



The many ways of falling down a cliff: Culture- and Language-specific ways of expressing path in Jaminjung and Kriol

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Citation for published version (APA):

Hoffmann, D., Austin, P. K. (Ed.), Bond, O. (Ed.), Charette, M. (Ed.), Nathan, D. (Ed.), & Sells, P. (Ed.) (2011). The many ways of falling down a cliff: Culture- and Language-specific ways of expressing path in Jaminjung and Kriol. In P. K. Austin, O. Bond, M. Charette, D. Nathan, & P. Sells (Eds.), *Proceedings of Conference on Language Documentation & Linguistic Theory 3* University of London.

Published in:

Proceedings of Conference on Language Documentation & Linguistic Theory 3

Citing this paper

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The many ways of falling down a cliff

Culture and Language Specific Ways of
Expressing Path in Jaminjung and Kriol

LDLT3, November 20th 2011

Dorothea Hoffmann

Overview

I. Introduction

- Lexicalisation Patterns and Path Saliency
- Jaminjung
- Kriol

II. Path Saliency

- Ground Specifications in Discourse in Jaminjung and Kriol
- Complex Motion Expressions
- Path and Event Granularity
- Factors for Path Saliency

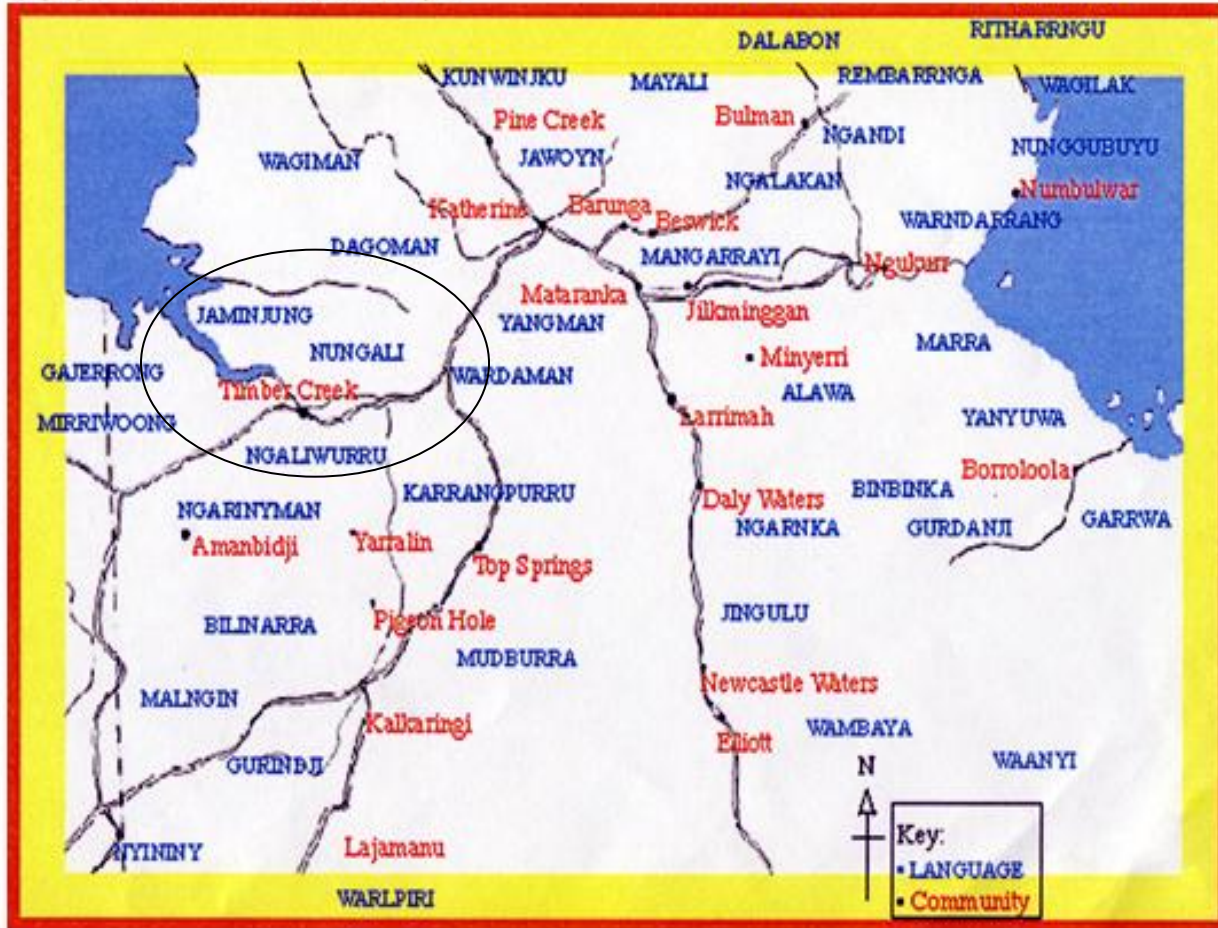
III. Summary and Conclusion

Lexicalisation Patterns and Path Salience

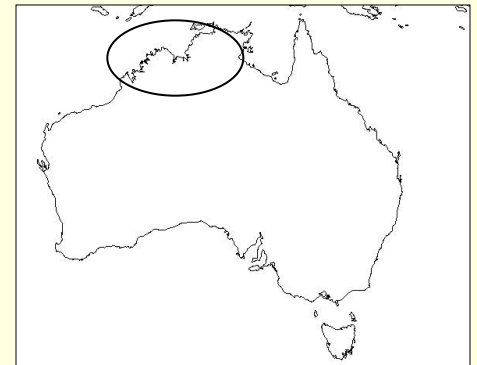
- Talmy's (1985) lexicalisation patterns:
