' pertaining to the 'performative frame', 'narrative', 'elaborative' and 'repetitive' being attributed to the 'narrative frame' and 'dramatic' signalling the 'dramatic frame' (Muecke 1981b: 7). Although 'performative' and 'dramatic frame' are different in that they exclusively function on the extra-textual and intra-textual levels respectively – in the 'dramatic frame' "[t]he 'I' and the 'you' [...] form the dialogue of the characters, not of the participants in the narration" (Muecke 1981b: 7) –, they both contribute to the creation of narrative involvement. In terms of Halliday's 'Systemic Functional Grammar', their function in the narrative discourse is therefore 'interpersonal' and contrasts with clauses having predominantly 'textual'

(‘formulaic’, ‘repetitive’ and ‘elaborative’ clauses) or ‘ideational’ (‘narrative’ and to some extent ‘meta-narrative’ clauses) functions (Muecke 1981b: 8).

The moving in and out of narrative frames characterises the process of narration as a form of communicative interaction in which meaning is created by the joint effort of narrator and narratee rather than merely being transmitted by a speaker to a listener “[...] as the “conduit metaphor of communication” would have it” (Klapproth 2004: 103). While such a shifting between narrative frames explains the interactive mechanisms inherent in narrative discourse, it may be to some extent universal to the genre of narrative. However, in accordance with aspects mentioned in the discussion of ‘genre’ and ‘addressee/speaker’, Muecke claims that Aboriginal storytelling is distinctive in that it constitutes an instantiation of cultural concepts in narrative form and in that the narrator him- or herself is rather the communicator of this concept than its ultimate source. I would argue that this may even comprise instances in which a story is narrated as personal experience of the narrator.

In Aboriginal story-telling situations, the meaning of the story emerges in the play of language in relation to the more permanent aspects of the cultural and physical environment [...] The speaker is in no sense the sole source of meaning (as the Western emphasis on authorship and authorial intention would perhaps lead us to believe); he or she is more the custodian of the ‘word’. (Muecke 1981b: 11).

In addition, he maintains that for the interactional process to be effective, it must be based on the reiteration of **shared meanings**, the narrative construction of which “[...] depends on the recognition of the conventional ways in which narrative frames different types of experience [...]” (Muecke 1981b: 11).

However, this observation leads us directly to the notion of story schemata as “[...] the organisational and interpretative mental structures that organise a person’s structuring of experience into narrative form” (Klapproth 2004: 8). In her contrastive analysis of narrative schemata found in Anglo-Western and Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara storytelling, Klapproth maintains that the distinct worldviews of the two cultures surface in the different narrative structures they use and that the schema-theoretical narratological approach is therefore a useful method of exploring cultural concepts.

Schema-theoretical narratological research contends that stories from the oral tradition use narrative schemata that are prototypical for the culture of their origin, and that through repeated participation in the storytelling events these canonical story schemata are internalised by the members of the culture. (Klapproth 2004: 29)

Analysing a corpus of sixty-two stories all set in traditional times, Klapproth identified seven categories into which most of her stories could be classified, including ‘brother-pair’ and

‘husband-wife’ stories, stories of desire and marriage, stories of intergenerational family relationships, abduction stories, stories of attacks by evil beings and a type of story which she called ‘on one’s own’. In my opinion, it is significant that the last three categories were also observed by Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000) in their analysis of forty contemporary Aboriginal narratives. In their study, Klapproth’s categories are arguably merged into the schema referred to ‘Encountering the Unknown’¹⁶⁵, which encompasses the subschemas of ‘Encountering Spiritual Powers or Avenging Strangers’ as well as ‘Contact History’. Other cultural schemata reported by Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000) include the ‘Travel schema’ with its alternation between ‘moving’ and ‘stopping’, the ‘Hunting schema’ concerned with the observation, pursuit and capture of prey, as well as the ‘Observing schema’, which is characterised by the detailed description of natural and social phenomena. In addition, Malcolm and Sharifian mention what they call the ‘family schema’, a “representation of experience in relation to an extended family network”, which, in their opinion, is related to the ‘mission schema’ (2002: 174). As to their significance, Malcolm and Rochecouste understand that “[...] the maintenance of these schemas (and associated genres) is related to longstanding cultural survival strategies and represents a skill which should be taken account of in education” (2000: 261). Given that most of the yarns in the corpus can be interpreted as examples of the schema referred to as ‘Encountering the Unknown’, which can arguably be explained by the interviewer’s aim to elicit exactly this type of stories, I will focus on this schema for the remainder of the present discussion. However, Malcolm and Rochecouste draw attention to the fact that “[...] more than one schema may be utilised by a narrator when providing a verbalised account of experience”(2000: 269), and I will therefore occasionally comment on such co-occurrences of narrative schemata.

Malcolm and Rochecouste’s definition of the ‘Encountering the Unknown’ schema significantly recalls what has been mentioned in connection with the genre of ‘life story thing’ and the principle of instantiation:

The Encountering the Unknown Schema [...] relates experience (**either first-hand or vicarious**)(my emphasis) of strange powers or persons affecting normal life within the community and is manifest in the expression of appearance and disappearance, or seeing or not seeing/finding evidence of the phenomenon in question. (2000: 270)

The dichotomy between ‘visible’ and ‘what cannot be seen’ is furthermore mentioned by Klapproth as one of four cultural core concepts typically explored in stories (2004: 294), and it seems to be related to the structural principle which she calls ‘retracing’:

¹⁶⁵ The same schema is additionally referred to as “Scary Things” in Malcolm and Sharifian (2002: 174).

I define *retracing* as the retrospective reconstruction of a series of previous events, a process that is dependent on a discovery activity carried out by a story character. Crucial to the notion of retracing is the fact that this gradual discovery process is achieved through the reading of tracks and traces left in the environment [...]. (2004: 270)

The search for physical traces in order to ‘track’ the intruder is not only reported in Malcolm and Rochecouste’s analysis of a Yamatji child’s account of a ‘devil story’ (2000: 283), but also occasionally surfaces in my own data:

Example from transcript

363 DR: <<all> WE went over nex' DAY-
 364 we thought (there's) somebody FIshin'?
 365 (1.2)
 366 an there's no TRACKS no-
 367 (--)
 368 <<all> cause you KNOW the BANK's pretty STEEP,
 369 (---)
 370 an Usually when somebody GOES down> !FI!shin-
 371 they leave TRACKS an THAT?
 372 P: =yeah.
 373 (--)
 374 DR: well there's NOthin.

Example from transcript 7

196 PG: the nex' MORning as we GOT up she took us outSIDE an IN the,
 197 (--)
 198 oh soft SAND an that aroun' the 'OUSE,
 199 (---)
 200 she SHOWED us all the little TRACKS little,
 201 (-)
 202 FOUR toes:¹⁶⁶,
 203 (---)
 204 <<p> PEOple.>

Somewhat in contrast to Klapproth’s finding that the process of ‘retracing’ concludes with the character’s understanding of what happened, my own observations are more in accordance with Malcolm and Rochecouste’s remark that “[t]he narrator is telling of a mysterious experience which he relates as fact and without any attempt to provide an explanation for it (2000: 284). More often than not, the narratives in my data conclude with the idea of ‘not seeing’, thereby stressing the cultural core concept of ‘visible vs. invisible’ without, however, seeking knowledge as to the background of their mysterious encounter. In this context, it is useful to mention that the narratives’ “protagonists” in my data cannot easily be referred to as such in the sense of “persons acting in pursuit of a certain goal”. This is in accordance with Klapproth’s finding that the application of the Anglo-Western narrative schema of ‘one protagonist- one goal’ to the analysis of Aboriginal storytelling is ineffective. In contrast to the Anglo-Western concept of the protagonist as

¹⁶⁶ The following passage can arguably be interpreted as belonging to the ‘Observation schema’ as the foot is described in detail and testifies to the skill of thorough observation often reported for Indigenous Australian people. Please refer to the disc enclosed in the appendix to read the full passage.

[t]he individual who is facing the conflict, and whose fate is at the centre of the audience's attention and interest, [and who] is conceived of as a "homo faber", a human being that – like a combatant – takes action and shapes his/her own destiny in working towards his/her goals by solving the problems that keep opposing these goals. (2004: 217)

the "protagonist" in Aboriginal storytelling appears to be an "experiencer" rather than an "agent". In this context, a connection with the grammatical category of 'ergativity',¹⁶⁷ commonly found in Australian Indigenous languages seems not too far-fetched, given that Hymes speaks of narrative form as a grammar of experience (Klapproth 2004: 142), while according to Halliday, grammar itself is a memory of past experience (Mühlhäusler 2003: 87)

In addition, Klapproth found that a strategy she calls "[...] shifting *character foci* results in the narrative's flat rather than hierarchical (i.e. complication – or high-point orientated) structural organisation [commonly found in Anglo-Western narratives]" (2004: 283). While some of the narratives in my own data included several "protagonists", the rendering of varying viewpoints were quite often found in successive instantiations of a story line. Given that the 'Encountering the Unknown' schema is exceptional in that it may feature single "protagonists" (Malcolm and Rochecouste 2000: 284) – which may be explained by the fact that in addition to exploring the 'visible/invisible' dichotomy, they also play on the cultural core concept that Klapproth refers to as 'alone vs. family' (2004: 294) –, I see this as an alternative strategy of narration which prevents the "protagonist" from being 'singled out' of the social group. The latter is an idea that evokes the Aboriginal concept of 'shame',¹⁶⁸ governing a large part of social interaction in Aboriginal communities.

The concept of a 'flat organisational structure' is additionally mirrored in the use of a discourse strategy called 'surveying', which Malcolm and Rochecouste define as "[...] an inclusive way of describing a scene or a succession of actions so that nothing is highlighted above the rest. Thus, undeveloped detail may be included simply because it is there, rather than because it progresses a particular narrative trajectory" (2000: 270). In the course of their article, the authors mention sixteen distinctive discourse strategies as well as twelve discourse markers (2000: 270-273). While they consider discourse strategies as "[...] stylistic and performative resources which are employed by the participants in a communal narrative to enhance the dynamics of the communicative event", discourse markers are identified in a

¹⁶⁷ In contrast to languages like English, in which the active voice is the unmarked form – a fact which becomes apparent when we take into account that the passive construction of a sentence is always longer – , in Australian Indigenous languages subjects need to be marked as agents by adding a specific suffix, indicating that intransitivity is the 'normal' unmarked case. (SSABSA 1996: 141)

¹⁶⁸ "Shaming is so effective in obtaining conformity among group members, that it is one of the reasons why people who want to do better for themselves must leave the mission." (Malcolm 1980-82: 88)

grammatical sense as “items of linkage which lend **cohesion** to a text [...]” (2000: 268). As these discourse strategies and markers will be important to the following analysis of three selected narratives included in the appendix, I will briefly list them here without, however, going into much more detail. The function of those relevant to this thesis will be explained in the context of the narrative analysis.

Discourse strategies:

Discourse markers:

- consecutive subject deletion	- topical development by association	- participant identification	- exemplification marker
- pre-informing act	- symmetrical framing	- time orientation	- space orientation
- structural repetition	- lexical repetition	- reference	- reference
- lexical substitution	- surveying	- orientation shift	- speaker progression
- suspensory tagging	- affiliative tagging	- marker	- marker
- paralinguistic support	- confirmation elicitation	- moving	- stopping
- vowel lengthening	- code switching	- profiling marker	- response marker
- gestural support	- collaborative narration		

Narrative Analysis

The analysis of the three selected narratives included in the appendix demonstrates the shifting between narrative frames along the lines explained in this chapter. The narrator regularly addresses his or her audience and ensures narrative involvement by the use of dramatic speech. In almost all cases, the ‘performance’ and the ‘dramatic frame’ do not succeed each other directly, that is, “[t]he transition from intra-textual to extra-textual function is rarely abrupt; the shift from the dramatic to the performance frame is most often mediated by the narrative frame [...]” (Muecke 1981b: 8). However, an exception to this rule occurs in the narrative excerpt taken from transcript 2:

Example from transcript 2

281 B: <<f,all> an i could ↑!SMELL!?
 282 =an' i said '!OH:! dear-
 283 DON'T say one of the `kids->
 284 (---)
 285 <<f,len> 'shit in `their ↑!BED! or SOMETHing> **you 'KNOW?**>

The example shows that ‘dramatic’ and ‘performance frame’ may not only directly succeed each other, but might even be found in a single tone unit. Although this is in contrast to Muecke’s finding, it is perhaps not so surprising if we take into account that ‘dramatic’ and ‘meta-narrative’ functions are both strongly related to the interpersonal domain of the narrative as a text.

