8 Conversational Preferences and Referential Design

The Murriny Patha referential lexicon makes for a very fluid mix of forms. Each referential item is used to satisfy simultaneously several conversational preferences. The six preferences are Minimization, Targeted Recipient Design, Generalization, Specification, Circumspection and Association. In this chapter, we will investigate the relationships between conflicting and compatible preferences in Murriny Patha conversation. At any given instance speakers choose a particular expression from a certain category of referential expressions. Each category of expressions is inclined towards satisfying combinations of several preferences at once, and disinclined towards satisfying various other preferences. Certain combinations of preferences are compatible whereas other combinations conflict. Conflicting preferences are regularly locked in tugs-of-war between optimal referential efficacy and maximal interactional advantage. Of interest here is how speakers optimize the multiple conversational preferences to choose the most appropriate expression for the given moment. Particular attention will be given to the two “new” preferences to emerge from the Enfield and Stivers’ (2007) volume, namely Circumspection and Association. These important preferences provide useful insights into the nature of the fluid mix of compatible and contradictory preferences.

In §8.1 we will re-examine the six basic categories of reference forms presented in Chapter 7 – proper names, nicknames, triangulations, minimal descriptions, free pronouns and verbal cross-reference – with regards to their ability to satisfy multiple conversational preferences. Then in §8.2 we will see how, as a result of the various Murriny Patha name taboos, Circumspection impacts greatly on referential design. As a result of Circumspection, a variety of “avoidance recognitionals” are chosen instead of a person’s name. In §8.3 we take up the preference for Association. In particular we will see that speakers regularly associate a referent to themselves when they want to make an authoritative claim about a certain event or an item of business. We will also look at the role of Association in instantiating culturally specific values. In §8.4 we will examine the integration of the complementary preferences, Circumspection and Association. In §8.5 we will see how addressee-associated triangulations are reference forms that simultaneously satisfy Association, Specification and Targeted Recipient Design. These reference forms provide insight into the nature of the role
that all recognitionals play in inviting targeted recipients to recognize the person that the speaker is referring to.

8.1 Referential design principles
When referring to persons in talk-in-interaction, interlocutors recruit the particular referential expressions that best satisfy both cultural contingencies and the speaker’s own interactional objectives. Interlocutors make choices about how to shape their referential expressions. This shaping of expressions is contingent on what they hope to achieve with their talk. In any turn at talk, certain categories of expression are better suited than others to achieve the desired interactional outcomes. I shall call this interactionally contingent, choice-governed shaping of referential expressions “referential design”. Certain preferences for referential design lead speakers to choose particular categories of expression at particular times, and other categories of expression at different times.

In Chapter 5, I introduced no fewer than 6 conversational preferences that have emerged from prior research. All these preferences have an influence on why Murriny Patha speakers choose the reference forms they do. They can all be thought of as referential design principles. For convenience, the various preferences under discussion are restated as follows (cf. Chapter 5 for sourcing and modifications thereof):

**MINIMIZATION:** If possible, prefer single or minimal reference forms (fewer units of speech production).

**TARGETED RECIPIENT DESIGN:** If possible, prefer recognitionals.

**GENERALIZATION:** If possible, prefer general reference forms and don’t be overly specific about who you are referring to.

**SPECIFICATION:** If possible, prefer specific reference forms that maximize the potential for achieving recognition.

**CIRCUMSPECTION:** If possible, observe culturally specific and/or situationally specific constraints on reference and avoid the default reference forms.

**ASSOCIATION:** If possible, closely associate the referent to the current conversation’s participants.

In this chapter we will see how at least some of these various preferences integrate. Some of the above preferences are largely complementary whereas others are contradictory. As discussed in Chapter 7, two preferences, Specification and Generalization are paired polar opposites. On the other hand, Specification and Targeted Recipient Design are similar in that they both deal with the business of
recognition\textsuperscript{184}; yet we will see in §8.5 that they operate in different ways toward achieving the same goal.

The population size of the Wadeye region makes for a speech community that is small enough that nearly all references by adults to adults are potentially recognizable. That is not to say that all person references are necessarily designed as recognitionals.

Statistical evidence points to names being the default reference forms for globally initial reference. In my one-hour transcribed corpus of talk-in-interaction, names comprise 37.5\% of globally initial references to non-present third persons (that were not within the immediate field of view). Despite names being subject to frequent and numerous taboos, they are still the best represented category in the sample.\textsuperscript{185} This suggests that under most circumstances, names are the preferred forms for use as recognitionals. There are of course certain exceptions to this generalization. Kinterms seem to be preferred for references to closely related senior kin. Senior people also tend to use kinterms or other triangulations for referring to young children. Sometimes, they don’t actually know all of the names of all of their own great-grandchildren! Names are also subject to taboos. Under these circumstances, alternatives to names are preferred.

The preferred status of names for use as recognitionals is born out by their being used for securing recognition even when speakers have doubts as to whether they or their interlocutors will actually know the name of the person in question (cf. Downing 1996; Sacks & Schegloff 1979):

\begin{quote}
Fragment 51 Spiny Chitons (2004-08-08JB03b)

709 → Phyl Pana; (. ) ngella pana numi.
That big fat one [was] that other one.

710 (1.0)
711 → Phyl Ba:bij
Bobby

712 (0.43)
713 Eliz Mm hm;

714 (. )
\end{quote}

Fragment 51 is extracted from a conversational narrative. Just prior to this fragment, Phyllis elaborated on two people engaged in a prior conversation – a boy

\textsuperscript{184} Levinson (1987, 2000, 2007) chooses to simplify these largely complementary preferences by collapsing them, and presenting them as broader catch-all principles. Because I am interested in the details of their integration, here I opt for maximal differentiation.

\textsuperscript{185} See footnote 153 (p. 163) for the tally of globally initial references.
and a man. Here she specifies yet another boy who is central to the story, although he did not partake in the conversation that she had just reported. In line 709 she makes (globally subsequent and locally initial) reference to the second boy with the recognitional descriptor, *pana ngen ngalla pana numi*, “that big fat one [was] the other one”. Whether Phyllis’s interlocutor Elizabeth was able to adequately perceive this reference is not clear. Following the reference, she displays no audible sign of recognition (line 710). Then, in line 711, Phyllis upgrades this descriptor with the try-marked name, *8a:biː* (Bobby). In line 713, Elizabeth provides confirmation of the success of this try with the acknowledgement token *mm hmː*. Whether the use of the recognitional descriptor had been successful or otherwise, the speaker has here sought confirmation for the sort of recognition that connects a name to a face – arguably a stronger sort of recognition than by association to a body type, or by placement within a family network (cf. Levinson 2007: 30, footnote 3), which is how the previous reference to this boy was made.\footnote{186 It’s feasible that Phyllis, in producing the try, seeks confirmation that she has remembered the boy’s name correctly. Earlier (see Fragment 76) she appeared to have forgotten the name.}

In Chapter 7 we saw that the vast majority of person references are performed with reference forms belonging to one of six major categories that are grouped not so much on a formal basis, but on a conversation analytic basis (see §7.1.1). The six categories are: names, nicknames, triangulations, minimal descriptions, free pronouns and verbal cross-reference (which of course includes “zeros”). In this chapter, we will see that the above list of six categories is not exhaustive. Occasionally, we also find non-minimal descriptions as well. Non-minimal descriptions are complex referential expressions that combine forms from the above six categories, drawing on certain characteristic properties of the six basic types. They are best understood by appreciating what sorts of properties characterize the six basic categories.