 - Satellite-framed *run out*
 - Verb-framed *exit*
 - Equipollently-framed *exit.run*
 - Path and Manner Salience:
 - Distribution patterns of various path and manner elements in discourse (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2009)
- (1) *The dog **ran** away from the cat and came to me squealing.*

Jaminjung

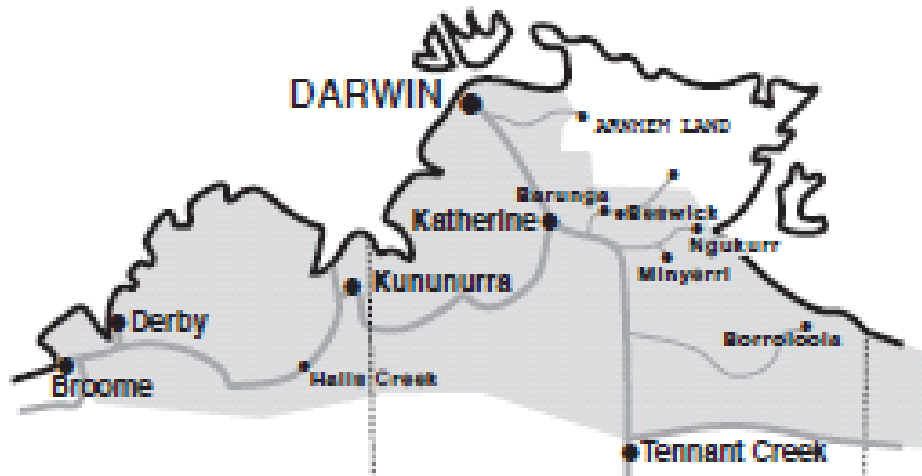
Languages and communities of Katherine Region



<http://www.kathlangcentre.org.au/regions.htm>
accessed 15/07/09

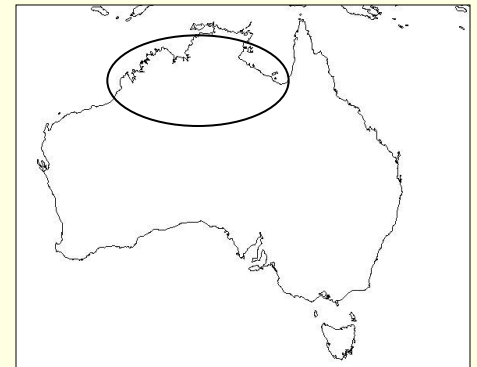


Kriol




The 'Kriol Kantri' Area

Map (Hagan, 2007)



Jaminjung

- Non-Pama-Nyungan in two remaining dialects Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru with approximately 50 speakers
- **Equipollently-framed:** **manner** and **path** expressed in coverbs forming complex predicates with an inflecting verb
- but expected equal discourse distribution patterns (Slobin, 1996) not found

(2) *malara galu-galu* *a* *yirr* 
frog RDP-footwalk ah move.out
ga-ram *gardag-ngunyi*
3SG-come:PRS tin-ABL
'the frog comes walking right out of the tin'



Kriol

- English-lexified Creole spoken by approximately 20.000 people
- **Satellite-framed:** **manner** encoded in main verb and **path** in satellite



(3) *det men bin draib pas*
that man AUX.PST drive past
garrim ka langa im haus
with car LOC 3SG house
'the man drove past (us) to the house with his car'



Why bother?