Another interesting aspect of the interplay between narrative frames can be found in the discourse strategy called ‘collaborative narration’, which Malcolm and Rochecouste define as follows:

Two or more speakers may collaborate in a narration or exposition, with one prompting, corroborating, extending, clarifying and expressing concurrence with the other. In Aboriginal yarnning situations listeners are free to contribute to the on-going talk and this is not seen as interruption but rather as helping the narrator to tell his or her story [...]. (2000: 271)

Although the content of a listener’s collaborative utterance may purely pertain to the ‘narrative frame’, I would argue that its function in the narrative can be labelled both ‘narrative’ and ‘meta-narrative’, given that it involves a high amount of interaction between the narrator and his or her audience. In contrast to Malcolm and Rochecouste’s observation that “[t]he Encountering the Unknown schema lends itself less than the Observing schema to collaborative narration [...]” (2000: 272), this strategy was frequently exploited in the narrative taken from transcript 3:

Example from transcript 3

332 V: =<<all> when they ˈWALked up an'>ˉ (ASK/ADGE) what they ˈWERE:,
 333 (-)
 334 <<h> ˈOH: ˈnonono-
 335 (--)
 336 RI: **then he used to sit an' ˈTALK to this ol' ˈMAN-**

Concerning the other discourse strategies mentioned in the list above, the results of my own narrative analyses were in accordance with Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000) in so far as ‘structural’ and ‘lexical repetition’, ‘suspensory tagging’, ‘vowel lengthening’ and ‘symmetrical framing’ were among the techniques frequently employed by all speakers. In the narrative taken from transcript 2, for example, ‘vowel lengthening’ occurred in tone units initiating a new storyline:

Examples from transcript 2

207 B: ˈan mi other ˈCOUsin,
 208 (---)
 209 she said=it's ˈOL:,

 386 B: yeah ˈONE feller he ˈwalked aˈWAY:,>

‘Lexical’ and ‘structural repetition’ was not only found to be a strategy frequently employed by the narrators for dramatic and aesthetic purposes, it is also said to be characteristic of Aboriginal storytelling in general.

In fact, in reading aloud Indigenous epics, the repetition gives that swirling of the senses which the musical language of poetry can create and leads to an understanding of why such epics were labelled, by the Berndts, ‘song circles’, in that themes and lines occur and recur until they are fixed not in the mind but in the unconscious in a general liberation from the prosaic into the truly poetic. (Mudrooroo 1997: 16)

In addition to the narrators' use of repetition, members of the audience sometimes reiterated lexical items used by the former. Malcolm identified such instances of repetition as a 'confirmation-giving device' which he called 'echoing': "Aboriginal children, in the course of an interaction, often echo what their companions have said. It could be that this should be seen as the same device as parallelism, but a jointly achieved parallelism" (1994a: 295).

Example from transcript 3

308 V: =^!RAIN:!bow `coloured ^RAbbits.
 309 (--)
 310 P: <<f> ^!RAIN!bow> coloured.
 311 RI: =<<f> ^!RAIN!bow.
 312 V: =<<f> ^!RAIN!bow coloured-
 313 (-)
 314 ^!RAIN!bow coloured.

While speaker *P*'s utterance is possibly better understood in the light of 'confirmation seeking', given that he as the interviewer is unlikely to know the story, speaker *RI*'s repetition could well be interpreted as an instance of 'echoing' in order to confirm the validity of what speaker *V* has just said. Given the emphatic as well as interactional character of 'echoing', I would argue that it is strongly related to the strategy of 'collaborative narration'.

In addition to 'suspensory tagging', which Malcolm and Rochecouste define as the attachment of "[...] *there (dere)* [...]" to a phrase with a rising intonation to achieve a suspensory effect" (2000: 271), speakers sometimes used an emphatic device called 'suspensory pausing', that is the pausing "[...] with glottal constriction, before significant nouns, for instance when naming places or objects" (Malcolm 1994a: 296).

Example from transcript 2

399 B: he'd come `out of the re`SERVE: **`there;**
 400 `SINGin `an' `look for a `FIGHT with all the other `BOYS -
 401 (1.3)
 402 <<all>^anyhow `!THIS! little `feller `he `jumped be`HIN'¹⁶⁹;
 403 **(1.1)**
 404 be`HIN' (.) a ↑!TREE!?

'Symmetrical framing', in which the end of a narrative somehow reflects its opening, is arguably one of the most interesting discourse strategies mentioned by Malcolm and Rochecouste. While the function of 'symmetrical framing' may be purely 'formulaic' as in the narrative taken from transcript 8,

192 GM: NOther story TOO is when WE was-
 ...
 354 GM: that's another STOrY that:-
 355 of this Little fellers.

¹⁶⁹ [bɪjɔn]

the data suggests that it may be linked to the cultural core concept of ‘visible/invisible’ already explained. The narrative taken from transcript 2 demonstrates how the interplay between ‘seeing’ and ‘not seeing’, or alternatively ‘smelling’ vs. ‘not smelling’, may be used to link up to four different story lines. In accordance with the strategy of ‘symmetrical framing’, speaker *B* opens her discourse with the following words:

Example from transcript 2

```
197  B:    but <<f> '!I:!am;
198        'i (h)aven' MET 'em;
199        =i 'SMELT 'em;>
200        (--)
201        haven't 'SEEN 'em but=uhm -
202        (--)
203        <<len> me 'SISter ;
204        (---)
205        'she used to 'SEE 'em;>
206        (---)
207        'an mi other 'COUsin,
```

She then goes on to first tell the story of her cousin’s encounter with the hairy man, which she ends with a ‘meta-narrative’ question aimed at ‘confirmation-seeking’:

```
235  B:    <<h>'that'd `been 'GOOD to `SEE 'one of them you 'KNOW?>
```

After a short conversation with the interviewer *P*, the next story line, in which she relates her own experience, starts and ends with the following utterances:

```
252  B:    but you can (.) 'smell 'em they '!ROUND:!,
...
314  B:    never 'smelt 'em `!NO! 'more,
```

The next accounts of encounters with the hairy men are attributed to her sister and another Aboriginal man. Although these passages are not initiated by a repetition of the cultural core concept of ‘visible/invisible’, their endings mirror the opening and ending of the first story that *B* had told.

```
352  B:    she's 'SEEN 'im .
409  B:    <<h> an !THIS! feller 'SEEN: 'im?
```

In addition to the ‘symmetrical framing’ evident in these recurring passages, it is interesting to note that speaker *B* starts her narrative by introducing all of the following protagonists, except for the Aboriginal man. It is thus that one gains the impression that she is making explicit her narrative structure from the first line on.

In the case of the narrative taken from transcript 3, the importance of ‘symmetrical framing’ is highlighted by the fact that it is not only related to the cultural core concept of things

‘visible/invisible’, but also reflects the idea of communally shared wisdom. While in the narrative taken from transcript 2 the principle of instantiation was achieved by the narration of several story lines with similar content, in the narrative from transcript 3 this principle is made explicit by the speakers’ constant reference to the community as a source. Speaker *R* starts his narrative with the following utterance, which he then repeats in line 279:

Example from transcript 2

271 R: ʔwe have been ʔTOLD;>

His reference to the communal source of the story is echoed in the ending of speaker *RI*’s contribution to the narrative:

344 RI: <<p> so i've been ʔTOLD,

As to the occurrence of the concept of being ‘visible/invisible’, it should be noted that both speaker *R* and *V*’s accounts of the story end with the word ‘disappear’, with *R*’s final utterance initiating *V*’s story line.

Example from transcript 3

294 R: but they **disap**↑!PEA!r,>

...

330 V: ʔ!FIRE! blazed ʔup (until) the ʔrabbits **disap**↑!PEAR:!. .

The closing effect of speaker *V*’s utterance is additionally accompanied by the use of syllable-timing, which has been discussed as an emphatic device in chapter 1.1.2.3 on speech rhythm.

The whole narrative relating the encounter with ‘magical people’ ends inter alia with the following utterance:

353 V: =ʔHE was a ^CLEverman-

354 RI: =[ʔyeah].

355 V: <<all> [he]'s ʔmost probably ʔCOULD sit ʔdown an' talk to the

356 ʔ!YUU!rii ʔman;

357 =but ʔ!O!ther ʔpeople-

358 (-)

359 V: <<h,len> when they ʔ!SEE! a ʔyuurii ↑MAN?>

Apart from the fact that this ending is in accordance with the principle of ‘symmetrical framing’, the last utterance is interesting in that it marks the beginning of the next narrative, which is linked to the story analysed in this chapter via another discourse strategy. Malcolm and Rochecoste called this strategy ‘topical development by association’ (2000: 271), thereby stressing the fact that narratives occurring in Aboriginal discourse may be linked by association rather than chronological sequence.

In addition to the discourse strategies said to be typical of the cultural schema of ‘Encountering the Unknown’, the narrative example taken from transcript 2 exhibited ‘consecutive subject deletion’ as in

409 B: <<h> an !THIS! feller ‘SEEN: ‘im?
 410 (---)
 411 swingin' the ‘!PUNCH! `for im ↑!EH:!,>
 412 (---)
 413 **MISSED** the little `FELler an `‘it the `TREE an `break his ‘ARM;

and ‘gestural support’ as in

338 B: she'd put it !OUT! `like ‘!THAT!-
 339 =and `!EE!'d come out and `grap er **like** `THIS;

As to the strategy of ‘surveying’, the story line in the following passage is frequently “interrupted” by additional information:

259 B: =‘I come back from coo^NAMble `ONE `night;
 260 (-)
 261 **WE's over THERE;**
 262 (---)
 263 <<p> OH ^BLOO:dy um->
 264 (---)
 265 <<all> we 'ad to `MOVE ou' there from the ↑!FLOOD! ,>
 266 (1.5)
 267 an' !COME! back an' we `!CLEANED! up every thing **LIKE** `that ;
 268 =<<acc> ^A::ny('ow) i'm `layin' `there in the ‘!NIGHT! then;
 269 =‘ad all the **WINDOWS** an' ()ol' tin ‘!OU!ses `there;>
 270 (1.1)
 271 and:(.) <<len,h> ‘LAYin ‘there,>
 272 (---)
 273 **i had three of me=‘!OWN! `kids;**
 274 (1.4)
 275 **and the `!TWO! that i a^DOPTed;**
 276 (---)
 277 <<h>‘LAYin `there->
 278 (---)
 279 **ONE was only SMALL,>**

While the supplementary information provided in lines 261-265 and line 267 is not marked off the text and can therefore not be distinguished from the core narrative, the status of the following lines printed in bold as instances of ‘surveying’ can be questioned. In contrast to the first part of the passage, the information relevant to the core narrative is highlighted by the repetition of the phrase *laying there*, which is additionally distinguished from the rest by the prosodic use of high pitch. From this perspective, it could be argued that the “true” instances of ‘surveying’ precede the narrative, which only starts with the use of *anyhow* in line 268.

Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000) do not mention the discourse marker *anyhow* as a word initiating the narrative schema. However, I would argue that it is similar in function to Malcolm and Rochecouste’s response marker *well* and their speaker progression marker *now*.

As all of the three words just mentioned serve to signal the speaker's **progression** of his or her narrative, I have used the term 'speaker progression marker' to refer to all of them. While all narrators make use of such discourse markers, the forms they use are, however, quite heterogeneous. Thus, *anyhow* only occurred in the narrative taken from transcript 2, whereas speaker *GM* in transcript 8 extensively uses *so*. In the narrative taken from transcript 3, speaker progression markers are rarely found, with the exception of speaker *R*'s use of *now* and *well* in lines 269 and 272 respectively. In my opinion, the reason for this may lie in the fact that 'collaborative narration' is a discourse strategy only found in the narrative taken from transcript 3. As a result, 'speaker progression' is marked not so much by the use of specific words, but in the switch of narrators.

Concerning the use of discourse markers, Malcolm and Rochecouste argue that:

[t]he discourse associated with the Encountering the Unknown schema is especially rich in demonstratives, used to highlight what is being profiled. This is consistent with the need to draw the listener's attention to normal phenomena the normality of which is being questioned in the discourse. (2000: 274).