Each of the six categories vary in how well or badly disposed they are towards satisfying particular conversational preferences. Certain preferences are best satisfied by selecting reference forms from one or more reference categories. Each of the categories satisfy different combinations of preferences. Table 11 shows the various categories next to the preferences that they generally satisfy. The absence of a preference next to a particular category doesn’t necessarily preclude its being satisfied
by a reference form of that category, only that speakers do not normally choose those forms if they want to give priority to that preference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of reference forms</th>
<th>Preferences that they generally satisfy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names</td>
<td>Minimization, Specification, Targeted Recipient Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicknames</td>
<td>Minimization, Specification, Targeted Recipient Design, Circumspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulations</td>
<td>Specification, Targeted Recipient Design, Association, Circumspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Descriptions</td>
<td>Minimization, Generalization, Circumspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Pronouns</td>
<td>Generalization, Circumspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Cross-reference (&amp; zeros)</td>
<td>Minimization, Generalization, Circumspection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Reference categories and preference satisfaction.

Each category of form can be used to satisfy more than one preference, and some more than others. No particular category can satisfy all of the preferences. In designing person references, speakers choose the forms that they do, not only because certain categories are inclined towards satisfying particular preferences, but also because the same categories are disinclined towards other preferences. The choices reflect an interactionally determined prioritization of complementary and contradictory preferences.

Because each of the person reference categories concurrently satisfies several preferences, the challenge is to see how these various preferences integrate in naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. One environment where the incompatibility between certain preferences becomes apparent is in repair sequences. Referential repairs are particularly useful because they reveal what interlocutors themselves take to be problematic. Repair sequences are a site where the speaker’s prioritization of preferences is less likely to be simultaneously satisfied. Repairs provide a locus where successful reference is achieved over several turns at talk.

Some researchers restrict their investigations to quite specific domains. For example Levinson (2007) and Sidnell (2007) primarily concern themselves with next turn repairs to globally initial third singular references, where the repair is other-initiated using a person specific repair initiator (e.g., who, which person and the like). Because I have only a one hour corpus, if I were to consider only the third position
repairs, I might not find enough sequences to observe useful patterns. In order to get a large enough sample size, it is necessary to be less restrictive about the types of sequences under investigation. This affords certain advantages in that larger patterns emerge that are less visible if the types of sequence under investigation are severely restricted.

I intend to widen the net in several ways. Firstly, I will not restrict the investigation to other-initiated repair sequences. Secondly, I will not examine only references to third persons and nor will I limit the repairs to problematic first-mentions. Finally though, rather than limiting the study to bona fide repair sequences, the net can be cast wider still by examining how reference is “upgraded”. We can say that speakers “upgrade” reference when they provide recipients with certain additional information about the referent. In this light, all referential repairs (in my corpus) are referential upgrades. Referential repairs assist in making the referent identifiable or recognizable. This normally amounts to an upgrade in specificity. However this need not be the case for all upgrades. Sometimes reference is upgraded regardless of whether or not genuine trouble is perceived. For instance, a recipient of an utterance may upgrade a reference in order to display that they have correctly perceived the referent. Alternatively, speakers might make subsequent references that update the shared common ground by demonstrating how the referent fits into the scheme of things. They might associate an already identified referent to other known persons, or by connecting the referent to matters discussed previously. These sorts of upgrades may or may not assist in achieving recognition. The point is though, that the pathways interlocutors take in upgrading reference provide insight into how and why interlocutors choose the reference forms that they do from amongst the various available categories. By thus widening the net on upgrades, I hope to extract maximal benefit from this modest corpus.

Particularly revealing are the cases where reference is upgraded because Circumspection comes into play. By removing the default reference forms for recognitional reference, a range of alternative reference options comes to the fore. These alternative options throw light on the conflict between opposing preferences and the compatibility between others.

Levinson (2007: 50) reports that in 6 hours of transcribed conversation, he identified 50 candidate third turn repair sequences, of which only 29 were suitable for inclusion in his study.
8.2 The preference for Circumspection

The reworked preference for Circumspection that I adopt in this dissertation states that if possible, speakers should observe culturally specific and/or situationally specific constraints on reference and avoid the default reference forms (after Levinson 2007). In Wadeye, the major class of culturally specific constraints relates to the numerous taboos restricting the use of personal names.

Amongst these taboos are behavioural and naming restrictions between mothers-in-law and sons-in-law. Similar (albeit less intense) naming restrictions apply between brothers-in-laws, though this practice has waned (Furlan – personal communication). There are also very strong restrictions on adults mentioning the names of real and classificatory opposite-sex siblings, a prohibition that also extends (to a lesser degree) to close opposite-sex cousins (Furlan 2005: 159). There is a very strong restriction on naming the deceased. This taboo lasts for several years after the person’s funeral. Traditionally the formal taboo is lifted following the *nandji mulurnu*, or “ragburning” mortuary ceremony that takes place several years after the funeral (Marett 2005: 61). Normally however, the names of closely related deceased kin are avoided indefinitely. When close kin of the deceased are within earshot, conversationalists generally avoid producing the deceased person’s name, even after the formal restriction has been lifted. Many of the above taboos also extend to namesakes and “placenamesakes” of the tabooed relation. Every individual in the community will be in avoidance relationships with a large number of real and classificatory kinsmen. This makes for a large number of personal names that need to be avoided. For these reasons, amongst Murriny Patha speakers, Circumspection impacts considerably on referential choice.

For all intents and purposes, Circumspection, as it manifests itself in Wadeye, is a culturally specific and situationally specific preference for avoiding personal names. The preference however is exactly that – a preference, that like other preferences, may be relaxed as required, rather than adhered to rigidly. If a naming restriction applies, then producing the relevant name would of course be dispreferred. In Fragment 52 such a name is produced, yet it is done in a way that reveals it to be produced as a dispreferred response.

Fragment 52 Longbun Dinner (2004-09-12)B04
760 Eliz *Nangalardu, (.) *dannyiyerrngimei; Who was it that told you/us that story? ← request (FPPbase)
761 (0.15)
762 Phyl (where; )
In Fragment 52 Elizabeth requests information from her sister Manman. In line 760, she asks her to tell those present who it was that had originally told the funny story that Manman had recounted just prior to this extract. What is expected from this request is an explicit identification. Rather, in the manner of a clue, Manman warns Elizabeth that the person in question has passed away (*makardu warda*, “the person isn’t around any more”, line 763), inferring that the person should not be named. The 1.6 second pause (line 765) following the advice of decease can be taken as a space left for Elizabeth to work out for herself who had passed away. *Makardu warda* is thus a pre-granting insertion that points to a problem for compliance with the request.

Because she didn’t manage to work out which deceased person told the story, the *Nanggalyu*, “who”, that Elizabeth produces in line 766 is not merely a reissued request, it also serves as a go-ahead for Manman to provide the information, despite the problematicity with the production of the name. She grants the request in line 768 by producing, sotto voce, the name *Birrarri*. Joe Birrarri was Manman’s husband who has been deceased for quite some years.\(^\text{188}\)

The dispreferred nature of the given response is revealed in the soft production of the eventual name and in the delay produced by the insert expansion sequence (a sequence that provides the opportunity for an alternative course of action – a guess). This dispreferred packaging displays Manman’s reticence about producing the name. Levinson (2007: 55) also found that Rossel Islanders, when pressed to identify certain in-laws with restricted names, also produced the name sotto voce.