- While both languages are structurally very different, they are spoken within the same cultural area across Northern Australia
- comparative study into, for example, frequency patterns of conceptual motion event components (path) has the potential to reveal to what extent language structure and cultural background respectively influence each other in discourse

Datasets

- Frog Story Motion Dataset (**FMD**):
- Jaminjung: 355 motion events in a corpus of 7.010 words
- Kriol: 234 motion events in a corpus of 6.739 words
- Complete Motion Dataset (**CMD**):
- Jaminjung: 1.142 motion events in a corpus of 32.754 words
- Kriol: 1.064 motion events in a corpus of 24.423 words

Path Salience

Analysis based on three complementary areas:

■ I. Ground Specifications in Discourse

- Distribution of minus- (*fall (down)*) and plus-ground (*fall (down) into the river*) expressions

■ II. Complex Path Expressions

- Extended path constructions including more than one path element (*fall **down** into the river*)

■ III. Path and Event Granularity

- Analysis of the degree of detailed description of a motion event beyond the clause level (i.e. How many different aspects of a 'journey' are mentioned by speakers in a comparable motion event description)

Ground Specifications in Discourse

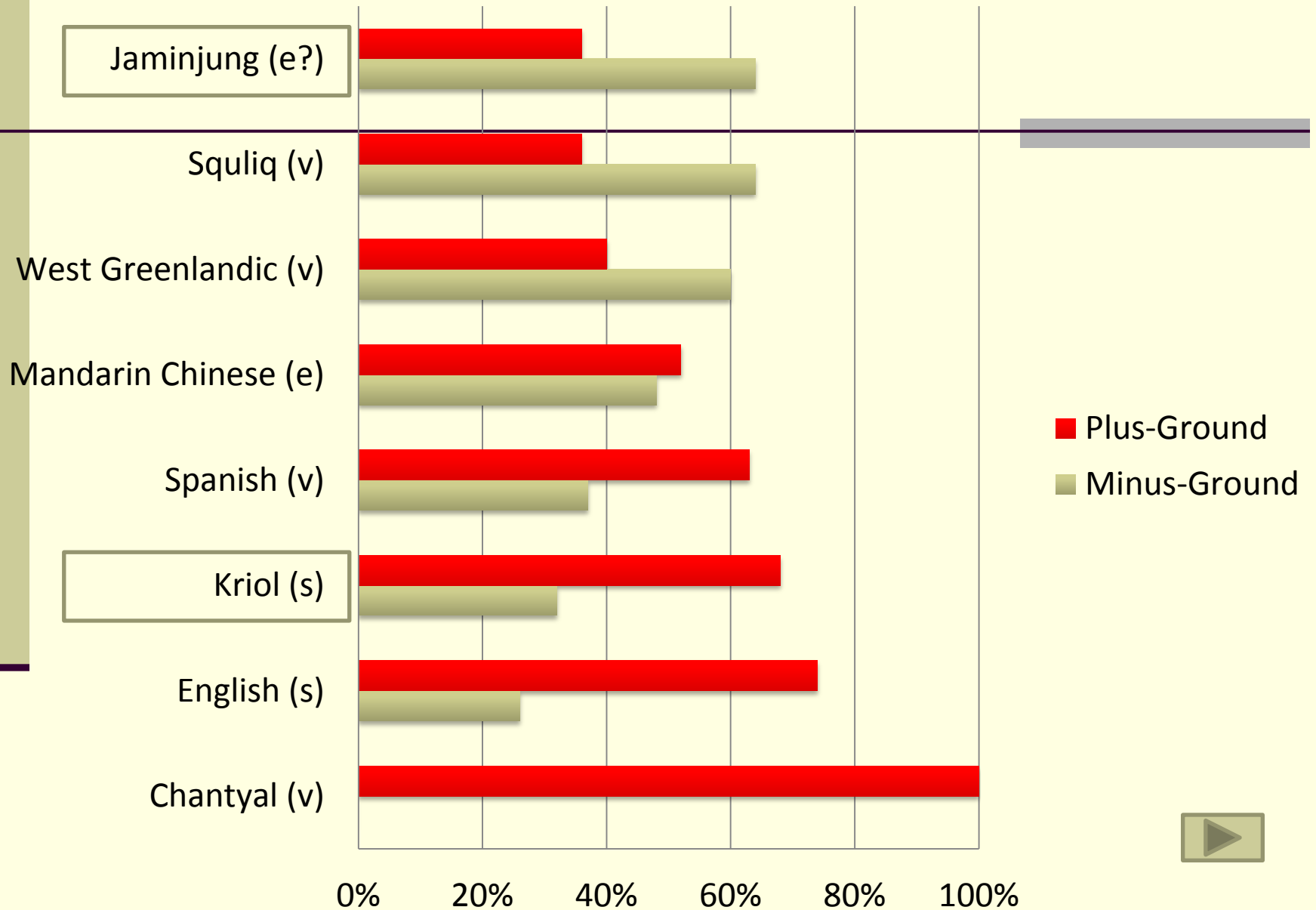
■ Jaminjung Minus-Ground expression:

(4) *yawayi, nga-ngga biyang ... buru*
yes 1SG-go.PRS now return
'yes, I'm going now, ... back'

■ Plus-Ground Expression in Kriol:

(5) *dei bin kam-at brom det woda*
3PL:SUBJ AUX.PST come-out ABL:from that water
'they came out from the water'

Minus- and Plus-Ground distribution cross-linguistically



Complex Motion Expressions

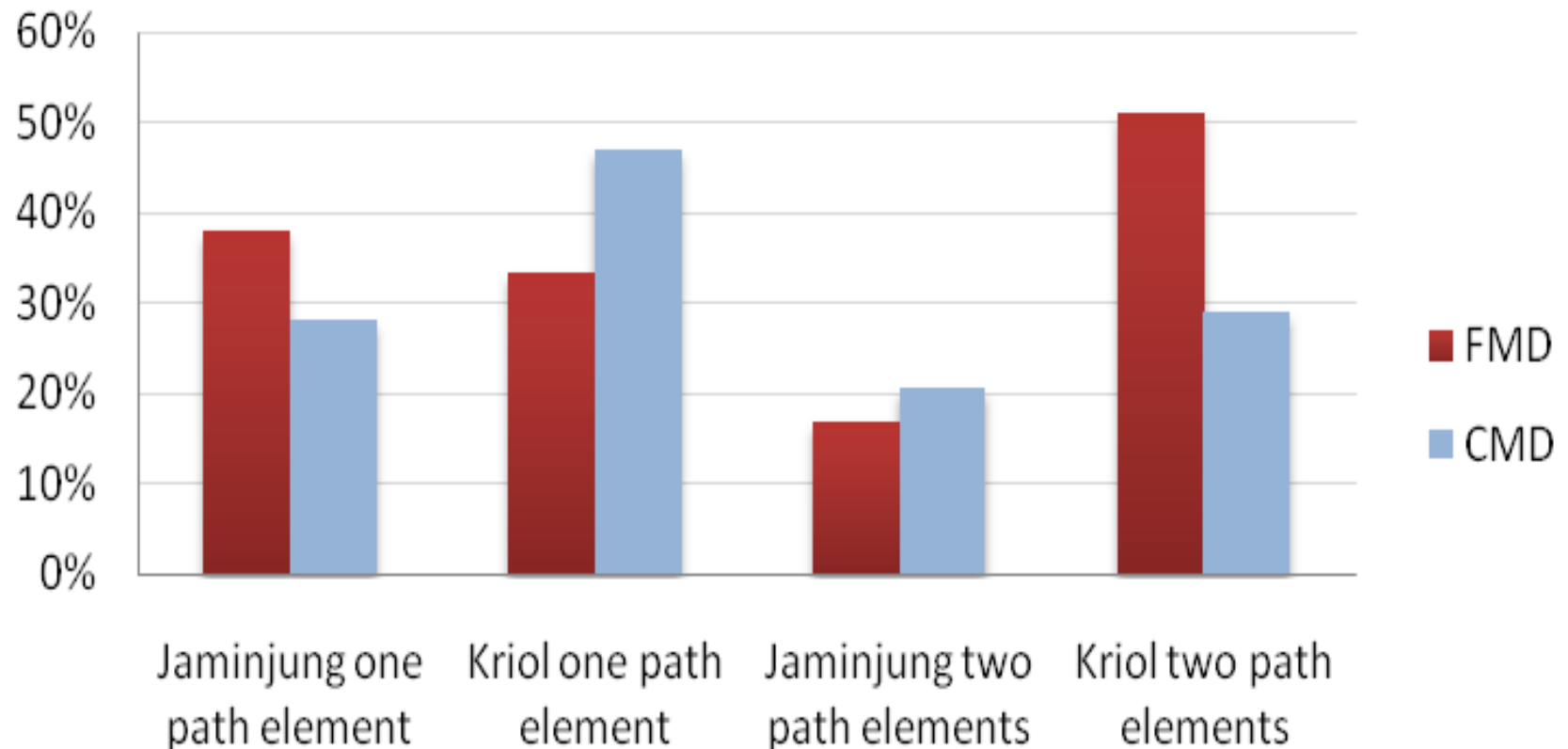
- In Jaminjung consist of one (or more) **path** coverbs and/or one (or two) **ground NPs**