In accordance with this observation, *this* as the most frequent 'profiling marker' was consistently attributed to the superhuman or non-human agents, the encounters with whom constituted the focus of the narrative.

Example from transcript 8

235 GM: an 'e WALKed out the DOOR an' **THIS**-
 236 other big-
 237 (--)
 238 ↑BIRD,
 239 (-)
 240 NIGHT owl;
 241 (-)
 242 swooped ↑PAST 'im;

In the example, the emphasis on the non-human agent is additionally highlighted by the use of 'suspensory pausing'. Furthermore, the 'profiling marker' *one* was found in the narrative example taken from transcript 2. As already mentioned in chapter 4.1.2.1, the use of *one* instead of the indefinite article is, however, limited to speaker *B* in the data.

While the use of 'participant identification' as a discourse marker has already been mentioned for transcript 2 – in which speaker *B* starts her narrative by introducing the protagonists of the following series of similar stories of encounters with the hairyman –, 'shifting character foci' were also observed for the narrative taken from transcript 8. Starting with a group of cousins including the narrator, that is the first person plural inclusive, the narrative then focuses on one of the boys before moving on to describe the following action, in which the narrator's

uncle and grandfather play an important role. Although the narrative is told from the boys' communal perspective, with the contributions of uncle and grandfather being limited to instances of direct speech, we once get an insight into the grandfather's thoughts:

Example from transcript 8

277 GM: <<len> he ↑**KNEWS**, >
 278 (--)
 279 something was **WRONG**,

It is interesting to note that the grandfather's thought in line 279 echoes the utterance of the uncle in line 256,

256 GM: <<p> so me UNClE said OH:->
 257 (---)
 258 <<f> **somethin's WRONG**:,

thereby indicating the narrative's concern with the breach of the natural and social order that one of the boys had committed by killing a night owl. As the allusion to 'wrong' behaviour additionally occurs in the beginning of the story, I would argue that the structuring principle used here is the 'narrative negotiation of cultural core concepts' as identified by Klapproth in the use of the word 'straight' (2004: 294), which can be translated as 'doing things in accordance with Aboriginal Law': "[...] in Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara storytelling practice the narrative negotiation of culturally relevant concerns, lexicalised in what may be called cultural core concepts, may function as a structuring principle working at the global level of narrative organisation" (2004: 259). Given that Aboriginal storytelling is not concerned with the fate of an individual, but with the consequences that an individual's action may have for the whole community (Klapproth 2004: 264), it is not surprising that the narrator uses 'shifting character foci' as a discursive strategy in order to give expression to a collectivity of viewpoints.

While Aboriginal storytelling is arguably not different from Anglo-Western narrative practice in that it situates the story in time, the reference to space is often said to be of heightened importance. In connection with Aboriginal people's strong relation to the land, Klapproth found that it is very conventional for narratives to start with a character's movement through geographical space (2004: 240):

Examples from transcript 2

259 B: =`I **come back** from coo^NAMble `ONE `night;
 ...
 399 B: he'd **come** `out of the re`SERVE:¹⁷⁰ `there;

¹⁷⁰ Note that reference to space is probably the most important means of linking the narrative with the colonial/post-colonial setting in which it takes place.

In her analysis of Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara narratives, Klapproth identified what she calls ‘the journey’ as one of the narrative’s structuring principles (2004: 253). In the same vein, the ‘Travel schema’, one of the four prototypical narrative schemata identified by Malcolm and Rochecouste (2000: 269), is characterised by the alternation of ‘moving’ and ‘stopping’ sequences. In accordance with the fact that narrative schemata may co-occur, the narrative example from transcript 8 starts with the ‘Travel schema’ and even shows traces of the related ‘Hunting schema’:

201	GM:	we wen' OUT -	<i>MOVING</i>
202		(---)	
203		shootin' SHANGhais and:-	<i>HUNTING</i>
204		(---)	
205		WE:-	
206		(---)	
207		we Killed a-	<i>STOPPING/HUNTING</i>
208		(--)	
209		<<f> a !NIGHT!owl;	
210		=!MO!poke;>	
211		<<pp> and->	
212		(1.2)	
213		in !AR!midale 'e's a-	
214		(--)	
215		!GHOST!bird 'e's a-	
216		<<all> you shouldn't KILL 'im 'e's a->	
217		(2.5)	
218		<<pp> uhm:->	
219		(1.3)	
220		<<f> when we KILLed'im?>	
221		(---)	
222		we wen' back to our UNCLe's place an' !STAYED! there;	<i>MOVING</i>
223		=<<all> we was stayin' at 'is place for the NIGHT,>	<i>STOPPING</i>

The example demonstrates that other schemata than the ‘Encountering the Unknown schema’ may well form part of the informants’ narrative repertoire, indicating that the reasons for the limited occurrence of the former is to be found in the limitations of the data rather than anywhere else.

4.2.5.2 Message Content

Having investigated the structures of three selected narratives in the last section, I will now turn to a brief discussion of content, that is the topics dealt with in the narratives. However, this is not to say that the preceding analysis of message form is irrelevant in the present context. Rather, message form and content as the two aspects of a speech event are normally highly related (Malcolm 1980-82: 61):

[...] any information that is to be communicated has be structured in certain ways, and the linguistic structure is therefore in itself an aspect of the information that is being communicated. In the storytelling act, this is directly reflected in the cognitive potential inherent in narrative discourse as an organising principle for the structuring of human experience in *particular, typified ways*. (Klapproth 2004: 103)

Given the limited scope of this study, I will concentrate on the example of the mythical creature called the ‘bunyip’¹⁷¹, which has been adopted as a cultural myth by the wider Australian society by now. My aim in doing so is twofold: First, I want to demonstrate the cultural continuity of the ‘bunyip’ tradition in some selected narratives taken from the data. In a second step, I will attempt to show how this tradition was embraced and culturally appropriated by the colonists, thereby already hinting at some of the problems that will be discussed in the context of ‘Norms of Interpretation’.

Describing the Australian Indigenous culture at the time of settlement, Holden states that “[m]onsters [...] were widespread in Australian Aboriginal lore. Strange aquatic creatures, water spirits and fearful variants of the bunyip possessed a variety of regional attributes [...]” (2001: 2). He then goes on to list the different names that Australian Indigenous people from all over south-eastern Australia assumedly used to refer to this mythical creature, including the terms *Mirriola* and *Waawii*, which he attributes to the Barwon River and Hunter River regions in New South Wales respectively. The following examples illustrate that both of these terms occurred in the data:

Example from transcript 3

1807 RI: [they] call im the WAA[wii here];
 1808 R: <<all> [that's ano]ther WORD for BUNyip.
 1809 = WAAwii.
 1810 RI: yeah the WAAwii.
 1811 (---)
 1812 the BUNyip.

Example from transcript 6

376 VI: <<p, len> an' she kept SAYin' it's a ↑!WAA!wii.>

Example from transcript 7

349 PG: VErY-
 350 SPEcial site at brewarRINA.
 351 (---)
 352 SAcRed site.
 353 called the MIrrigana.
 354 (---)
 355 an MIrrigana MEANS:-
 356 (---)
 357 well MIrri is DOG: an an gana is: is like GANya.
 358 PLACE-

¹⁷¹ Other possible topics would include Aboriginal beliefs in birds as messengers of death or bad news and the role of nature in the Aboriginal totemic worldview in general. These subjects, though not discussed in detail here, will be touched on in the context of ‘Norms of interpretation’.

359 (--)
 360 <<dim> !PLACE! where the WAtEr dog (.) LIVES.>

Somewhat curiously, speaker *PG* uses the term *mirri* to refer to a creature called ‘the water dog’ rather than the ‘bunyip’, and he concludes his narrative by stating that the two can indeed be considered as one:

500 PG: the the Waterdog covers that I THINK;
 501 P: =yeah.
 502 PG: =yeah.
 I THINK he:’s-
 he’s the BUNyip or-

Although this explanation is not repeated by any of the other speakers, there is a similarity between their descriptions of the *waawii* as a fish and their depiction of the *mirri* dog, indicating that these mythical creatures may be linked to each other:

Example from transcript 6

573 VI: they live in the WAtEr.
 574 (--)
 575 P: mmh?
 576 VI: <<pp> in the RIVer.>
 577 an they’ve got EYES:,
 578 (---)
 579 real big EYES like:-
 580 (2.0)
 ...
 590 an:’ LOT like FISH you KNOW

Despite the fact that the ‘bunyip’ obviously continues to form the subject of contemporary Aboriginal storytelling, its significance for Aboriginal mythology remains largely unknown to Europeans and will therefore not be investigated in any more detail in the context of this thesis. There is, however, evidence that it touches on traditional secret knowledge only imparted to initiated members of Aboriginal community. According to a historical source of the nineteenth century cited in Holden,

the natives are unable to reveal, to even those Europeans who have learned enough of their dialects to be able to hold a conversation with them, those things that to them are such sacred mysteries that they are not to be spoken of to any one, white or black, who has not passed the degree of initiation that would permit of such revelation. (2001: 114)

What is important in the context of this thesis is the fact that communally shared wisdom concerning the ‘bunyip’/dog is indeed encoded in the narratives in the data. The use of the same structure and wording across a wide range of speakers with different backgrounds belie the idea of idiosyncratic narrative invention and allude to the fact that the informants’ stories constitute instantiations of a traditional story. The story of the ‘water dog’, apart from playing on the cultural concept of ‘visible/invisible’ things, always includes a variation of the sentence *it got bigger*:

Example from transcript

967 R: an' the !FUR!ther they went the bigger the !DOG! got.

Example from transcript 7

422 PG: =it got Bigger an Bigger as (.) AS they-
423 (--)
424 <<dim> as they LOOKED at it.>

In contrast, encounters with the ‘bunyip’ are often related to the activity of fishing. The traditional character of the latter story line is also indicated by the fact that a quite similar story can be found in the National Library of Australia’s online presentation of the ‘bunyip’ myth, where it has been included in the category of ‘Aboriginal stories’ and bears the title *Bunyip and the Swan*¹⁷².

The website cited above is perhaps most interesting in that it testifies to the popularity of the ‘bunyip’ in Australian culture as “[...] one of the very few Aboriginal legends to be embraced by the Europeans” (Holden 2001: 16). According to Holden, the first settlers were likely to believe in the existence of the ‘bunyip’ as a mythical monster, given that they pictured the Antipodes as a region roamed by ‘exotic inversions of the natural order’, a view which was supported by the biblical story of the tower of Babel:

[...] until the tower’s destruction it was said that ‘the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech’ [...], but in the confusion thereafter a bewildering variety of languages and a diversity of races multiplied and dispersed – **with the most monstrous usually situated at the furthest reaches of the imagined world** (my emphasis). (2001: 25)

However, they soon sought a rational rather than a spiritual explanation of the myth, starting with the attribution of the Aboriginal bunyip to the alien presence of seals or crocodiles as far south as northern New South Wales or the booming voice of an Australian swamp bird called the bittern and culminating in the scientific discovery of fossil bones.

[The learned] thought it probable that a large animal of strange appearance existed in Australian wilds – a carnivorous marsupial, strong and fierce, and courageous enough to attack man. It might be a “living fossil” – a survivor from the Age of giant reptiles, or at least, the era of Diprotodon, that huge wombat-like marsupial whose fossil remains have been found in abundance nearly all over our island-continent. (Barrett 1946: 8)

In the following period, the myth surrounding the ‘bunyip’ additionally underwent a process of cultural appropriation and soon became incorporated into prototypical Anglo-Western story schemata à la ‘Beauty and the Beast’ as exemplified in the following description of the pantomime *The Bunyip*, which had its debut performance in 1916:

¹⁷² National Library of Australia. “Bunyips...enter the lair of the bunyip if you dare!”. URL: <http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/bunyips>; accessed on 23/10/2006.

A demonic Gnome turns the daughter of the King of Fairyland into a Bunyip. The unfortunate girl can only be returned to her natural form if someone lovingly overlooks her dreadful features. This basic plot is considerably enlivened by scenes set in the Jenolan Caves, a native flower ballet, a procession of Australian characters including Ned Kelly, and a striking finale to the tune of *Advance Australia Fair*. (Holden 2001: 133)

While most non-Indigenous Australians now consider the ‘bunyip’ as an amusing fairy tale creature mostly found in the fantasy world of children’s books (Holden 2001: 179) or depicted in lollies offered in Australian supermarkets, Australian Indigenous authors have recently protested against this kind of trivialisation by launching a series of new ‘bunyip’ stories and demanding a “[...] return to a time when the bunyip ‘was honoured and had its rightful place... to serve as monster in a continuing myth’” (Holden 2001: 199).

