

# Mirima Linguistic Forum

Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, 1pm

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) would like to announce its 17<sup>th</sup> Linguistic Forum to take place on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, starting at 1pm. The forum will be held at Mirima Language Centre, Kununurra.

We are very pleased to announce the following presentation:

## Kriol of Northern Australia: a first dialectology

by Dr. Greg Dickson,  
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### Bio:

Greg Dickson is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow and the University of Queensland, also working with the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Languages. He has worked in the Katherine Region since 2002 in a number of roles, including linguist with the Ngukurr Language Centre, Kriol-English interpreter with the NT Government and lecturer and Batchelor Institute. He was worked on projects on traditional languages as well as Kriol and completed a PhD at the Australian National University in 2015.

*The Mirima Linguistic Forum is an initiative by MDWg to bring together people with an academic interest in Indigenous studies. While our focus is on language and culture, ideally with a reference to local Indigenous matters, we welcome contributions on related topics. Presentations occur in an informal and relaxed atmosphere and we leave plenty of time for discussion and exchange. The forum is open to all; if you happen to be in the Kununurra area and would like to present on a topic of interest - please let us know: [info@mirima.org.au](mailto:info@mirima.org.au).*

ABSTRACT:

## Kriol of Northern Australia: a first dialectology

Dialectology is the study of dialects of a language. Kriol speakers know very well that Kriol is spoken differently in different regions and communities. Linguists have also recognised this, and usually give names to the varieties of Kriol they study, like Joyce Hudson's study of "Fitzroy Valley Kriol" (1985) or linguists who have researched "Barunga Kriol" (e.g. Ponsonnet 2016) or Roper Kriol (e.g. Nicholls 2011). Even though Kriol speakers and researchers know that Kriol has different dialects, the differences have never been carefully studied.

In 2016, I visited ten communities to investigate how Kriol might be different in each place. I focused on communities east of Katherine in the Northern Territory, and also visited Kununurra briefly. I interviewed 61 people and recorded 48 hours of spoken Kriol, half of which is now transcribed and being analysed.

I have used quantitative sociolinguistic methods to analyse how Kriol is different in different communities. By choosing words that we know vary from place to place, we can quantify the differences by counting all the instances of who uses which word (and where they are from) and look for patterns. The three words that have been analysed in most detail so far are (1) the reflexive particle (*mijelp*, *jelp* and many other forms), (2) the locational preposition *la/langa* and (3) the word *lagijat* (meaning 'like', 'like that') which also gets pronounced many ways. In this talk, I will give a summary of the results of these analysis.

By doing careful quantitative analysis on how these words vary, we are building a clearer picture of what dialects of Kriol are like. My research shows that in the area east of Katherine, patterns are appearing that linguists had not recognised before.