\(^{188}\) Elsewhere in this corpus Manman displays less reticence about producing his European name, *Joe*. The soft pronunciation and hesitation displayed here provide support for Stanner’s (1937: 309) observation that restrictions on names of European origin are less rigidly applied than restrictions on indigenous names (see §5.2).
Under conditions such as these where the husband is deceased, the preferred reference form would be something other than a name. However Circumspection, which prefers names not to be used, runs counter to the need to achieve recognition. In this example Circumspection is relaxed in favour of the two (largely) complementary preferences, Targeted Recipient Design (which prefers the use of recognitionals, e.g., names) and Specification (which prefers the use of specific reference forms, e.g., names). Elsewhere in the corpus, women generally do not mention their deceased husbands by name. Generally Circumspection is not relaxed. The complications associated with the avoidance of names can result in referential problems and (as we will see in Chapter 10) even failed reference.

We have already encountered one strategy for avoiding a restricted name in §7.2.1, where initial reference is made to a spousal couple and then subsequent singular reference is made to the member of the couple that is the tabooed relation. Recall from Fragment 32 (repeated here as Fragment 53) that one method is to incorporate a deceased partner into a dual feminine non-sibling reference using a free pronoun, and then make subsequent verbal cross-reference to the partner with a singular verb.

**Fragment 53** Initial mention as dual, subsequent mention as singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Longbum Dinner (2004-09-02)B04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74 Eliz Ngaŋ’gungintha (kal) ngunungamginthardurr thunggu ← initial ref to husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngaŋ’gungintha ?? ngunungam-ngintha-rdurr thunggu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDU.EX.F.NSIB 1S$go.NFUT-DU.F.NSIB-depart fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 bannurdurdi’tharra:thu thunggu ngalla nyiniyu*. ← subs ref to husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ban - nu - rdurdi - tharra - gathu thunggu ngalla nyini-yu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S.17.NFUT -DTRANS -insert - moving - toward rifle big that-PART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We two (IDU.F.NSIB) set off. He/she put [bullets] into that big rifle as he came along this way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next fragment, Elizabeth employs a parallel method for avoiding naming a classificatory brother. By drawing on the spousal relationship, she establishes reference using a dual feminine non-sibling inclusory construction and thereafter refers to him singularly.

**Fragment 54** Initial mention as dual, subsequent mention as singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ninbingi (2005-07-15)B01a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 Lucy pinggarlma daya; ← nickname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinggarlma ((nickname: knees-having)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 (0.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Eliz hhawu. No!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 (0.45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Fragment 54, Elizabeth disagrees with Lucy’s claim that a particular djanba song was about a question that her “father” had asked of his wife. In line 38, Elizabeth uses an inclusory construction to refer to the couple who were involved in the exchange. In this construction, the wife, Kandilmun, is named explicitly. The husband, Elizabeth’s classificatory brother, is the other party captured by the dual feminine non-sibling reciprocal verb (deneginthanhadarrpudha, “two non-siblings at least one of whom was female [Kandilmun] were asking each other”). In line 40, Felix produces a third singular verb danidharrpuwadini, “he/she was asking”, which points out that only one person was doing the asking (and that the other was being asked a question). Because the subjects of verbs are unmarked for gender, this reference form doesn’t specify which of the two it was that asked the question. In 42, Elizabeth elaborates further. She uses the free pronoun nukunu with the focal suffix -gathu to explicate that it was the husband who said it to (asked it of) his wife, Kandilmun. This specific reference to Kandilmun’s husband proposes him as an alternative candidate to the asker claimed by Lucy. In line 43, Lucy backs down from her initial claim.

In this fragment, Circumspection is satisfied, as Elizabeth has avoided producing the name of the brother. Minimization on the other hand is relaxed, as the reference to the husband is spread over several turns at talk, rather than the single turn required for production of a name. The reference form used for the initial reference to the husband, the inclusory construction, is quite specific – as specific as the name Kandilmun.

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189 See Fragment 64, p. 230.
190 Because the turn begins in overlap, Kandilmun is named twice. Once Lucy drops out, the second re-mention is in the clear.
because the woman, Kandilmun, had only one husband. In this case, the name was avoided without any relaxation of Specification required.

Inclusory constructions and free pronouns are not forms that spring to mind as typical recognitionals, yet achieving globally initial recognitional reference is precisely what these forms have been successfully used for doing. It seems that under conditions of taboo, a variety of reference forms may be recruited for use as recognitionals. In this respect, there is a lot that Murriny Patha can teach us about the nature of recognition.

Recall from Chapter 5 that Stivers’ (2007) “alternative recognitionals” are recognitional expressions that depart from the unmarked forms for recognitionals. These forms are employed when “something else in addition to referring is being done by the talk practice which has been employed” (Schegloff 1996a: 439). If we think of name avoidance as a systematic practice that Murriny Patha people engage in, then Stivers’ definition (2007: 77) (see p. 86) can be modified to account for the kinds of recognitionals that are used when a referent’s name is restricted and “avoidance” needs to be performed. We can call such expressions “avoidance recognitionals”. We may consider a reference form to be an “avoidance recognitional” if and only if:

1. The speaker knows the referent by name.
2. The speaker
   a) assumes the hearer knows the name of the referent and
   b) assumes the hearer to assume the speaker to know it.
3. The name is restricted either
   a) for the speaker to pronounce or
   b) for the hearer to hear/pronounce.
4. The speaker
   a) assumes the hearer will appreciate that the reference form was so constructed in order to avoid pronouncing a restricted name and
   b) assumes the hearer to assume the speaker will assume the hearer recognizes that the reference form was so constructed in order to avoid pronouncing a restricted name.
5. The reference form must still be recognitional to the hearer.

Technically, the form used in line 38 is more general than a name because the inclusory construction does not provide any information about the non-specified person, except that the person is not Kandilmun’s sibling. However, as previously noted, the connotation associated with regularized globally initial reference to couples using dual feminine non-sibling inclusory constructions effectively narrows the range of potential referents to that restricted set of men who are married to women named Kandilmun.
Partly because they are so specific, the most common of the avoidance recognitionals are triangulations, particularly kinterms. However, we will see that reference forms from all of the regular reference categories may be recruited as avoidance recognitionals. This is even true of names. As Fragments 56, 81 and 83 demonstrate, rather than use the name of a person in a tabooed relationship, sometimes speakers will refer to a tabooed relation using the name of their spouse or other close kinsman. Garde (2002: 370) reports the same practice amongst Bininj Gun-wok speakers. As long as the recipients understand the name to be used not for reference to the actual namebearer but rather to an “avoidable” person, then names when used in this way may be considered avoidance recognitionals. Any reference form that satisfies Circumspection (at least, with regards to the avoidance of personal names, as it is locally construed in Wadeye) can be used as an “avoidance recognitional” – as long as it is used in such a way that recognition is the objective and avoidance is performed.

As the result of a repair, in Fragment 55 two recognitionals are used for reference to two individuals. One person is referred to by name. Because the other person is deceased, he is referred to using an avoidance recognitional.