4.2.6 Key

Citing Hymes, Saville-Troike states that “[k]ey is introduced to provide for the tone, manner, or spirit in which the act is done” (1989: 141) and that it “[...] may be signalled by choice of language or variety [...]” (1989: 142). While the linguistic repertoire of individual speakers is rather hard to assess since they were only recorded on one occasion, the ‘key’ of their speech acts, which have been defined as ‘yarning’, can be explored by looking at their attitudes towards the narratives. Although laughter occasionally occurs in the course of conversation, it is absent from the narratives themselves, their tone being predominantly serious.

Example from transcript 3

```
1435 R:    <<f> an for !SOME! reason an a!NO!ther->
1436 RI:    (    )-
1437        (--)
1438        LIFE,
1439        (-)
1440 R:    <<len> the beLIEFS are TRUE.>
```

Example from transcript 2

```
651 B:    (    )we NEVer used to get FRIGHtened ,
652        =that OLD people -
653        (-)
654        used to SAY that to us ;
655        =but THEY were TRUE:: ,
```

The speakers’ insistence on the validity of the narratives is in accordance with Klapproth’s observation that seriousness of intent is one of the most important criteria for the evaluation of good Aboriginal stories (2004: 287). In addition, the use of the word *true* in the examples above is arguably of special importance since Klapproth includes the dichotomy ‘true/false’ in her list of cultural core concepts typically explored in Aboriginal storytelling (2004: 294).

4.2.7 Instrumentality

4.2.7.1 Channel

According to Malcolm (1980-82: 81), Aboriginal storytelling often involves what he calls ‘sand stories’, a graphic representation of the protagonists’ move through geographical space that is typically drawn on the sand with a stick. However, as the interviews were not videotaped, it is impossible to comment on the use of semiotic systems other than the verbal one, although the following example demonstrates that speakers make occasional use non-vocal modes of expression:

Example from transcript 2

527 B: =‘SEE `an=all `others went out ~!CHI!ppin?
528 (---)
529 P: ‘yeah:?
530 B: !Pick!in -
531 P: =um
532 B: =up the the ‘!STICKS!¹⁷³ an -

4.2.7.2 Forms of Speech

The linguistic variety used by the speakers in the data has been extensively analysed in the structure-centred description provided in chapter 4.1 and will therefore not be discussed in this context. Suffice it to say that despite some linguistic differences between individual speakers, the variety of ‘AbE’ used in the data can generally be described as acrolectal since the analysis suggested that it has more in common with ‘mAusE’ than with the Australian Creoles.

4.2.8 Norms

4.2.8.1 Norms of Interpretation

It is important to point out that the majority of Aborigines in ‘settled’ Australia are biculturally competent. Many people choose to operate within white norms in many of their dealings with non-Aborigines, and to use Aboriginal norms [...] in their own in-group interactions. However, this choice is by no means universal, and much cross-cultural interaction is affected by **different norms of interaction** (my emphasis) [...]. (Eades 1988: 99)

Cross-cultural communication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the past has shown that misunderstandings can often not adequately be explained by Aboriginal

¹⁷³ sound of fingers knocking on a table or chair

people's use of different linguistic surface structures, but must instead be traced back to distinct understandings of personal experience and concepts of the world: "When people who are talking don't share the same culture, knowledge, values, and assumptions, mutual understanding can be especially difficult" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 231). According to the authors, cultural presuppositions, that is the 'common' knowledge shared by members of a community, are often encoded in metaphors since "[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (1980: 3). However, 'metaphor' as used in this context is not to be equated with the literary device that it is most often associated with. Rather than residing on the surface level of language, metaphor is arguably better understood as an underlying conceptual system that may occasionally **surface** in linguistic structure. It is thus that a lack in stylistic metaphors as observed in the data does by no means imply the absence of metaphorical concepts. Similar to the idea of nursery rhymes as culturally specific literary forms (Mühlhäusler and Amery, p.c.), the use of metaphor as a stylistic device may in fact not be universal. Narratives are directly related to cultural conceptualisations in that they provide a widely-used means of "packaging reality" (Malcolm and Sharifian 2002: 172), and they therefore lend themselves to the exploration of cultural metaphors, the most important of which will be presented in the following.

- *Narratives are a valid means of transmitting knowledge*

In Anglo-Western culture, the realm of education is associated primarily with the (expository) discourse of science; the negotiation of personal identity, on the other hand, with the (narrative) discourse of the personal life story. Furthermore, the two realms are viewed as belonging to two distinct and separate spheres, one being predominantly public, the other private. (Klapproth 2004: 47)

In her analysis of Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara narratives, Klapproth draws attention to the fact that in contrast to Western practice, storytelling is not discarded as fictional 'fairy tale stuff' (the only purpose of which is private amusement), but is instead considered as an essential means of education in Aboriginal society. In addition, it has already been argued that the concept of 'personal life story', or autobiography for that matter, is hard to apply to Aboriginal 'life story thing' as presented in chapter 4.2.1: Its function is not so much the negotiation of personal identity in the individualistic sense that autobiography is normally associated with than the reaffirmation of common values that gain their validity through the technique of instantiation. The incorporation of those values into the narrator's account of his/her personal life creates a kind of immediacy and therefore illustrates their applicability to everyday life. The latter is in fact a precondition for teachability commonly acknowledged in the field of pedagogy so that 'life story thing' has rightly been considered "[...] the very stuff of inter-generational transmission of value [...]" (Sansom 2001: 120).

The idea of inter-generational transmission is especially interesting in this context, given that Aboriginal society is often said to favour an authoritarian over a rationalistic epistemology (Malcolm 1980-82: 95). Elders are revered as custodians of culture, which is in contrast to modern Western society where elderly people's narratives are more often than not discarded as "out of fashion". The reason why Aboriginal elders' stories are neither considered as obsolete nor criticised may perhaps be explained by Aboriginals' "[...] traditionally anchored willingness to accept belief systems as "closed" systems (i.e. that do not need to be subjected to analytical or scientific scrutiny)[...]" (Klapproth 2004: 72). It is probably for that matter that young Aboriginals, having been introduced to cultural values through Aboriginal storytelling, have preserved their belief in certain traditions up to that day. The following example illustrates that "[i]n modern Aboriginal subculture some elements of traditional culture survive: [...] beliefs in certain spirits and harbingers of death are still passed on [...]" (Barwick 1988: 29).

Example from transcript 3

1220 R: but Even the YOUNger generation (.) to!DAY!,
 1221 (--)
 ...
 1226 still beLIEVE-
 1227 (-)
 1228 in SPIrits.
 1229 (2.0)
 1230 <<p> ah:: WHEther it's jus' PART of their-
 1231 (-)
 1232 CULture or WHAT i don' KNOW?
 1233 (--)
 1234 uhm->
 1235 (---)
 1236 it been BRED into em,
 1237 (-)
 1238 (from) day !ONE:!,

- *Time is cyclic*

Commenting on ethnographic semantics in the framework of his preliminary ethnography of speaking for Aboriginal society, Malcolm claims that one important characteristics of this society is its members' cyclic view of time (Malcolm 1980-82: 95). This hypothesis is furthermore supported by Macdonald, according to whom this underlying cultural metaphor finds its expression in the narrative practice of instantiation and its connection with the genre of 'life story thing':

[Wiradjuri people] are great story tellers. Many hours have been whiled away telling stories of the past and present, most of them about real characters and events in time and space which, in the telling, take on an **intransitive and cyclical quality, a timelessness and an enduring significance** (my emphasis). Most stories carry basic messages, highlight concerns, and reveal features of Koorie life and values which have persisted over time. In this sense, the story is like a myth. Stories are not told to inform or illuminate but, rather, to illustrate and to emphasise. (Macdonald 1988: 180)

In addition, I would argue that it is in connection with this kind of timelessness and enduring significance that the use of habitual past in the following story can be explained. Rather than referring to a single instance, the narrator's choice of tense serves to stress the perseverative character of the event.

Example from transcript 3

```

1588 V:    <<f> !MUM!->
1589      (---)
1590      <<h> she used to ALL the-
1591      KIDS be runnin' round at NIGHT down the RIVER?
1592      (-)
1593 RI:    <<p> mmh.>
1594      (---)
1595 V:    <<p> an SHE used to always SAY.>
1596      (---)
1597      <<h> an' GET back 'ERE:-
1598      i can 'EAR 'im COmin THERE,>
1599      (-)
1600      you'll 'EAR 'im singin OUT in a minute,
1601      <<h> we said OH:->
1602      <<f> who's !MUM! (who),>
1603      (---)
1604      <<t> the da!LUUTCH! bird will GET you;>
1605      =the da[LUUTCH] bird,
1606 RI:    <<p>[uhm].>
1607 V:    <<all> an sure enOUGH you'd 'ear 'im singin' OUT;
1608      =an' the kids would jus' SCAtter an' go straight inTO-
1609      wherever they were SLEEpIn' an' that was IT.>

```

In my opinion, the extensive use of the term *always* needs to be interpreted in the same manner. While Harkins (1994: 155) simply states that *always* is substituted for *frequently* in varieties of 'AbE', this choice seems to be motivated by the Aboriginal concern for enduring significance of the story content.

- *human beings are a part of the natural world*

Analysing Anglo-Western stories with the help of narratological models, Klapproth states that "[...] the highest level category which the schema-theoretical models propose – i.e. the *episode* – is understood as a *one protagonist –one goal unit*. This conceptualisation reflects an atomistic and individualistic understanding of social reality" (2004: 162). As already mentioned, this is in contrast to the communal conceptualisation propagated by Aboriginal society, which is evident in the narratological strategies of both instantiation and collaborative narration. However, Malcolm argues that this idea of togetherness is not limited to fellow men, but includes nature and thereby results in a holistic rather than an individualistic view of the world: "Whereas European goals may divide the individual from his social and physical environment, distinctively Aboriginal goals operate in the other direction: "They and the world are one. They think, live and act ecologically" (1980-82: 94). While the argument that

natives are generally more concerned with the environment has been criticised in recent times, Klapproth hints at the possibility that a positivist philosophy as propagated in Western countries may in fact be responsible for environmental mismanagement since “[...] this analytical procedure rests on an understanding of the separateness of the objective world from the human mind. From such a position of separateness the human mind can take control over the universe and can start to manipulate it” (2004: 52).

The idea of human companionship with the natural world is deeply anchored in Aboriginal mythology, with traditional narratives often including a transition from human to animal form as exemplified in the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara story *Tjitji Maluringanyi* (‘a child transforms into a kangaroo’), which has been analysed in detail in Klapproth (2004). Although the data under discussion in this thesis does not include traditional stories of this kind, the boundary between animal and human form is sometimes blurred in participants’ narratives as in the following examples:

Example from transcript 10

22 A: an’ as we’re DRivin just on the OUTskirts of Dubbo i looked
 aCROSS at the-
 23 (--)
 24 were the (.) GRAVES of the BOYS were-
 25 =an i started to !CRY! an-
 26 an my DAUghter said-
 27 (--)
 28 TO’ me not to CRY,
 29 (--) (children in the background)
 30 cause these TWO young kangaROOS had just HOpped over the
 other-
 32 (--)
 33 side of the ROAD an’-
 34 (1.3)
 35 we-
 36 (---)
 37 **looked at the kangaROOS: an’ we thought about the BOYS’:-**
 38 (--)
 39 **!SPI!rits bein’ in the kangaROOS:,**

Example from transcript 7

429 PG: <<f> the SAME DOG,
 430 (---)
 431 you SEE this BIG-
 432 (---)
 433 you see this big white DOG,>
 435 (---)
 436 <<all> when they used to be WALKin’ ’ome on the MIssions,>
 437 =we would ALL walk over the SCRUB,
 438 (---)
 439 an:-
 440 (---)
 441 WHEN ’e disapPEARS INTO the Other SIDE?