(6) *Thuluji ... burduj ga-jga-ny eroplein*
n_top go.up 3SG-go-PST aeroplane
'the plane went up to Thuluji'

- Kriol complex motion expressions consist of a verb of motion with some kind of **path satellite** and one (or two) **ground encoding NPs**

(7) *imin jump ontop la det bigges log*
3SG:AUX.PST jump on+top to:ALL that big log
'it (the dog) jumped onto the big trunk'

Path elements across the corpora for all motion phrases



- Complex NP paths (two grounds) have much lower and similar frequency in both languages:

- Jaminjung 1,5% in FMD and 3% in CMD
- Kriol 2% in FMD and 2,5% in CMD

(8) *wirib=gayi,* *ga-dba-ny=ni* *gugu-bina*
dog=ALSO 3SG-fall-PST=SFOC water-ALL
bu, *balarraj-giyag,*
enter.water cliff-ABL
'the dog too, he fell, into the water, from the cliff'

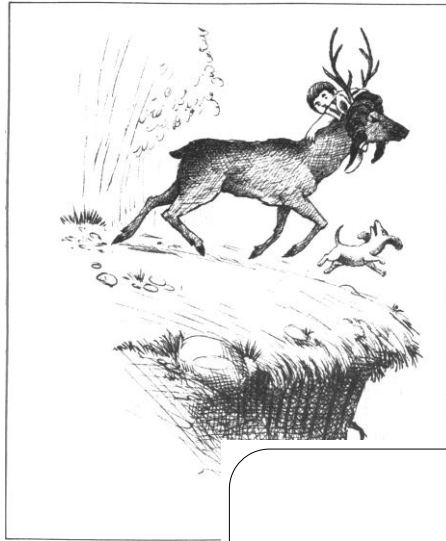
Language	Path Elements per verb	One	Two or +
Kriol (s)	Several	40%	60%
Basque (v)	Several	61%	39%
Danish (s)	Several	69%	31%
Jaminjung (e)	Several	69,5%	30,5%
Turkish (v)	Several	75%	25%
Spanish (v)	Usually one	95%	5%
West Greenlandic (v)	One	98%	2%
Thai (e)	Estrictly one	99%	1%

Path and Event Granularity

- Event granularity identifies the frequency of path complements mentioned in discourse independent of the availability of complex path clauses

Analysis of the Frog-story Cliff scene (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2009, Slobin, 1996):

- 6 narrative segments/subscenes: 1) deer starts to run, 2) deer runs, carrying the boy, 3) deer tops at cliff, 4) deer throws the boy (off the antlers/down), 5) boy and dog fall, 6) boy and dog land in water
- High event granularity is assumed when always or mostly more than three segments are mentioned