**Fragment 55**

Verbal cross-ref upgraded to a name, verbal cross-ref upgraded to triangulation, minimal descriptor upgraded to a name

Spiny Chitons (2004-08-08)B03b

690 Phyl [Moːma damathay] thamunytha:
     [His] grandfather said to him.
691 thurdayangkutjatha::y有信心
     "You shouldn't have said that swearword."
692 Eliz [Ku tjipmandji mana]ya.
     "Really it should be ‘spiny chiton’.
693 Phyl [+:Ku] tjipmandji na;+
     "‘Spiny chiton’ isn’t it."
694 (0.37)
695 Eliz Mm;
696 (1.8)
697 Phyl Yuːkuy: (0.15) umama.
     “Yes”, he said to him.
698 (0.18)
699 Eliz Mnh he [he ha ha ha ha]
700 Phyl [Ha ha ha ha ha]
701 (0.15)
702 Eliz Nanggala;: ha ha
     Who?
703 Phyl Ya kardu Antania pani damathay ha] hm. ← name/descriptor, RS,
     Um, that very same Antonio.
704 Eliz [Ha ha ha]
In Fragment 55, Phyllis is telling Elizabeth a funny story about two young boys and two men. One of the two men, G, is the Elizabeth’s deceased son. The story incorporates a lot of reported speech. In line 691, Phyllis reports an utterance that originally hailed from Elizabeth’s son, G, and was addressed to his classificatory grandson, Antonio (his classificatory daughter’s son – Phyllis’s own daughter’s son). In this line of reported speech, G informs his “grandson” that the words he had used to refer to a particular species of mollusc were in fact swearwords. In line 692, Elizabeth anticipates Phyllis’s reporting of her son’s next utterance by providing the correct name for the molluscs, ku tjipmandji, “spiny chitons”. G’s correction of the young boys’ mistake is subsequently echoed by Phyllis in line 693.

In line 697, Phyllis reports a response token, yukuy, “yes”, that should probably be interpreted as the young boy’s reported reply to the “grandfather”, G. The response token is framed by the speech verb mamna, “he/she said to him”. This particular verb (being a multiply-denoting expression) is used to refer to the reported speaker and the reported recipient at the same time. After a burst of joint laughter (lines 699 and 700), it seems Elizabeth has not worked out who is talking to who, and so in line 702, she produces a person-specific other-initiation of repair, nanggalwa, “who?!”. Phyllis self-corrects by embedding the name of the young boy within a recognitional descriptor, kardu Antonio pandamatha, “that very same Antonio”. In line 707, she then upgrades the reference to the other person. Phyllis here refers to Elizabeth’s son with the self-anchored kinterm kanggurl ngay, “my brother’s son’s

192 However, the converse situation cannot be ruled out – that the grandfather said “yukuy” to the young boy, Antonio.
193 This reference is presumably to the reported addressee, though this cannot be ascertained.
son”. Because she has shown Circumspection and avoided the personal name, the self-anchored kinterm may be considered an avoidance recognitional.

Although the repairs provide upgraded references to both the reported speaker and to the reported addressee, and remove doubt as to who these individuals might be (Elizabeth’s son, G, and the young boy, Antonio), the repairs do not entirely clear up the question of who said “yukuy” to whom. Since no further repairs ensue, then presumably the question of who was involved in the exchange has been resolved adequately for Elizabeth to get the general gist of the story.

In Levinson’s (2007) account of person reference on Rossel Island, he states that when the conditions for name avoidance apply, the recognitional reference forms recruited in the stead of names are denotationally less specific than names (the default recognitional forms). In fact, he actually phrases Circumspection in this light: “Show circumspection by not over-reducing the set of referents explicitly” (Levinson 2007: 31). In the Murriny Patha data, although it is true that the vast majority of expressions recruited for name avoidance have broader denotata than names, notable exceptions to this tendency throw doubt on the ability of reference restriction to explain the mechanics of Circumspection. However, before considering the Murriny Patha exceptions, we should consider that for English speakers also, there are certain circumstances where particular situational constraints push referential choice towards greater specification than would be expected from the default class of recognitions.

One such set of circumstances are press conferences and press releases, where globally initial references are made to presidents and prime ministers. In these specific contexts, the initial mention of a political leader is normally comprised of two separate reference forms – for example, “the President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush”. In this very specific set of circumstances, “situational constraints” dictate that reporters, press secretaries and the like, avoid using bare names (e.g., George, Bush, George Bush) (which under normal circumstances would be the unmarked forms for use as a first mention), and instead use non-minimal, appositional reference forms. Note that this particular two-part reference is more

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194 For example, at the press conference in San Christobal, Mexico, on 16th of February 2001, Mexico’s President Vincente Fox began a joint press conference thus:

“Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Mr. President. This morning I have held very productive and cordial talks with the President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush. We have agreed on a set of principles and values to provide our relationship as neighbors with more constructive dynamics of....”

specific than a personal name on its own, because it uniquely specifies the 43rd president of the United States, and excludes other (albeit famous) people that happen to have the same name.\footnote{Such as George H.W. Bush, the 41st president and father of the 43rd president; George P. Bush, the nephew of the 43rd President; and George Washington Bush, the first black settler in what is now the state of Washington.}

As stated earlier, in Murriny Patha conversation Circumspection predominantly deals with the avoidance of restricted names. Fragment 56 is unusual in that it is one of the few cases where a speaker, in the effort to avoid mentioning a restricted name, produces a reference form that is more specific than a name. In this fragment, Rita refers to a man she cannot name. The man in question was called Piyelam. This man Piyelam has been deceased for over sixty years. As his classificatory daughter, Rita was not in avoidance relationship to this particular man. However, she is (or was) in an avoidance relationship to another man called Piyelam who is now also deceased, but wasn’t deceased at the time that this recording was made. This other Piyelam was Rita’s classificatory ngathan, or “brother”. Because the restriction on naming opposite-sex siblings also extends to the namesakes of siblings, Rita is not at liberty to mention the name Piyelam, even when talking about her “father”.

### Fragment 56

Wurltjirri (2005-07-15)B04b

123 → Rita  
yu karda yalgay karrim ponguniminya;
yu karda yalgay karrim pangu-nimin-ya
yeah here my.father 3sS.stand.EXIST DIST-INTENS-PART
Yeah, the “father” of mine was really there.

(0.2)

124  
125 → Rita  
murrinj pana pulurtji kondjinkurran.
murriny pana pulurtji kondjin=kurran
name that.you.know man’s.name 3sS.have.EXIST=3sS.go.along.EXIST
[Same] name [as] that pulurtji[‘s father] has.

126 Felix  [xxx xxx xxx]
(0.4)

127 Felix Piyelam. 1
Piyelam.

In a complex turn spanning two TCUs (lines 123 and 125), Rita refers to the long-deceased Piyelam with a very complex reference form (a non-minimal description). The reference form comes to a point of possible completion at the end of the first TCU. The second is then produced as an increment to the first. The complex reference form would be most accurately translated into English as “the father of mine [with] the same name Pulurttji has” [really was there]. However, built into this second TCU, the name Pulurttji is itself functioning as an avoidance recognitional.
Purlurtji is the son of the younger Piyelam, the classificatory brother of Rita. Here Rita uses the name of the son to refer to his father, thus short-circuiting the restriction on the father’s name. Having located the father (her brother), and thus also his name, she explicates the namesake relation and applies the entire complex expression to her own classificatory father. Effectively the whole complex reference is understood as “that father of mine with the same name that Purlurtji’s father has” [really was there]. In line 128, Felix provides the restricted name on Rita’s behalf.

In this particular case the complex reference form that is used is more specific than the default reference form. Names are not unique identifiers. The chosen form is (very probably) a unique identifier – effectively, “the Piyelam that was my father and not the one who is my brother”.