442 <<all> on the Other side of the ROA' an'->
 443 (think) **this MAN would WALK out the scrub.**

The companionship between men and the natural world is additionally apparent in the anthropocentric conceptualisation of animals having the same social structures and similar kinds of interaction as human beings:

Example from transcript 6

292 VI: =she never SAW so many !BIRDS!,
 293 (---)
 294 in one PLACE you KNOW?
 295 (---)
 296 an' she MENTioned it TO:-
 297 (---)
 298 <<len> I know IS it-
 299 'er ↑GRANmother OR->
 300 (1.5)
 301 her ↑AUNTie;
 302 (---)
 303 <<p> an' she said> <<len> THAT was their !CON!ference.>
 304 (1.3)
 305 they-
 306 they GET together like THAT an' they 'ad their ↑!CON!ference.

This idea also seems to include spirits and mythical creatures as Gale argues that “[r]eality, for the Warlpiri¹⁷⁴, is not dichotomised into the natural versus the supernatural, as it is in Western so-called scientific minds” (Gale 1995: 44). Referring to the ‘hairy men’, speaker *R* states that:

Example from transcript 3

835 R: <<p,all> they probab' got the same FAMily structures as Anyone-
 836 like !YOU!,>

In addition, both mythical creatures like the ‘hairy man’ and animals are considered as capable of communication. According to Saville-Troike, the investigation into such beliefs regarding language use constitutes an important aspect to be studied in every ethnographic research on communication (1989: 116). Birds, in particular, are often regarded as messengers of bad news or death by the speakers in the data:

Example from transcript 3

1318 V: but the-
 1319 (---)
 1320 willy WAGtail comes,
 1321 they say you !GO!nna:-
 1322 (---)
 1323 Somebody's !SICK!.
 1324 (1.8)
 1325 <<h> you're WANTED someWHERE?>
 1326 RI: or you HEAR bad NEWS.

¹⁷⁴ Warlpiri is the name of an Aboriginal “tribe” living in the Western Desert region of Central Australia.

In my opinion, this kind of culturally defined indexicality may perhaps be compared to the belief that nature as a macrocosm mirrors events in human social life. This concept is thought to be typical of the Elizabethan Age, a period preceding the eighteenth century of Enlightenment that marked the beginning of positivist philosophy and scientific discourse in Western culture. Consider the following excerpt from Shakespeare's drama *Macbeth* (Act 2, Scene 4), in which disorder in the natural world is used as a metaphor foreshadowing the discovery of the breakdown of social morality in connection with the protagonist's crime.

Old man

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

The recurrent reference to scientific discourse and positivist philosophy is important in the context of this analysis of cultural norms of interpretation, given that Lakoff and Johnson have identified the so called 'myth of objectivism' to be one of the philosophical cornerstones underpinning modern Western conceptualisations of 'reality' and 'truth' (1980: 229). It is probably this view of the world and its concomitant cultural presuppositions which contrast most with the Aboriginal holistic and spiritual understanding and therefore lead to cross-cultural miscommunication or the cultural appropriation of Indigenous culture as illustrated in the case of the 'bunyip' myth (see chapter 4.2.5.2).

4.2.8.2 Norms of Interaction

Norms of interaction in connection with the narrative event have already been addressed in the discussion of 'collaborative narration', namely the audience's contribution to the act of storytelling and the resulting creation of a communal narrative that is in accordance with the narrative's content and purpose of reinstantiating communal wisdom.

Another norm of interaction which can be deduced from the narratives in the data is the general aim of conflict avoidance or restoring of order (Klapproth 2004: 285 and 306) rather than problem solving typical of Western story schemata modelled on the concept of the 'homo faber'. As already mentioned, "protagonists" in Aboriginal stories often need to be considered as experiencers rather than agents, an idea which seems to be directly related to the holistic view of nature as opposed to the notion of man being separate from the natural environment.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the data under discussion shares a high amount of linguistic surface features with the variety of English used by non-Indigenous Australians. In addition, it also reveals some distinctive patterns, the nature of which is comparable to the findings of other studies conducted in different regions of Australia. This observation, however, already points to the fact that the dissociation of this Aboriginal variety of English from ‘mAusE’ on the basis of structure-centred description alone remains problematic, given the considerable overlap between the two systems in the area of segmental phonology and morphosyntax in particular. It may therefore be questioned whether the variety used by the Aboriginal informants can be qualified as ‘Aboriginal English’ at all?

Although pronunciation and grammar may be close to ‘mAusE’, major differences between the varieties can be found in the area of linguistic deep level structures as exemplified in the ethnographic analysis of the narratives, which need to be understood as a genre of oral history. As the ethnographic approach is concerned with the meaning of language, its use in interaction and the structuring of oral discourse, the findings presented in chapter 4.2 testify to Aboriginal speakers’ use of English as a means to express their distinct culture. Unfortunately, the study of such differences is often ignored in descriptive linguistics, most probably because they are rather hard to assess. The same is perhaps true for cross-cultural communication in general: if a speaker uses what could superficially be described as “standard” English, interlocutors assume that they can comprehend his or her utterances. However, it is this assumption that often leads to miscommunications between speakers of different ethnic backgrounds using the same language because distinct structures of discourse and its underlying cultural concepts can pose a major problem for communication.

Being a white non-Australian person, the author of this study therefore does not claim to have fully ‘understood’ every aspect of the analysed speech data, a claim which would indeed be very naive, given that a discussion with the speakers concerning their intended meaning could unfortunately not take place. Consequently, the merit of this study can only lie in the attempt to show a higher degree of awareness of culturally-based differences in the use of English by Aboriginal speakers and the will to become more sensitive to linguistic deep structures indicating such differences. However, I would argue that this kind of willingness is a necessary precondition for cross-cultural understanding in general as

[...] the degree of conceptual convergence between speakers is not only dependent on the retrospective variable, the one of shared perspective, [...] as the desire to participate or share in future activities. The prospective variable represents the active part communicants have to play in converting individual [or communal] experience/knowledge into shared knowledge. (Kreckel 1981: 25)

From this perspective, Indigenous oral history with its narrative component assumes a significant role in that narratives have been identified as a linguistic ‘prime site’ of sharing cultures. However, the use of narrative and non-standard linguistic surface structures are more often than not depreciated as inadequate forms of transmitting knowledge and inappropriate means of communication respectively. I would therefore like to conclude this thesis by aligning myself with Hymes who discovered

[...] a general predisposition in our culture to dichotomise forms and functions of language use, and to treat one side of the dichotomy as superior, the other side as something to be disdained, discouraged, diagnosed as evidence or cause of subordinate status. Different dichotomies tend to be conflated, so that standard: non-standard, written: spoken, abstract: concrete, context-independent: context-free (sic!), technical/formal: narrative tend to be equated. (Hymes 1996: 112)

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7. APPENDIX

7.1 EXCURSUS: ABORIGINAL LOANWORDS IN mAUSe

When compared to the influence that English has had on Aboriginal languages, the impact of the latter on ‘mAusE’ has definitely been less striking. In fact, it can be limited to the lexicon, which “[b]y its very nature [...] is the least unified area of any language and is most open to processes of systematic and/or idiosyncratic development, i.e. of mixing and nativization” (Leitner 1992: 215). The table below provides a selective list of historical loanwords which are part of the contemporary lexicon of ‘mAusE’:

Table 6: Selective list of historical borrowings from Aboriginal Languages

	Original word	Australian Language	English	Source
PLANTS	warradah	Dharug	waratah ¹⁷⁵	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	gwandaang	Wiradjuri	quandong tree	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
MAMMALS	buduru	Dharug	potoroo ¹⁷⁶	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	dhama(r)	Nyungar	tammar wallaby	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	dingu	Dharug	dingo	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994); Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	gangurru	Guugu Yimidhirr	kangaroo	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	koolah	Dharug	koala	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	kwok, kwoka, kuka	Nyungar	quokka ¹⁷⁷	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994); Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	wambad	Wiradjuri (BUT: loanword from Dharug!!)	wombat	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	wularu	Dharug	wallaroo	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	wumbat	Dharug	wombat	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	yuru, thuru	Adnyamathanha	euro	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
BIRDS	burrallga	Kamilaroi and others	broilga ¹⁷⁸	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	bubuk	Dharug	boobook owl	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	guuguubarra	Wiradjuri	kookaburra	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
	wungawunga	Dharug	wonga pigeon	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
FISH AND SEA ANIMALS	puddenba, puddinba	probably Yagara	pudding-ball	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)

¹⁷⁵ a kind of flower predominantly found in Western Australia

¹⁷⁶ an Australian marsupial

¹⁷⁷ a species of rats

¹⁷⁸ an Australian bird species

REPTILES	dhaypan	Wik-Mungkan	taipan	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
MYTHICAL CREATURES	banib	Wembawemba	bunyip	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990), SSABSA (1996)
	yuwi ('dream spirit')	Yuwaalaraay	Yowie	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
HUNTING	wumara	Dharug	woomara	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)
CEREMONY	¹⁷⁹	Kamilaroi	bora (initiation rite)	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
		Dharug	corroboree	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
PEOPLE		Dharug	gin ¹⁸⁰	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
		Awabakal	koorie	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
ENVIRONMENT		Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi	gilgai ('waterhole')	Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990)
	bilabang	Wiradjuri	billabong	Thieberger and Mc Gregor (1994)

Though this list is not extensive, it nevertheless indicates that the majority of loanwords were 'cultural borrowings' (Amery 1993: 39) referring to aspects of the natural environment and Aboriginal culture that were new to the colonists. This observation is in stark contrast to the case of Aboriginal languages, which have extensively borrowed words from English and thereby often substituted already existing Aboriginal words with English ones. Indeed, the initial impression that the majority of Aboriginal words that have become a part of the lexicon of 'mAuse' are such 'cultural borrowings' can be supported by a quantitative analysis of the 400 words listed in Dixon *et al.*'s *Australian Aboriginal Words in English: their origin and meaning* (note that word classes other than nouns have today become obsolete!):

Table 7: Semantic categories of loanwords

	Semantic category	Number of loanwords
Fauna	Mammals	54
	Birds	23
	Fish and water animals	28
	Reptiles	9
	Insects	9
Flora	Fruits, nuts, seeds	28
	Roots	6
	Other edible flora	14
	General flora	60
Implements	Hunting/warfare	23
	food collection and preparation	7
	Ceremony/Religion	31
	People	34
	Music instruments	2
	Art	3
	Body parts	3
	Environment	17

¹⁷⁹ Neither did Dixon *et al.* provide the original words in the following cases, nor could they be found in other sources.

¹⁸⁰ Nowadays used as a derogatory term for an Indigenous woman; another similar word is *lubra* which, too, has become pejorative over time.

	Clothing	2
	Dwellings	5
	Verbs (4 used in Pidgin and now obsolete)	9
	Adjectives/adverbs (6 used in Pidgin and now obsolete)	9

Of the loanwords listed in table 6, the word *kangaroo*, which was derived from a Guugu Yimidhirr name for a special kind of kangaroo, is not only the best known, but presumably also the first word of an Aboriginal language to have entered the lexicon of 'mAusE'. At least, it was one of the very first Aboriginal words ever heard by a European: "In 1770, when Cook was faced to make repairs to the 'Endeavour' in north Queensland, he and his party saw a number of large marsupials" (Dixon *et al.* 1990: 67). In the absence of any kind of knowledge of the traditional languages of Australia, the colonists assumed that the word *kangaroo* was part of one common Aboriginal language. While they consequently used it during subsequent encounters with Indigenous people, the latter thought they were being taught an English word for a new concept. Thus, at the same time that *kangaroo* entered the lexicon of 'NSW Pidgin English' and spread to other parts of the continent, the colonists' and Aborigines' understandings of this lexical item differed significantly from each other:

Through chains of communication between Aboriginal communities, the word was quickly passed on to other Indigenous peoples, as far away as the Paakantyi people of the Darling River in western New South Wales. The Paakantyi did not adopt *kangaroo* for kangaroos, of course, because they already had their own words *kirpatya* and *tharlta* for them. They used *kangaroo* to name the horse, which had been brought by the Europeans. (SSABSA 1996:126)

Today, the word *kangaroo* is arguably no longer consciously perceived as a loanword by the majority of Australians (and even less so by speakers of English outside Australia). In fact, the word has been completely nativized: not only are word formation processes including *kangaroo* very productive – compounds include *kangaroo apple*, *kangaroo fly*, *kangaroo paw*¹⁸¹, *kangaroo court* (a kind of lynch law) etc. – , the word also features in idiomatic expressions like *to have kangaroos in the top paddock*, which means 'to be crazy/eccentric' (Dixon *et al.* 1990: 67). However, note that the formation of both compounds and idioms is in accordance with English morphosyntactic processes.