Language	+3 segments
Tagalog (v)	17%
Romance languages (v)	30%
Malay (v)	50%
Slavic languages (s)	76%
West Greenlandic (v)	80%
Jaminjung (e)	85%
Kriol (s)	85%
Germanic languages (s)	86%
Chinese (e)	92%
Basque (v)	93%
Arrernte (v)	100%
Squiliq (v)	100%
Chantyal (v)	100%




Factors for Path Salience: 'dummy verbs'

Jaminjung

- Inflecting Verbs only indicate fact of motion, but not much semantic load 
- **47,5%** of all events in FMD and **39%** in CMD consist of IVs only

→ majority of motion encodings includes some other path element

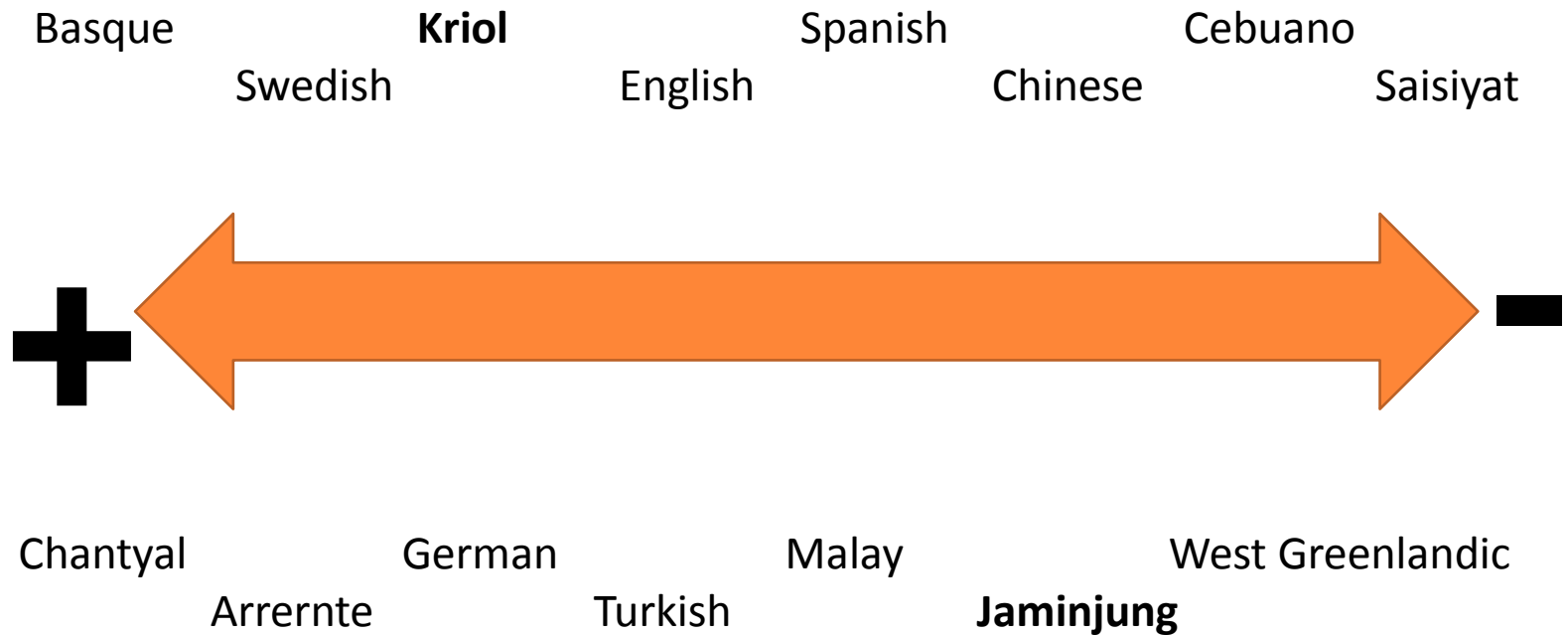
Kriol

- 'bare' motion verbs (i.e. without adverbial suffix/preposition) do not carry high semantic load 
- **6%** of all events in FMD and **9%** in CMD consist of motion verbs alone

→ majority of motion encodings include some other path element



Path Saliience Cline



Factors for Path Salience: Cultural Systems

- languages displaying high level of path event granularity in larger chunks of discourse are more likely to possess cultural systems in which space and motion play a more important role than languages which do not (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2009).