In this particular example, as with the US president example, the preference for Minimization (if possible, prefer single or minimal reference forms) and the preference for Generalization (if possible, prefer general reference forms) are relaxed in favour of both Circumspection and Specification (if possible, prefer specific reference forms). The complex reference form used in Fragment 56 is unusual in that it does not belong to any of the regular reference categories presented in §7.1.1. The form is a non-minimal description. Such forms do exist, yet in the corpus they are quite rare; presumably because the preference for Minimization constrains against them. The vast majority of reference forms do belong to one of the six regular categories.

Circumspection does not therefore, as Levinson suggests, necessarily predict the use of reference forms less specific than the default. This tendency for reference forms to be less specific is a natural outcome of the specificity cline that places names as the most specific of the usual suspect categories (recall Figure 7.4, p. 165). It is the specificity cline that predicts that the alternatives to names will be less specific. However, there is nothing about Circumspection that precludes the use of reference forms not pertaining to any of the regular reference categories. The need to be specific is interactionally contingent and need not be relaxed (although it usually is) just because the default reference forms ought to be avoided.

Personal names have a special status in that these are the forms that simultaneously satisfy the preferences for Minimization, Specification and Targeted

196 This is why, in framing Circumspection, I have drawn on Levinson’s discussion but have not adopted his definition (see §5.3.4.2).
Recipient Design. If circumstances are such that Circumspection needs to be satisfied by avoiding a name, then sacrifices will need to be made by relaxing one or more of the above preferences. Overwhelmingly Circumspection does yield more general reference forms, but the alternative option is to use less-minimal reference forms and thus maintain specificity.

Although somewhat beyond the scope of this dissertation\(^\text{197}\), we find that the preference for Circumspection has a wider application than that of personal names. Allan & Burridge (1988, 1992) provide typologies of euphemism that include general-for-specific substitutions, part-for-whole substitutions, circumlocutions, clippings and acronyms, verbal play, technical jargon, hyperbole and understatement. Here again, Circumspection (the need to avoid the default forms) does not necessarily predict that the replacement form will be less specific than the tabooed form, though the general-for-specific strategy is a frequently availed option.\(^\text{198}\)

The other important preference to be singled out for special attention in this chapter is that of Association. In Murriny Patha conversation, associative references are very frequent. By examining referential upgrades where Association figures, important insights may be gained about other preferences as well.

### 8.3 The preference for Association

The preference for Association states that if possible, the referent should be associated as closely as possible to the current conversation’s participants (Brown 2007). In Murriny Patha the process of association is usually enacted by explicitly anchoring a kinterm to a named propositus. In this case, the propositus of choice is either the current speaker, an addressed recipient or co-present other(s).

Association may be enacted with a recognitional reference in globally initial position, such as in line 113 of Fragment 57 where Phyllis makes globally initial reference to the great-grandfather of Elizabeth’s co-present granddaughters.

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**Fragment 57** On the Flat (2005-07-05JB01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Eliz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Eliz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Mangalala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Eliz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{197}\) However, see Fragment 80.

\(^\text{198}\) See also Grondelaers & Geeraerts (1998) and Garde (2008).
113 → Phyl Mu¿ (.) muluk pule pigunuka ngarrangu kanardang,
[muluk pule ]=pigun-ka
[great-grandfather ]=3PL-TOP
Oh, their great-grandfather, which way did he get speared?

114 (1.1)
115 Phyl (pilampi.)
(salt flat).
116 (0.34)
117 Eliz (Nyinika kanyungu),
That was this way.

Alternatively, once globally initial reference has been established, it is quite common
for a recipient of an previous reference to establish a subsequent association to
themselves (as in Fragment 58) or to an addressed recipient (as in Fragment 59).

Fragment 58 Wurltjirri (2005-07-15JB04b)
52 Rita =>mindilbitj ngangganimin< kgrrim yam- wuld mitjin>wangu<,
He is [buried] right there in the cemetery, at the old mission.
53 (0.34)
54 → Felix piyelam yalngayya.
piyelam yalngay-ya
man's.name my.father-PART
Piyelam [was] my father.
55 Rita Yu::.
yeah.

Fragment 59 On the Flat (2005-07-05JB01)
194 JC niy°rnu da kardu, (.) nangari.
That's her now, Nangari ((who was in the belly)).
194 (0.18)
195 → Phyl Yu nangari kanggurl nyinyinukunu<ya.
yu nangari [kanggurl=nyinyi ]=nukunu-ya
yes subsection [fafa.zi=2sPOS ]=3SMPOS-PART
Yeah Nangari [is] your father's father's sister.

We already encountered evidence in Chapter 2 for the practice of associating
referents to co-present conversationalists being properly construed as a conversational
preference, rather than a mere tendency. If such a course of action is actually
preferred when the occasion to do so presents itself, then we might expect that a
failure to comply with such a preference would be actually noticeable. Fragment 60
shows that it is indeed noticeable. In fact, it is more than noticeable – it is actually
repairable.

Fragment 60 On the Flat (2005-07-05JB01)
50 Phyl Pana. (.) marip, (0.28) kanggurlanggurlya.
That paternal grandfather of Marip. ← TS
51 (0.45)
52 Phyl thunggu mawumawu kardanugothu nuradhadiñi.
He came this way for a rifle.
53 UnId [ mmh hm ha ha ha ha ]
54 (1.0)
In Fragment 60 (which was presented previously as part of Fragment 2), Phyllis is telling the story of a battle. In line 50 she makes globally initial recognitional reference to a man using a kin-based triangulation, *pana Marip kanggurlanggurlyya*, “that biological father’s father of Marip”. Although the man in question was deceased long before many of those present were born, the “recognitional” demonstrative *pana* invites recipients to locate the person within a genealogical network. Phyllis then goes on to say that he came this way looking for a rifle.

The person Marip is not present. In line 55, Elizabeth proposes an alternative kin-based formulation with herself as propositus, *thaminy ngay*, “my maternal grandfather”. Elizabeth presents this alternative construal as a candidate formulation to be confirmed as being the same person, or contradicted for being someone else. The “astonishment” conveyed by this “intonationally tweaked” other-initiation of repair\(^{199}\) locates a problem with the choice of Marip as propositus for the kinterm. Confirmation is provided in the next turn (i, “yeah”) and the alternative formulation is ratified by its repetition, thus completing the repair.

Given that this was an occasion when it was possible to associate the referent to co-present conversationalists, and that Phyllis actually chose the optimal category of reference form with which to do so, the failure to comply with the preference was not only noticeable, but problematic and in need of repair. This shows that if the propositus may be anchored to a co-present conversationalist, speakers are expected to do so. It is this that makes Association a conversational preference.

When associations are properly construed in conversation (that is, to a co-present conversationalist), it can be difficult to find evidence for the work that they are employed to achieve within the recipiency of the co-present interlocutors.\(^{200}\) It isn’t that associative references go unacknowledged by recipients, or even that they are not

\(^{199}\) For fuller discussion see p. 16.

\(^{200}\) That is, it is difficult to find the sorts of evidence that conversation analysts might normally search for: acknowledgement tokens, change of state markers etc. Video evidence may provide various visual cues that are otherwise missing from these transcripts. In this respect, the absence of video (though unavoidable) is rather unfortunate.
acknowledged audibly (some are, as in Fragment 58). It’s more that if we want to appreciate the range of tasks that these references are employed to perform, we will need to adopt a more ethnographically oriented approach to analysis than is preferred by traditional CA; particularly since much of the business of Association seems to lie in the multiplicity of cumulative associative references, made over the duration of extended passages of talk. Thus, in the following section we will examine some of these cumulative references in an extended conversational narrative.

