Typology trumps constraints:
Case transfer in Australian languages

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Australia provides an unusual number of case morphology borrowings. Heath (1978) observes examples of case suffixes being borrowed between traditional Australian languages in Arnhem Land, including the transfer of Ritharrngu (Pama-Nyungan) case markers into Ngandi (Gunwinyguan); and Nunggubuyu (Gunwinyguan) case markers into Warndarang (Marran). Case markers from traditional Australian languages have also been borrowed into newly-emergent Australian languages, for example Warumungu, Nyangumarta, Mudburra and Gurindji (Pama-Nyungan) case markers are all present in Kriol and English matrix languages (Disbray and Simpson 2005; Hamilton 2013; Meakins 2014). At the extreme end of the scale, the two mixed languages, Gurindji Kriol (see (1) below) and Light Warlpiri, have integrated the entire case paradigm into a Kriol verbal architecture (Meakins 2011; O'Shannessy 2011; Meakins and O'Shannessy 2010).

(1)　　Dat gel-***tu***　　i　**bin** tok-in　　***nyanuny*** *kapuku-**yu** wartan-**ta***
　　　　the girl-ERG　　3SG.S PST talk-CONT 3SG.DAT　sister-DAT hand-LOC
　　　　The girl is talking to her sister behind her hand. (Meakins, 2011: 59)

Given the rarity of inflectional transfer in other borrowing and code-switching situations (Gardani, Arkadiev, & Amiridze, 2014; Matras & Sakel, 2007; Myers-Scotton, 1993a; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988), particularly contextual inflections such as structural case (Gardani, 2008), the apparent ease with which case markers are borrowed in Australian languages is suggestive of a typological permissiveness not found elsewhere.

　　　　This paper argues that case-marked nominals are transferrable due to the non-argument status of nominals in non-configurational languages. Nominals in these languages are argued to have the status of adjuncts or secondary predicates rather than arguments (Baker, 1996, 2000; Jelinek, 1984; Pensalfini, 2004). Myers-Scotton (1993a) observes that well-formed structures from a language can enter into a mixed clause via what she terms Embedded Language Islands (and what Muysken (2000) refers to as 'alternational code-switching'). These structural islands are peripheral to the morpho-syntactic frame provided by the matrix language. In the case of many Australian languages, case-marked nominals do not participate in the predicate argument structure of the mixed clause. In this respect they may be thought of as *added* structures (e.g. adjuncts) rather than arguments which are *inserted* into the matrix clause. This paper proposes that it is these Embedded Language Islands structures which are responsible for 'smuggling' case marking into other languages in Australia.

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