However,

- Jaminjung shows a relatively low frequency of path encodings in discourse but high salience for path event granularity
- Kriol, which meets many characteristics of a high-path salient language on the clause level shows the exact same behaviour as Jaminjung for event granularity.

- shared cultural space of both languages is the reason Jaminjung and Kriol behaving similar to one another in terms of path granularity
- While frequency of path encodings appears to have its roots in the lexicalisation patterns of the languages, event encodings in larger chunks of discourse appear not to be affected by this
- For other Australian languages (e.g. Warlpiri, Arrernte) it has been claimed that cultural factors are linked directly to the way space and motion are described displaying detailed attention for motion, paths, journeys, and orientation in space (Bavin, 2004, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2009, Simpson, 2002, Wilkins, 2004)

■ Cultural factors:

- Hunter-gatherer languages
- High significance of the 'journey' of dreamtime beings in traditional dreamtime narratives
- Aboriginal storytelling techniques (Bavin, 2004:18, McGregor, 2005:31) which appear not to focus on a telling of a story in a linear sequence of events but rather tell the story as visiting important places in it → Journey and motion as abstract structuring devices as well as central contextual elements in traditional and personal narratives

- Preference for detailed path encoding beyond clause level observed for three typologically different Australian languages spoken in the same cultural space: Arrernte (v), Jaminjung (e) and Kriol (s)
- Not all high-path granularity languages are hunter-gatherer (Germanic, Basque, Chinese), but these all are high-path salient languages on the clause-level 
- But remarkable mismatch for Jaminjung between path within and beyond the clause level in discourse

III. Summary and Conclusion

Three complementary areas of investigation:

- Minus- and Plus-Ground encodings:
 - Jaminjung speakers prefer minus- (71% in FMD)
 - and Kriol plus-ground expressions (67% in FMD)
- Distribution of complex paths:
 - Jaminjung FMD 10% complex paths (52% of all motion encodings include at least one path element)
 - and Kriol FMD 52% complex paths (84,5% include at least one path element)
 - But very rare occurrences of complex NP paths in both languages (between 1,5 and 2% in FMD for Kriol and Jaminjung)
- Path and Event Granularity:
 - Both languages show the exact same behaviour in discourse with 85% of speakers expressing 3 or more segments of cliff scene journey description



Conclusion

- whereas structurally path salience accounts for major differences between Jaminjung (middle) and Kriol (high path salient), the elaboration of segments in a given motion event appears to be very similar for the two languages.
- Considering that they are spoken within the same cultural area, this suggests a culture-specific pattern.
- My analysis raises doubts on Ibarretxe-Antuñano's (2009) study of path salience combining structural elements and elaboration patterns and suggests keeping the measurements apart.

Thank you!



Questions?

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The Goal Bias

- A number of authors (Ikegami, 1987, Nikitina, 2009, Stefanowitsch and Rohde, 2004, Verspoor et al., 1999) observe an asymmetry between the encoding of goal and other ground specifications such as source and passed ground
- A preference of goal-encoding in discourse might be explained by the following hypothesis

- ‘Complete Conceptualisation Hypothesis’ is based on Talmy’s (1996) assumption that the interpretation of a motion verb necessarily involves the entire path (goal, passed ground and source)
- A goal encoding ground has a higher information value than any other type of ground
- confirmed based on English corpus data using only general motion verb *go* (1000 instances extracted from the North American News Corpus)
- Jaminjung and Kriol: CMD only occurrences of -*ijga* ‘go’ and *go* without adverbial suffix or preposition

	English	Jaminjung	Kriol
Source	6%	10%	7.5%
Passed Ground	4,5%	-	2%
Goal	88%	81%	85%
Goal/Source	1%	8%	5%
Total	100% (260 of 296 = 87% plus-ground)	100% (76 of 263 = 29% plus-ground)	100% (106 of 162 = 65% plus-ground)

- Structural explanation for goal-bias as well:
 - Jaminjung: source NPs need to be case-marked with ablative suffix *-ngunyi*, goal-NPs might be left unmarked (deictics and toponyms = preferred strategy)
 - Kriol: source NPs need to be marked by preposition *brom*, but goal can (toponyms) or even has to (deictic) be left unmarked
 - → goal is unmarked ‘default’ interpretation of toponyms and deictics