8.3.1 Multiple associations in a conversational narrative

Brown (2007) claims that Tzeltal person reference reflects a cultural preoccupation with kin and geographic setting. Such a claim seems equally applicable to Murriny Patha person reference as well. In fact, it seems reasonable to suggest that the practice of associating referents to co-present conversationalists is itself a resource for instantiating cultural values; particularly with regard to accentuating differences between individuals or groups, and to forging solidarity between individuals and groups. This is not so readily apparent if we examine only individual fragments where isolated associations are enacted by individual references. Rather, it is that cultural values are reinforced by the cumulative effect of multiple associations, spread over extended passages of conversation.

The next three fragments all come from the same conversational narrative. The recording was made whilst visiting a place on the Yek Nangu clan’s estate. Lucy, Manman & Elizabeth all belong to the Yek Nangu Murriny Patha clan. They have brought some other people for a picnic. Not all of the people present belong to this clan.

Fragment 61 Problematic verbal x-ref upgraded to a triangulation

Longburn Dinner (2004-09-12)B04

1 Lucy pedjetka f k a n y i  d a m a lθa,  yu (0.3) sə’h, Pedjet was right here.
2 Eliz l’Pangu’ dangathaj. That place there.
3  
4 Eliz Purltjenya kardu ngi- nyini >kanyi da wangu,< banawatjhwarda (0.6) a- u-; I think Purltjen was born around here.
5  
6 Lucy Mika lala panguwathu ngana naman dji dharra:ya:: karda;=  
    ngana -na -mandji -dharra -ya  
    ISS.PSTMP -3sIO -carry.over.shoulder -moving -PART
    I was carrying cycad fruit to him on my shoulder.
In line 1 of Fragment 61 Lucy begins to tell a story. She uses a name, Pedjet, to make globally initial reference to an old man who has been deceased for many years. She announces that at some unspecified time in his life he had been “right here”, where the recording was being made. In the following line, Elizabeth mentions another old man, Purltjen, as being born in the area. In line 7, Lucy goes on to say Mika lala ngana namandjitharraya karda, “I carried cycad fruit to him on my shoulder.” Given that two males have just been named, there is ambiguity as to which was the recipient of the cycad fruit. Immediately following this utterance, Elizabeth produces an open class repair initiator, Eh? (line 8). Lucy does not treat the open class repair initiator as pertaining to a hearing problem, but as pertaining to a problem of potentially ambiguous reference. The repair solution, ngarra thaminy ngay (line 9), “to my grandfather” (in this case, fa.mo.br), is specifically fitted to the problem at hand by conveying recipiency with the preposition ngarra, rather than with the indirect object pronominal (-na, -3SMIO, line 7), as was the case previously. The grandfather in question was the same Pedjet that she had previously mentioned in line 1. It should be pointed out that Pedjet’s own biological son was a co-present recipient of this particular storytelling. Here, the self-anchored kinterm thamuny ngay not only repairs the problematic reference by upgrading it from the denotationally general verbal cross-reference to the more specific kinterm, but by associating the referent to herself, she additionally establishes her own credentials to be telling the story about the man in question – he wasn’t just anyone, he was her grandfather!

This passage also begins a theme that is taken up by the other conversationalists. Lucy and Elizabeth both belong to the clan whose estate we were visiting, whereas Pedjet (and his co-present son) belong to a neighbouring clan. In line 7 Lucy makes the point that she actively provided food for the old man ( whilst he was visiting her clan’s estate). By linking the providing of food to a “grandparent” relationship, Lucy shows that her obligation to provide food was fulfilled. The obligation is not only that of a dutiful “granddaughter” to an esteemed “grandfather”, but that of land-owning
hosts to provide for their guests. Lucy goes on to further develop this theme. The other women of the clan also go on to make it clear that they all were involved in caring for the old man while he was convalescing in their country.

Fragment 62 continues the same story from where Fragment 61 left off. In this fragment Lucy deals with her recipients’ lack of uptake by treating her own prior utterance as possibly problematic. She then self-repairs with associative reference forms and secures their co-participation.

Fragment 62 Verbal cross-reference upgraded to a free pronoun and verbal cross-reference upgraded to triangulation.

Longburn Dinner (2004-09-12B04)

13 Lucy Yinguangtyharru piru ngangathu (0.3) pandjelalka yalngay

kanyi danga’dua’ ma puddininamunelrt.I

Right here my father put down the stringybark for him that he carried on his head. They left it for him and went off another way.

15 Mmm

16 (0.5)

17 → Lucy Purranginawup.
parrani-นา-wup

3PLS.I9.PSTIMP-3SGO-make.shelter
They were making a shelter for him.

18 (1.7)

19 → Lucy Ngan’guŋguŋgi.me.
My mob.

20 (1.4)

21 → Lucy Yile +nyaŋyae.
Your father.

22 (2.1)

23 Eliz Nyinyi weyi’dal kapigapiŋyingga xxxI
You didn’t really visit him.

In line 13, Lucy refers to her own father as having brought some stringybark for the same old man (Pedjet). Lucy receives strong support from Manman in line 15, who produces a strongly affirmative acknowledgement token, Mmm: : . In line 17, Lucy goes on to state that “they were making a shelter for him”, Parrinina.wup. The polysynthetic verb makes for a reference form that favours Generalization rather than Specification. Because the third person subject is “plural”, the reference to the builders of the shelter is effectively cast as non-recognitional. 201 In the ensuing 1.7 seconds of silence, this utterance receives no immediate support, nor audible acknowledgement from any of Lucy’s interlocutors. The silence is suggestive of the

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201 This “plural” reference effectively equates with the non-recognitional “they” in English (see §6.1.3.1, particularly, p. 123).
prior turn being perhaps problematic. Following this transition space, Lucy self-repairs in line 19 by elaborating on the identity of the builders of the shelter. Here she produces a free pronoun, *ngan’gumime, 1EX.PAUC.F.NSIB,* effectively “my mob”. Because Lucy was a young girl at the time, she would not be expected to be building bark shelters. Here however, the initial reference is upgraded in specificity by choosing a paucal feminine non-sibling pronoun – these forms being used for specific mobs. In this case, the mob in question consisted of members of her own clan (whose number included her own father). Even though she didn’t help to build the shelter, the first person pronoun includes herself within the group who were responsible for its being built. Because she is sitting on the ground with two members of her own clan and because the form of the pronoun is exclusive of the addressee, the upgrade is “recipient designed” for an addressee who is not a member of the same clan. Here the exclusive pronoun is simultaneously used for self-association to a group and for disassociation of the addressee to the same group. Triangulations are not the only reference forms that may be recruited to satisfy Association.

Once again there is no audible uptake by the targeted recipient of this upgrade, nor from the co-present women of Lucy’s own clan (line 20). The 1.4 seconds of silence is perhaps indicative of a further problem. Again in the manner of a transition-space self-repair, Lucy upgrades the reference to the recipient of the shelter, thus treating the denotationally general *3SMIO* pronominal *-na* as being potentially vague. Here the upgrade is with a kinterm that is anchored to a second person propositus, *yile nyinyi,* “your father”. The father in question is the same Pedjet that she had previously referred to in Fragment 61 as *thamuny ngay,* “my maternal grandfather”. She is here addressing the biological son of the said Pedjet. Whether or not the references to the builders of the shelter or to the recipient of the shelter are genuinely problematic is irrelevant. The potential problematicity of Lucy’s initial reference occasions two opportunities (lines 19 and 21) to deal with her interlocutors’ lack of uptake. In turn, the self-repairs provide two further opportunities for Lucy’s interlocutors to display their reciprocity. The second of these opportunities is taken up by Elizabeth in line 23.