Though the word *kangaroo* is not only the best-known loanword, but also provides a typical example of what has been called 'cultural borrowing', its linguistic origin is rather atypical when compared to the majority of loanwords. According to Dixon *et al.*, "[m]any of the loan words come from languages of the state capital cities (Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane); [...]" (1990: 23), of which the Sydney language Dharug was the most

¹⁸¹ an Australian flower

important one. The following table shows the Aboriginal languages that have provided more than three loanwords and have therefore be included in Dixon *et al.*. It is noteworthy that the majority of these languages were spoken in what is often called ‘settled Australia’, that is the eastern states of Australia, and have rather quickly died out in the aftermath of colonisation, so that the greater part of borrowings must be dated back to the initial phases of colonisation.

Table 8: The linguistic origin of loanwords

Language	Number of Loanwords
Dharug (Sydney)	>60
Wiradjuri (NSW)	>24
Kamilaroi and Yuwaalaraay (NSW)	>24
Bandjalang (NSW)	5
Dharawal and Dhurga (NSW)	4
Nyungar (Perth region)	>50 (some of them only used in Western Australia)
Western Desert languages	13
Wuywurung (Melbourne)	10
Wathawurung (Victoria)	6
Wembawemba (Victoria)	12
Kaurna (Adelaide)	10
Yaralde (SA)	7
Adnyamathanha (SA)	3
Arabana and Wangganguru (SA)	5
Yagara (Brisbane)	16
Gabi-Gabi (QLD)	3
Dyirbal (QLD)	6
Warrgamay (QLD)	3
Aranda (NT)	8
Tasmania	3 (possible loans)

Though the tables indicate that borrowing from Aboriginal languages was rather limited in number as well as in terms of semantic categories, Dixon *et al.* maintain that these loanwords contribute in important ways to the uniqueness of ‘mAusE’.

The number of borrowings clearly say something about the nature of contact between the colonists and Aborigines, as does the breakdown of the words into areas of meaning. But it would be wrong to think that the Aboriginal contribution to Australian English, because relatively small, was insignificant. In fact it provides the most distinctively Australian words of all – many of them refer to emblematic features of the country (*Koala* and *Kookaburra*) [...]. (Dixon *et al.* 1990: 219)

To conclude, it should be mentioned that borrowing is not an exclusively historical phenomenon in the Australian context, as it is likely to occur whenever two cultures coexist permanently. However, a detailed study of recent loanwords from Aboriginal languages and ‘Aboriginal English’¹⁸² yet needs to be conducted. A possible candidate would be the word

¹⁸² Some recent loanwords from ‘Aboriginal English’ and Aboriginal languages are included in Leitner (2004: 160-167).

buntha as in the phrase *We're going buntha*¹⁸³ used in a recent advertisement. In addition, Aboriginals did and still do borrow words from English into their indigenous languages as borrowing from neighbouring languages (adstrate languages) was already a very common phenomenon in traditional Aboriginal Australia. To mention just a few examples: While the missionaries Teichelmann and Schürmann documenting the Aboriginal language Kurna recorded such historical loanwords as *mutyerta* ('my shirt') and *birkitti* ('biscuit') (Amery 1993: 41), more recent borrowings would include the Pitjantjatjara word *wutbala* derived from English 'football' and the Yolngu word *rinytjin* from English 'engine' (Amery p.c.).

7.2 INDIGENOUS LOANWORDS IN 'AbE'

Table 9: Examples of Indigenous loanwords in the data

loanword ¹⁸⁴	meaning in the data	origin and source
bagii		'bageeyn', 'bageenj' (Wiradjuri: cleverman/doctor/ghost); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
barrang, balang	head	'balang' (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994));
bidjiiwong	little lizard	
bulbiin	pregnant (woman)	'buulbeenj' (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
bunyip	mythical creature	'banib' (Wemba-Wemba); (SSABSA (1996))
burray, burraay	baby	'buurraay' (Wiradjuri: boy/child/ human being); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
buuliis	whirlywind	
dalay	angry	'dhalaay', 'dhalay' (Wiradjuri: anger/passion/sorry for); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
daluutch bird		
dhidhing	foot	'dhinang', 'jinang' (Wiradjuri) ; (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
din:gaa	meat (kangaroo/emu)	'dhingaa', 'dhiyn', 'jiyn' (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
djirrii djirrii	willy wagtail	'dhirri-dhirri', 'jirri-jirri' (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
durrung	snake	'dhuurruung' (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking 1994)
galing	water	(Wiradjuri: rain, water, water fall, motion); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
gidjii scrub	plant	
gilgaay	water; waterhole	(Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi); (Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990))
girrawar	goanna	'girrawaa' (Wiradjuri : tree goanna); (McNicol and Hosking (1994));
guuya	fish	(Wiradjuri ¹⁸⁵); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
manga	ears	
marra	hand	(Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))

¹⁸³ According to Thieberger and McGregor, *buntha* is a Yindjibarndi word (Thieberger and McGregor 1994). The fact that this word was used in a recent advertisement was brought to my attention during a linguistic class held at the University of Adelaide.

¹⁸⁴ The spelling used in this column were taken from Frank Povah's transcripts of the data. As most Australian Indigenous languages do not have a conventional writing system, spelling is a general problem.

¹⁸⁵ This word seems to be one of the most wide-spread lexical items all over Australia and can be found in a range of other languages, too, including, for example, Kurna (the Australian Indigenous language spoken in Adelaide).

mirriuula	dog	‘mirriyoola’ (Wiradjuri: ghost dog); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
mugamuga	deaf	‘muuguu-marra’ (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
mugiin	blind	‘muugeeyn’, ‘muugeenj’ (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
mukpuk	owl (mook-mook owl)	
naragaa	bullshit, stupid	‘ngarragaa’ (Wiradjuri: poor thing, poor fellow, sorry); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
nay:on	light	‘ngalan’ (Wiradjuri: light, flame); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
Nimbunj	little feller; hairy man	
waawii	mythical creature; bunyip	
wandang	ghost/spirit, ugly man	(Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
wandaylii, digabilii	porcupine	‘wandiyali’ (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
winambuu	hairy man	
wong:ga	mad	
wulay	possum	‘wilay’ (Wiradjuri); (McNicol and Hosking (1994))
yowii,yowie	mythical creature; ‘hairy man’	‘yuwi’ (Yuwaalaraay); (Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1990))
Yuuriwinna	stinking, hairy women	
yuurung bird	grey thrush	

In addition to the selection of loanwords from Indigenous languages presented in the list above, most of which were borrowed from the vocabulary of the Wiradjuri language, the data also included words said to have been derived from ‘New South Wales Pidgin’, thereby indicating that this variety of ‘AbE’ has at least to some extent emerged from the latter.

Table 10: Examples of vocabulary of ‘New South Wales Pidgin’ found in the data

bacca	‘tobacco’	(Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003); Troy (1990))
damper	bread	(Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003); Troy (1990))
gabaa	‘white man’	(McNicol and Hosking (1994)); (probably from ‘governor’)
ganjibul	‘constable’	(Thieberger and McGregor (1994)); (from English ‘constable’)
no good	‘bad’	(Troy (1990); (Sandefur 1979: occurs in Kriol))
waajin	‘white girl’	(Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003); Troy (1990))
yaba	‘yarn’	(Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003); Troy (1990))
yaramaayn	‘horse’	(Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (2003); Troy (1990))

7.3 EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Example from transcript 3 (lines 249-371)

	Discourse strategy	Discourse markers	Function
RI: <<len> 'I!(.) `heard this `STOrY about a `man who used to sit an' ↑!TALK! to them out at the ^MIssion.>			
R: 'YEAH:, (-) I know '!HE! said `he was `!TALk!in' `bout- (-) the `!MA!gical ^PEOple. (-)			
RI: <<p> `mmh.> (1.6)			
R: <<p> carry on 'WITH,> (---) ↓(not) (---) the `MAgical `PEOple- (-) with ^!A!nimals. (1.6) ah::- (-)			meta-narrative
<<mumbling> a 'PERson 'now I `don'- for`get who his `NAME `WAS it;> (-) `we have been 'TOLD;> <<all> well `used to `have `all=these=little ^!RA!bbits. (--)	lexical repetition		elaborative
`RUnnin' `ROUN' 'is; `COloured `RAbbits. `ROUND 'is-		speaker progression marker now“ /participant identification;	narrative
	symmetrical framing	speaker progression marker “well”	meta-narrative
	lexical repetition		narrative

<p>(-) ↑CAMP: , =<<all,p> we (were)`TOL'.> (1.2) ah ^!JOh!nno an ^!JO!ey; (--) ^THEY often ^SPOKE of- ↑!SPOKE! of this- ↓!PER:!'son,> (---) <<all> an' bout 'is ^!RA!bbi', =when they go ^UP ^there;> RI: ^OH: ^YEAH: , R: <<f> to his ↑CAMP: ,> (--) <<all> they could ^see ^it from a ^DIsTance; (---) but they disap↑!PEAr!> (---) RI: <<pp> ()? V: ^YEAH. <<t,all> [he] ^SAID he was (^BUsy). RI: [()], (--) V: he ^JUS'- (1.4) 'e'd be ^sittin' round the ^FIRE: an the mmh- (-) coloured ^rabbits would be ↑!DAN:!'cin'. (--) RI: <<p> ^ah:::;> V: =^!RAIN:!'bow ^coloured ^RAbbits. (--) P: <<f> ^!RAIN!bow> coloured. RI: =<<f> ^!RAIN!bow.</p>	<p>suspensory pausing symmetrical framing</p> <p>space orientation reference</p> <p>meta-narrative</p> <p>participant identification</p> <p>narrative</p> <p>lexical repetition;</p> <p>profiling marker “this”</p> <p>repetitive</p> <p>suspensory tagging “there”</p> <p>narrative</p>
	<p>symmetrical framing</p> <p>meta-narraive</p>
	<p>collaborative narration</p> <p>narrative</p> <p>lexical repetition</p> <p>elaborative</p> <p>echoing</p>

V:	=<<f> ^!RAIN!bow coloured- (-) ^!RAIN!bow coloured. (--) ^Rabbits.	lexical repetition		repetitive
RI:	'mmh, (-)	lexical repetition		repetitive
V:	<<all> uncle ^joey (say/said)> i ^!SEEN! em: with ^me OWN ^EYES. (---) <<p> he said an'> ^!WHEN! 'e ^eard ^me ^Comin', (--)			narrative/dramatic
RI:	^YEAH:,			
V:	=he ^CLOSE down the ^FIRE;			dramatic
RI:	=^HE saw a ^FAIR ^bit, ^Didn' ^HE? [^JOE]-			
V:	[AN:] he said he ^!WAS! ^round the ^FIRE 'e SAID an' then-	structural and lexical repetition		meta-narrative narrative/dramatic
RI:	<<p> ^mmh.			
V:	^!FIRE! blazed ^up (until) the ^rabbits disap [↑] !PEAR:!. RI: ^yeah.	symmetrical framing		
V:	=<<all> when they ^WALked up an'>^(ASK/ADGE) what they ^WERE:, (-) <<h> ^OH: ^nonono-> (--)			narrative dramatic
RI:	then he used to sit an' ^TALK to this ol' ^MAN- <<all,dim> who^Ever it ^WAS;> (-) <<p> he used to ^sit an ^TALK->	collaborative narration	participant identification; profiling marker "this"	narrative meta-narrative
V:	^YEAH;	structural repetition		repetitive
RI:	to him a ^LOT, <<dim> an ^THEN he got ^!SCARED! of ^im.> (1.3) <<p> so i've been ^TOLD:,			narrative
P:	=<<f> got ^SCARED of the ^YUUrii ^man;>	symmetrical framing		meta-narrative

RI:	got ˘SCARED of the-		narrative
	(-)		
	OF the-		
	(-)		
	˘CLEverman: ,	suspensory pausing	
V:	= [but]-		
P:	<<f> [˘OH:] ˘YEAH: ,		meta-narrative
V:	= ˘HE was a ˘CLEverman-		
RI:	= [˘yeah].	collaborative narration	elaborative
V:	<<all> [he]'s ˘most probably ˘COULD sit ˘down an' talk to the ˘!YUU!rii ˘man; =but ˘!O!ther ˘people-		
	(-)		
	<<h,len> when they ˘!SEE! a ˘yuurii ↑MAN?>	topical development by association	meta-narrative
	(1.5)		
	WHICH is (.)POSSible ˘up until to˘DAY,>		
	(--)		
	<<p,all> they can ˘STILL ˘SEE ˘im,		
	(-)		
RI:	<<pp> ˘mmh.>		
	(1.3)		
V:	THEY-		
	(1.4)		
	(R can be heard talking in the background)		
	it was ˘!SOME!thin' to ˘FRIGHTEN ˘!KIDS! [with];		meta-narrative
P:	˘ [YEAH.]		