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202 Due to the lack of video footage, the import of inter-turn silences has been difficult to analyse in these transcripts, because speakers regularly produce extended inter-turn silences that are not treated as problematic (Gardner & Mushin 2007a, b). However, it’s worth noting that following Manman’s acknowledgement token in line 15, Lucy’s uptake in line 17 is much quicker (after a mere 0.5 seconds). This contrast suggests that the silences in lines 18 and 20 are potentially indicative of prior problems.
Lucy could have elaborated on the recipient of the shelter by re-using the name *Pedjet*. By anchoring the kinterm to her addressee and by excluding the addressee from the reference to the builders of the shelter, she distinguishes father and son (the visitors to the country) from herself, her father and her co-present companions (the landowners). By this time portraying her own clansmen as providers of shelter, she again presents them as people that fulfill their social obligations to guests.

In Fragment 61 Lucy uses a triangulation to associate the referent to herself, whilst in Fragment 62 she goes on to use a triangulation to associate the same referent to her addressee. In each case the practice of association accomplishes particular social and interactional ends. However, in this fragment she recruits a reference form from outside the triangulation category, a free pronoun, to build on the associative work of these triangular reference forms. Significantly, she contrasts one social group construed by the association of a referent to a propositus, to another group construed by the use of a free pronoun. She chooses the first person paucal exclusive free pronoun, *ngan’gungime*, to contrast the addressee-excluded group (her own clansmen) from the group comprising the addressee and the addressee-associated referent (alien clansmen). Lucy here uses different reference forms to instantiate cultural values by highlighting important social divisions.

Having used association to mark difference, in the next fragment Lucy uses association to forge solidarity. In Fragment 63, initial reference is made with a non-minimal complex reference consisting of a self-anchored kinterm, nickname and verbal cross-reference. Repairs are enacted in a manner that further the association to self and extend the association to an addressed recipient.

**Fragment 63 Longburn Dinner (2004-09-12)B04**

49 Lucy =nngu kanam=ngantha-part kanggurl "ngay pinggarl=ma"; ← non-minimal ref
   nangu kanam-nga=nta-part kanggurl=ngay pinggarl=ma
   place.name 3S.4.NFUT-1SfED-leave fa.fa.zi=1sPOS knee-having
   Pinggarl, ma father’s auntie, left [Pedjet] behind at Nangu, which displeased me.
   (0.8)

50 MyCr ((laughs)) [0.4]
51 (1.0)
52 Eliz Nanggal. Who?

54 ← OIR₁

---

203 As we will see in §8.5, these addressee-associated triangulations make first class recognitionals.
204 Although individual clans have names, as far as I can determine, Murriny Patha lacks a superordinate category term “clan”. I suspect that the recurrent practice of associating people to each other, and people to country, is critical to how this aspect of social organization is enacted.
In Fragment 63, Lucy continues telling the story about her thamuny (in this case, her fa.mo.br), Pedjet, who was ill. In line 49 she complains that his wife, a woman whose nickname was Pinggarlma (“person with [bad] knees”), left him at a place called Nangu. She refers to Pinggarlma with a non-minimal complex reference consisting of a self-anchored kinterm, nickname and verbal cross-reference. So doing, she chooses herself as propositus for the kinterm kanggurl (in this case, fa.fa.zi), thus associating the referent to herself (see Figure 8.1). At the same time she refers to herself using the 1sED -ngantha as part of the verb kanamnganthapart, “he/she left [s/o] behind on me” (recall example 6.52, p. 135). Ethical datives generally express malefaction. Here Lucy refers to herself as the party adversely affected by Pedjet’s being left behind.

Some 2.4 seconds later, Elizabeth initiates a repair with a person specific repair initiator nanggal, “who”. Nowhere in this corpus are category specific repair initiators
treated as dealing with problems with hearing.\textsuperscript{205} Even though the latter part of line 49 is pronounced softly, rather than repeat the prior utterance (which is the normal practice for dealing with hearing problems), in line 56 Lucy reworks the prior reference as an explanation: “Pinggarlma was really in a kanggurl relationship to me”. Lucy treats the troublesource as being an issue of the nickname Pinggarlma not being a unique identifier. Lucy’s own father’s brother also had the same nickname. Line 56 is thus a disambiguation – effectively, “the female Pinggarlma that was my fa.fa.zi, and not the male Pinggarlma that was my fa.br.”

In line 59, Elizabeth again uses a person-specific repair initiator to initiate a further repair on who it was in line 49 that was left behind. Lucy could easily attend to this problem by producing the name Pedjet, but she doesn’t. Instead, addressing the co-present son of Pedjet (E in Figure 8.1), she produces two separate triangulations in separate TCUs. The first, \textit{yile ngangga kem}, “[your] daddy was there”, includes an addressee associated kin title, \textit{yile}, “daddy”, which has an implied second person propositus. In Murriny Patha, as in lots of languages including English, it is common to reckon kin titles (like \textit{mum} and \textit{dad}) altercentrically when speaking to younger people about their parents. Because Lucy is more than twenty years older than E, and because Pedjet was the biological father of her addressee, the propositus may be elided.\textsuperscript{206} The second TCU is an increment to the first. This triangulation \textit{thaminy ngay damatha}, “my proper fa.mo.br”, is an association to herself. This two-part reference associates the referent to Lucy’s addressee and also to herself. The combination is at least as specific as the name, but far less minimal. In this particular reference, Minimization has been relaxed in favour of Association, without sacrificing Specification.

The non-minimal reference simultaneously associates the current speaker and addressed recipient to the referent in a way that highlights a common bond – you and I are both kin, by way of this person (irrespective of us belonging to different clans). This is a means for building solidarity between speaker and addressee. Here Lucy aligns herself with her addressee and the referent. Because she had just previously

\textsuperscript{205} In this corpus, \textit{Nanggal}, “who”, is only ever used when a recipient fails to uniquely identify the referent. This situation contrasts with Sidnell’s Bequan Creole data where \textit{who} is used when a recipient fails to make out the name. On the other hand, \textit{who X} is used when there are multiple potential referents and \textit{who is named so} is used when a recipient doesn’t know anyone by the name provided (Sidnell 2007).

\textsuperscript{206} This is not the first time in this conversation that Pedjet is associated to his co-present son, but it is the first instance where the propositus for \textit{yile} is elided.
aligned herself with Pedjet in being adversely affected by his being left behind at Nangu, the double-barreled association that follows, groups E and herself together in having legitimate grounds for affection towards the old man.

In the 47 seconds that comprise these three fragments, Lucy twice associates the referent to her addressee and makes five associations to herself, one of which is at the same time a dissociation of the referent from her addressee. The passage is thus dense with multiple associations.

Much of the work that is done here relates to culturally specific values such as clan membership and the obligations of landowning hosts towards guests. My claim about these reference forms being recruited for these particular ends is more grounded in ethnographic fieldwork than in traditional CA. Nonetheless, we here seem to be witnessing these macro-social factors played out locally in the fragments of conversation. This is perhaps evidenced more in the totality of the multiple associations than in the particulars of the individual associations. Triangulations, the forms that are usually recruited for satisfying Association, are very frequently used in conversation, both in globally initial positions and in globally subsequent positions.