2. Example from transcript 2 (lines 201-419)

	Discourse strategy	Discourse markers	Function
B: 'i (h)aven' MET 'em; =i 'SMELT 'em;> (--)	symmetrical framing	participant identification	
P: yeah.			
B: haven't 'SEEN 'em but=uhm - (--) <<len> me 'SISter ; (---) ~she used to ~SEE 'em;> (---) ~an mi other ~COUsin, (---) she said=it's 'OL: , =<<all> she used to ~WALK from- =~OH i' be '~bout from ~ERE ; ~righ' to the 'DAM , =to come ↑'OME ? =in the ↑NIGH'?> (--) <<t> moon`light 'NIGHT - (--) she'd ~walk a'LONG,> =<<rall> an ~SHE'd meet im ~HALF 'WAY ,> <<len> in bet~WEEN `her 'PLACE an ~where she'd ~LEFT 'from?> (---) an' - (-) IT come ~ON-	symmetrical framing	participant identification lexical repetition	narrative
	vowel lengthening	participant identification space orientation reference	dramatic narrative
	lexical repetition structural repetition	time orientation reference space orientation reference	elaborative narrative

<p>=get='ol'='er 'AN', WALK a long WITH! 'er, (---) 'only little'!SHORT:!feller got'REAL! long(.) white !BEARD!; (-)</p>	<p>structural repetition; consecutive subject deletion</p>	
<p>P: yeah:, B: 'so it 'MUSSta 'been the 'OLdes'; (---) P: yeah . (---)</p>		
<p>B: <<h>'that'd'been'GOOD to'SEE one of them you 'KNOW?> (-) P: (yeah) an what do they HELP you OUT 'TOO, 'DO 'they ? B: 'mmh:? (---)</p>	<p>confirmation elicitation/ symmetrical framing</p>	<p>meta-narrative</p>
<p><<len> they'll check ON you-> <<all> you KNOW if you're a 'WOMan an' that on your=↑!OWN!?!></p>		
<p>P: [yeah:]? B: =[with ↑KIDS], (-) P: 'AL:'RIGHT , B: =an':-</p>		
<p>(---) <<len> 'they'll 'be 'THERE:,> they 'won't 'come in an 'FIGHT! you or any'thing , (---) but you can (.)'smell 'em they 'ROUND:!, (---) you 'KNOW you 'know they're 'ROUN'!? (---) and uhm - (2.1)</p>	<p>symmetrical framing structural repetition</p>	<p>repetitive/meta- narrative</p>

<<len> see if you `AL`right an' `ALL `that,> = `I come back from coo^NAMble `ONE `night; (-) `WE's over `THERE; (--) <<p> OH ^BLOO:dy um-> (---) <<all> we 'ad to `MOVE ou' there from the↑!FLOOD! ,> (1.5) an' !COME! back an' we `!CLEANED! up every thing LIKE `that ; =<<acc> ^A::ny('ow)i'm `layin'`there in the `!NIGHT! then; ='ad all the WINDows an'()ol' tin`!'OU!ses `there;> (1.1) and:(.) <<len,h> `LAYin `there,> (---) i had three of me=`!OWN! `kids; (1.4) and the `!TWO! that i a^DOPTed; (---) <<h>`LAYin `there-> (--) `ONE was only `SMALL,> (1.5) <<f,all> an i could ↑!SMELL!? =an' i said `!OH:! dear- `DON'T say one of the `kids-> (---) <<f,len>`shit in`their↑!BED!or SOMETHing> you`KNOW?> (-) `I `went=over=an=`!SMELT!=`them; (--) `put me='AN' on=em=`!ALL!? (--)	surveying	participant identification/time and space orientation reference	meta-narrative narrative meta-narrative
	surveying	speaker progression marker “anyhow”	narrative
	surveying		
	surveying		
	surveying		
			dramatic
	confirmation elicitation		dramatic/meta- narrative narrative

P:	<<p> you 'KNOW 'felt their 'Bottom?>		elaborative/meta-
	'YEAH 'yeah.		narrative
	(--)		
B:	<<t> no;		narrative
	(--)		
	an THEN i 'thought <<len> 'OH 'god;>		narrative/dramatic
	I said <<len>'!E!'s 'here;>>		
	(1.5)		
	<<h> 'I jus' wen' 'back an lay ↑DO(WN):?>		narrative
	(---)		
	<<p> an I said->		
	(-)		
	i'm 'al!RIGHT!-		dramatic
	=only 'ME an the 'KIDS 'ere;		
	(--)		
P:	yeah.		
B:	= 'leave us a 'LONE,		
	(---)		
	<<len> you 'TALK to 'em 'like 'THAT ,		meta-narrative
P:	yeah: ?		
B:	you know they '!KNOW!?		
	(--)		
P:	RIGHT,		
B:	never 'smelt 'em '!NO! 'more,		
	(---)		symmetrical framing
P:	jus' wen' a 'WAY,		
B:	'Mmh?		
	(2.1)		
	yeah '!MY:! '!SI!ster she 'used to-		participant identification
	(---)		narrative
	'CLOSE the 'door-		
	=<<all>'er 'usband used to work out on the		surveying
	'!STA!tion;>		
	(1.5)		
	she'd 'come 'OUT an' '!CLOSE! the '!DOOR! in the		narrative

<pre> `night to - (--)</pre>			time orientation reference
<pre> to `GO to - (--)</pre>	lexical repetition		
<pre> go to ↑!BED!?</pre>			
<pre> (--)</pre>			
<pre> <<acc,p> TIE: it UP with the `!CHAIN!;</pre>			meta-narrative
<pre> =you `KNOW=used to have big`!chain! with the</pre>	surveying/lexic al repetition		
<pre> `!DOOR!?!></pre>			
<pre> (1.2)</pre>			
<pre> she'd GO there an `PUT er h -</pre>			narrative
<pre> =she `HAD to put er `HAND up ;</pre>			
<pre> (-)</pre>			
<pre> to `push the `!CHAIN! back on (.)the`!O!ther `side</pre>			
<pre> of the `DOOR;</pre>			
<pre> (---)</pre>			
<pre> she'd put it !OUT! `like `!THAT!-</pre>			
<pre> =and `!E!`d come out and `grap er like `THIS;</pre>	structural repetition;		
<pre> OH she (`!BEAT!)im;</pre>	gestural support		
<pre> =THIS feller was a <<f>`!WILD!> one ;</pre>		profiling marker “this”	meta-narrative
<pre> =he USED to (`GROWL/GROAN) an' `KIND of;</pre>			narrative
<pre> <<acc,h> PUSH the door=`!O!pen-</pre>			
<pre> SHE's there `pullin' `ON it;</pre>			
<pre> (-)</pre>			
<pre> (to) ↑CLOSE: it?></pre>			
<pre> (---)</pre>			
<pre> <<len,f> she REckon he's got `!REAL:! `!STRONG:!</pre>			
<pre> `!airy `!ARM!;></pre>			
<pre> (---)</pre>			meta-narrative
<pre> <<all,p> hu ^bigger a `BIG `than ^me'n ^YOUR;></pre>			
<pre> (3.1)</pre>			
<pre> she's `SEEN 'im .</pre>			
<pre> (1.3)</pre>			
<pre> <<h> they `real `LITTLE `feller they `ARE:,></pre>	symmetrical framing		
<pre> =they `real `!AI:!ry .</pre>	structural repetition		

(---)
 P: DO they-
 (-)
 do 'people 'still 'SEE 'em 'up 'there,
 do 'you 'THINK?
 (2.2)
 B: well they 'haven' 'YET for a 'while,
 =never heard any '!MORE! a`bout it?
 (1.2)
 but ^tanya ^!THERE!,
 SHE:-
 (---)
 !WE! wen' up ^!LA:S! ^year;
 (-)
 <<p> UP up IN the ->
 (-)
 (i) think it was ↑!A!pril;
 (-)
 `Holidays.
 !SCHOOL:! holiday.
 (--)
 so they must be still a'!ROUND!;
 P: ^!YEAH!-
 `yeah.
 B: that's only las' YEAR:,
 (---)
 P: <<p> oh !THAT!'s good.>
 <<pp>as LONG as you know that they're still up
 'THERE ,
 B: ^Mmm;
 (---)
 yeah 'ONE feller he ^walked a^WAY:,>
 <<all>^DRUNKard=feller he's ^REAL;>>
 (---)
 <<len> no ^good ↓!BOY! he 'is,>

vowel	participant identification;	narrative
lengthening;	profiling marker "one"	elaborative
lexical		
repetition		

oh he `!MUST! been about in `his - (---) twenty`!NINE:! or `THIR:ty, you `KNOW? (2.0) he WAL:kin' `roun'- =he THINK he was a <<len> big `PUG `SEE?> `!ONE! of them `fightin' when he's `!DRUNK!, (1.3) he'd come `out of the re`SERVE: `there; `SINGin` an' `look for a `FIGHT with all the other `BOYS - (1.3) <<all>^anyhow `!THIS! little `feller `he `jumped be`HIN'; (1.1) be`HIN' (.) a ↑!TREE!? <<all> he said> !COME! on <<all> he said !YOU!;> <<all> little`feller`look for a`fight all the `time, =have a go at ↑ME?> (-) <<h> an !THIS! feller `SEEN: 'im? (---) swingin' the `!PUNCH! `for im ↑!EH:!,> (---) MISSED the little `FELler an `it the `TREE an `break his `ARM; P: =<<laughing> BREAK his `ARM,> B: =`YEAH ? P: =well there you `GO. B: `Mm, (1.0) they `get `them kind of `!PEO!ple `see?				meta-narrative
				narrative meta-narrative
	suspensory tagging “there”	space orientation reference		narrative
	suspensory pausing lexical repetition	speaker progression marker “anyhow”; profiling marker “this”		dramatic
	symmetrical framing confirmation elicitation	profiling marker “this”		narrative
				narrative/meta- narrative narrative
	consecutive subject deletion			
				meta-narrative

3. Example from transcript 8 (lines 192-355)

	Discourse strategy	Discourse markers	Function
GM:			
NOther story TOO is when WE was-			
when I was a-			
(---)			
i's only about ↑TWELVE,			
(1.3)			
in ↑ARmidale and-			
(--)			
me COUsins and-			
there was FIVE of us-			
we wen' OUT-			
(---			
shootin' SHANGhais and:-			
(---			
WE:-			
(---			
we Killed a-			
(--)			
<<f> a !NIGHT!owl;			
=!MO!poke;>			
<<pp> and->			
(1.2)			
in !AR!midale 'e's a-			
(--)			
!GHOST!bird 'e's a-			
<<all> you shouldn't KILL 'im 'e's a->			
(2.5)			
<<pp> uhm:->			
(1.3)			
<<f> when we KILLed'im?>			
(---			
we wen' back to our UNCle's place an' !STAYED! there;			
	symmetrical framing	participant identification	formulaic narrative
		space orientation reference	
		participant identification	
		moving	
		(Hunting schema : shoot ; killed)	
	lexical repetition suspensory pause	stopping	elaborative
			meta-narrative
	structural repetition		
			narrative
		moving	

=<<all> we was stayin' at 'is place for the NIGHT,> (1.2) the bloke that actually ↑Killed 'im, ='E jumped up (.) ALFway- (---) through the ↑NIGHT, (--) SAY about TWO o'clock in the ↑MORnin', (1.4) <<p> and-> (---) <<all> he jus' jump STRAIGHT up an' 'E said i'm goin' 'OME, an 'e WALKed out the DOOR an' THIS- other big- (--) ↑BIRD, (-) NIGHT owl; (-) swooped ↑PAST 'im; (1.2) <<p> and:-> (---) he- (---) FELL back in the ↑!DOOR! an 'E- (--) a big BIRD: then PERched itSELF in- (--) () front on the FENCE, (---) singin' OUT all the time. (1.2) <<p> so me UNCle said OH:-> (---)	lexical repetition	stopping participant identification time orientation reference	elaborative narrative
	structural repetition	profiling marker "this" moving	
	suspensory pause		elaborative narrative
		speaker progression marker "so"; participant identification	narrative/ dramatic

<<f> somethin's WRONG:, =we BETter go an' GET- (GM clears his throat) GRANDfather.> (1.5) so:- (---) <<all> before he can GO: an' !GET! grandFATHER, =here's GRANDfather comin' up the (.) the ROAD,> (1.5) and:- (1.5) <<pp> HE said>(WHERE/WHERE're) those BOYS? (---) <<p> an' SO:-> (--) HE didn't know that we !KILL! the bird; he- (1.4) <<len> he ↑KNEWS, > (--) something was WRONG, =<<all> he said WHERE are those BOYS? an' so he LINED us all UP, =an' he said RIGHTyo; WHICH one of YOUSE- (---) <<len> kill that BIRD?> (1.2) (GM clears his throat) an we was BLAmin' each Other. (1.1) and:- (1.5) <all> 'cause WE (didn't wanna get)in ↑!TROUBLE!; (2.0) (GM coughs loudly) <<t> and:-		dramatic
	participant identification	
	speaker progression marker “so”	narrative
	structural and lexical repetition	
	speaker progression marker “so”	narrative/dramatic narrative
	speaker progression marker “so”	narrative/dramatic/ repetitive; narrative narrative/dramatic
		narrative

(--)
 he !POIN!ted to the BOY that (have) KILL it;
 =he said !YOU! killed it;
 =an' 'e !BASHED! the-
 <<dim> LOT of us an' HE's ->
 (--)
 <<all> made us GO down to !'IS! place; >
 (-)
 <<p> out BACK->
 (---)
 in the ↑!LAUN!dry;
 (1.3)
 <<p> and:->
 (---)
 PUT us all in the LAUNdry-
 (--)
 <<p> and->
 (1.2)
 <<len> that NIGHT he made a FIRE: outside: ->
 an' he said <<all> now DON'T you come !OUT!,
 whatever youse DON'T come OUT.>
 (--)
 you STAY there.
 (1.2)
 <<p> and:-
 (---)
 NEXT minute WE could:->
 (---)
 <<len> HEAR 'im TALKin' in the LINGo,>
 (---)
 we WOULDN'T go out Anyway;
 (---)
 we was too !FRIGH!tened;
 (---)
 !ONE! of the:-
 !COUsins! he:-

lexical
repetition

dramatic/repetitive
narrative

moving; space reference
orientation

lexical
repetition

stopping

structural
repetition

profiling marker “that”

narrative/dramatic
dramatic/repetitive

narrative

participant identification

(---)
 want to GO to the ↑!TOI!let;
 (1.2)
 <<pp> and:->
 (1.2)
 WHEN 'e: (.) looked out of the DOOR:?
 (---)
 <<pp> he->
 (---)
 SAW:-
 (---)
 our GRANDfather plus this little HAIRy,
 (---)
 feller;
 (2.1)
 SIttin' together TAL:kin' ()-
 (---)
 in the LANguage.
 (1.6)
 and:-
 he was too FRIGHtened <<laughing> to GO outSIDE-
 he stayed in ALL (night),>
 so:-
 (---)
 that's another STOrY that:-
 of this LIttle fellers.

suspensory
 pausing

profiling marker “this”

symmetrical
 framing

speaker progression
 marker “so”
 profiling marker “this”

formulaic

7.4 INSTANTIATION: STORIES OF THE BUNYIP/WATER DOG

Example from transcript 3 (lines 925-998)

R: <<all> !I'd like-
(-)
to reLATE ()>
(--)
a !STORY! ↑!HERE!,
(--)
er-
(1.2)
that SOME of the-
(---)
!KU!ri back years a!GO!;
(---)
travellin' OUT the -
the ol' MIssion in horse an !SUL!kies,
(1.6)
<<p> oh !ONE!-
(-)
on their OWN;
ONE-
(--)
[()];>
WOM: <<ff>[!aaaaaa!]-
!SHUT! that.>
(-)
R: and er-
(---)
<<all> as they get !PA(st)!> bulgandramine !BRIDGE!,
(---)
er::::-
<<len> this DOG **apPEARED**,>
(---)
V: <<all> that happened to aNOther of me GRANDmothers.>
(--)
R: <<f> !SMALL!.>
(1.2)
<<dim> an' ran along SIDE the-
the:-
(-)
Sulky?>
(--)
<<p,all> tom up the !HORSE! an what!E!ver?>
(---)
an' the !FUR!ther they went the bigger the !DOG! got.
(1.8)
it GREW an' grew' an !GREW!,
till ALmost-
(1.3)
!CALF! size i supPOSE?
(---)
RI: grew as BIG as a !HORSE!?
(--)
R: <<pp,all> (oh) OR as big as a !HORSE! or whatever,>

RI: <<pp> uhm.>
 (--)
 R: and:-
 (2.0)
 se-
 (-)
 <<all>(somehow=or=ano)it was runnin'alongside this SULky or
 something;>
 (--)
 (loud noise)
 this-
 (---)
 he (.) lacked out with a !WHIP!,
 (---)
 <<p,all> they said the whip went->
 (-)
 !THROUGH! it.
 (1.8)
 <<p> an':-
 !I! (gue(ss))-
 (---)
 he went !SO! far-
an then it disapPEAR.>

Example from transcript 7 (lines 344-462)

PG: YEAH the-
 the WAtEr dog OR the-
 (--)
 (Wila WIra).
 (---)
 VEry-
 SPEcial site at brewarRINA.
 (---)
 SAcRed site.
 called the MIrrigana.
 (---)
 an MIrrigana MEANS:-
 (---)
 well MIrri is DOG: an an gana is: is like GANya.
 PLACE-
 (--)
 <<dim> !PLACE! where the WAtEr dog (.) LIVES.>
 (--)
 <<p> AND so->
 (-)
 (PG sneezes)
 it's ONE of our sacred SITES.>
 (1.8)
 but WHERE this PLACE is,
 (---)
 on the Other SIDE of that WAS <<acc> where the old MISSion
 used to BE.>

=<<all> on the other side of the River.>
 (---)
 <<all,dim> Opposite the !TOWN! site was where the old
 MISSION used to
 be.>
 (1.2)
 an: !WE! used to like to go DOWN;
 (---)
 <<p> when we was KIDS on the MISSION;
 GO down to the River.
 (1.4)
 and PLAY along the RIVERbank;>
 (---)
 cause there was a !BIG! !FLAT! !PLAY!ground.
 =<<all> RIGHT down there what they call the WOOLwah.
 (---)
 we USED to-
 =WHERE we used to PLAY;>
 (1.7)
 AND:-
 (---)
 <<all> the OL' people used to ALWAYS say !LIS!ten.>
 (---)
 jus' on !DARK:!,
 an you HEAR-
 =you'll 'ear a VOICE sing out.
 it's TIME to go 'OME.
 (---)
 an WHEN you ear that VOICE-
 get straight 'OME.
 cause if you DON',
 =the WATER dog will COME up out of the WATER.
 (1.2)
 and:-
 (1.9)
 <<f> !I! never ever TESTED the-
 the story OUT.>
 (WHETHER'd)-
 <<all> when i heard the VOICE i always took OFF;
 =i didn' WORRY about WAITIN UNTIL the!DOG! was round to().>
 =but a !FEW! of the Other fellers reckon that WHEN they-
 (---)
 they didn' LISTEN.
 they TURNED around an LOOKED AT it,
 (---)
 an' the DOG come UP,
 (---)
 and it STARTED to come up toWARDS them,
 an then WHEN they-
 (-)
 TOOK of to RUN,
 (---)
 <<p> an then they STOPPED again to look BACK again-
 =it got Bigger an Bigger as (.) AS they-
 (---)
 <<dim> as they LOOKED at it.>¤

(3.5)
 you GOT that around QUAMbone there TOO,
 WHERE they-
 (---)
 <<f> the SAME DOG,
 (---)
 you SEE this BIG-
 (---)
 you see this big white DOG,>
 (---)
 <<all> when they used to be WALKin 'ome on the Missions,>
 =we would ALL walk over the SCRUB,
 (---)
 an:-
 (---)
 WHEN 'e **disappeARS Into** the Other SIDE?
 <<all> on the Other side of the ROA' an->
 (think) this MAN would WALK out the scrub.
 (---)
 an he'd (GIVES) a-
 !HE! used to-
 COME out 'n TALK to the BOYS.
 (1.1)
 an THEN he'd-
 he'd !POINT! at SOMEthin;
 =he'd SAY=EH you fellers LOOK over THERE-
 LOOK.
 (---)
 an WHEN they TOOK their !EYES! of him 'n LOOKED AWAY?
 HE's (.) pull his 'EAD off;
 (---)
 an'-
 (-)
 to TUCK it under 'is ARM,
 an when they looked around to SEE what-
 he was POINTin' at,
 (---)
 he had no HEAD on;¤

Example from transcript 6 (lines 332-398)

VI: <<staccato> [yeah DAD did CATCH it].>
 J: [(): said that he] seen the BUNyip.
 P: =he CAUGH' one;
 VI: yeah: an' AN':-
 farve !EH!?
 he was ()-
 =<<f> !DAD! was only YOUNG but->
 (---)
 HE wen' down: FIshin' with uhm-
 (---)
 ↑FARVE?
 (---)
 FARVE was uhm-

(-)
 layin' out his NETS?
 an' they FOUND this **FUnny lookin' FISH?**
 (---)
 <<h> in the ↑NE'?'>
 they couldn' MAKE out what it was,
 (1.1)
 now FARVE said go up an' !ASK! rosie PHillips;
 =<dim> cause she used to live on the BEN' EH?>
 J: <<p> mm MUDgee's (daughter).>
 VI: AND:-
 cause SHE's-
 she's !TRI!bal an'-
 <<p> [SHE's from]->
 P: [mmh.]
 (---)
 VI: <<p> QUEENSland SOMEwhere?>
 (---)
 an' they !TOOK! it up to='ER,
 =she's 'ANGIN' the CLOTHES out on the LINE at the TIME,
 (1.3)
 an' FARVE: ASKED: 'er did SHE know what sort of FISH it was?
 (---)
 <<all>an' she TURN a:' SAW i' she wen' OFF(.)her ↑!HEAD! you
 !KNOW!?'
 (---)
 <<all> GOin' on IN in the LINgo?>
 (1.4)
 <<len> WANTin' 'em to take it ↑aWAY?>
 (---)
 <<all> HE want to know what it WAS?>
 (1.4)
 <<p, len> an' she kept SAYin' it's a ↑!WAA!wii.>
 J: WAAwii.
 P: <<surprised> a WAAwii?>
 VI: <<p> THA's what they call it up THERE?>
 P: =<<p> mmh,>
 (---)
 VI: <<p> and:->
 (1.3)
 <<f> she was hysTERical;>
 <<p> WANTin''em to take it aWAY an'AN' 'e SAID;>
 (---)
 <<h, len> is a **WAAwii a BUNyip?**>
 <<p> AN' she said> <<h, len> YEAH a baby WAAwii.>
 P: <<ff> a BAby waawii,>
 VI: =<<pp, h> an' she' take it BACK to where it WAS you KNOW?>
 (---)
 P: <<p> yeah,>
 VI: so they !DID!,
 =they TOOK it back-
 (---)
 !TO! the BEN' out THERE?
 (---)
 <<pp> put back in the ↑RIver;>

Example from transcript 3 (lines 1801-1831)

RI: my HUSband-
(1.2)
was talking to one of his COUsins DOWN at ah swan HILL;
(--)
an HE told him a story about the **WAAwii**,
V: hahaha[ha]
RI: [they] call im the WAA[wii here];
R: <<all> [that's ano]ther WORD for BUNyip.
= WAAwii.
RI: yeah the WAAwii.
(--)
the BUNyip.
(1.4)
<<f> an he SAY he was **FIshin**,
(--)
an the LINE kept goin upSTREAM,>
(--)
kept goin upSTREAM SO-
<<dim> he REckon that was the BUNyip TELLin him to knock of
fishin in the HOLE?
go HOME so;>
(---)
<<acc> he LEFT in-
(-)
in a bit of a HUrry,>
(---)
took his THINGS an Everything an-
wen HOME because-
(---)
<<t> he REckon-
he REckon it was the (!)WAA!wii talkin to him.>

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