At a micro-level, Association plays a role in enhancing distinctions and forging alliances. In particular, we see joint association of the same referent to both speaker and addressee used as a means of forging solidarity, where each are united in having a common bond. On the other hand, we see contrastive associations recruited for accentuating difference. Particularly, we see self-association to a group contrasted with other association to an individual who is not part of that group.

In the following section we further some of the findings touched upon in the three fragments that have just been discussed.

8.3.2 Self-association and epistemic authority
In Fragment 61 we saw that Lucy associated Pedjet to herself as a means of establishing her credentials for telling a story. Speakers regularly associate the referent to themselves when they want to present themselves as having knowledge about certain events. However, because this is identifiable as a means for making an authoritative claim, its usage invites scrutiny of the claim’s veracity.
Fragment 64 Ninbingi (2005-07-15)B01a

27 Felix “daka Ninbingika pangurdaya ṭngarra kalakkalak”= ((singing))
Ninbingi is the place where the clouds...

28 Lucy [ yalngayathu. ] ← claim, triangulation
It was my father.

29 Felix =kanambeapkem. ((singing))
are forming.

30 Eliz yakay yile nyinyi; ← OIR, triangulation
Your father?!!

31 Felix ((Singing))

32 Lucy pinggarlmarde; ← RS, nickname
It was Pinggarlma ((nickname: knees-having)).

33 (0.36)

34 Eliz (h)a(h)wu.
N(h)o!! ((very breathy, like a growl))

35 (0.45)

36 Felix Yeah.

37 Lucy (w)ayini-

38 Eliz [kandilmunya kandilmun- (0.2) deneginthanumardadharrpudha;=
Kandilmun Kandilmun and another person [her husband] were
asking each other, at kurlurlurl.

39 da kururlurl panguyu. ← ↑ counter-claim

40 Felix [ dajdahrpuwadiniya.
He/she was asking.

41 (0.22)

42 Eliz ‘nu’kunwathu mmmnge xxx ← counter-claim continued
It was him who said it to her.

43 Lucy A yu yu djiva;
Ah yeah yeah, that’s how it was.

In Fragment 64 a group of Murriny Patha people are discussing djanba 59 which has just been played, and for which a group of researchers will shortly elicit the song text. In the song, a man asks his wife, “Tidha, what’s the place where the clouds are visible in the distance?” The woman then replies, “That’s Ninbingi where the clouds are forming”.

Whilst Felix sings the song, Lucy uses the self-anchored kinterm yalngay (“my father”, line 28) to make the claim that it was her father that asked the question of his wife. In line 30, Elizabeth displays her astonishment with this claim by prefacing the recycled kinterm with the reaction token yakay, which marks surprise. Recall from §5.3.2 that initial reference forms are frequently recycled by recipients in framing disagreements. Here the recycled kinterm (yile nyinyi, “your father”) locates a problem, thus other-initiating a repair sequence. As Schegloff (2007c: 102-104, 151)
notes, insert expansion repair sequences can also pre-figure disagreements. Lucy treats this other-initiation of repair not as challenging her claim, but as pointing to the reference being insufficiently specific. She thus upgrades the reference by providing the nickname Pinggarlma, effectively specifying the person in question as not her own biological father, but one of his two brothers.

Elizabeth strongly displays her disagreement with Lucy’s claim by producing the gravelly disagreement token (h)σ(h)wu., “N(h)o!!” (line 34), and then making a counter-claim (lines 38, 39 and 42) that it was a woman called Kandilmun and her husband that had had this particular exchange. In the face of this alternative version of events, Lucy backs down from her initial claim (line 43).

In Lucy’s initial reference she associates the referent to herself and thus makes an authoritative claim about the referent and the event. In challenging the veracity of Lucy’s claim, Elizabeth recycles the reference form but reverses the polarity of the association (from self to other), thus problematizing not only the reference, but the association to self. The challenge to the claim is packaged as an astonished repair initiation. This other-initiation provides the opportunity for a backdown or for mitigation of the prior claim. Regardless of whether Lucy actually perceives the repair initiation as challenge to her version of the events, she deals with the repair initiator by treating the problem as one of potential ambiguity. Here the method employed for making an authoritative claim actually backfires and provides the tools with which to challenge the claim.

Support for my claim that self-association is to be taken as a stamp of epistemic authority can be found in the vigour with which Elizabeth attacks Lucy’s claim, and with it her self-association. There appears to be a moral to the story provided here: if speakers wish to fly a flag, claiming that they know something, then the basis for

207 As this example from Schegloff (2007c: 102) illustrates. Note the recycling of “sound happy”.

1 Bee = {W h y} what’sa mattuh with y-Yih sou[nd HAIPFY,] hh ← FPPbase
2 Ava [ Nothing.]
3 Ava u= I sound hap[py?] ← FPPinsert
4 Bee [Yee]uh. ← SPPinsert
5 (0.3)
6 Ava No, ← SPPbase

208 Citing discussions with the late Harvey Sacks, Schegloff (2007c: 151, footnote 17) remarks that “one basic way that humans have of dealing with disagreement and conflict is to treat it as a problem in hearing or understanding, and try to ‘fix’ that problem.”

209 Some speakers of Aboriginal English would say that Elizabeth, in line 34, has “growled” Lucy. The verb growl is transitively used when someone chastises or scolds another person (or animal), often whilst literally growling, as is the case here.
their claim had better be correct, or their interlocutors will come down upon them like a ton of bricks.

The next fragment provides a further example of self-association used to position the speaker as an authority. It is unusual in that the association to self is not enacted with a triangular expression, but rather with the proximal demonstrative *kanyi*, “here”.

**Fragment 65** Minimal descriptor incrementally upgraded to a pronoun plus name.

Wurltjirri (2005-07-15)B04

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>Felix <em>wurldjirri</em>[<em>Il</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>Mmmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>Allan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>(0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>Felix eh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>(0.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>Mary Mm: =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>Allan --And malkarrin little bit after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>Felix [Yeah]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>UnId [Yeah]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>Eliz After.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248</td>
<td>Felix And the:--n (0.25) <em>third thlis one now djanba.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249</td>
<td>Mary [ x x x x x x x x x x x x]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>(0.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>Allan djanba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>Eliz nyinika da mishin kanyi warda;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>(0.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>Lucy xxx=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>Felix =djanba mana warda dimya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>→ Felix djanbaka nyini marra “k’anyi warda na [kardul pule; And that Djanba is newer isn’t it. That old boss...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>Eliz [x x x]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259</td>
<td>(0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>→ Felix <em>kanyiya</em>; (0.7) *nukunu tungguya; this one (0.7) he Tungguy ((Robert Kolumboort)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>262</td>
<td>Allan Ok.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fragment 65 hails from an ethnomusicological elicitation session where the interlocutors were discussing when exactly the founder of the wurltjirri\textsuperscript{210} and the founder of the malgarrin\textsuperscript{211} performance repertories received the first of these song series in their dreams. Having established that wurltjirri predated malgarrin, Felix in line 248 mentions the third of the public Murriny Patha song repertories, djanba. In line 252, Elizabeth states that djanba was the most recent because it was composed at a time when the Port Keats mission had already been established\textsuperscript{212} (which contrasts with the timing of the other two genres, each of which predate 1935, when the “old mission” was established at Werndek Nganayi).

After confirming (lines 255 and 257) that djanba was indeed the most recent, Felix goes on to refer to the first of the djanba composers to receive a song in a dream. In an extended turn spanning three separate TCUs (lines 257 and 260), Felix refers to this man using three separate reference forms. The initial mention (line 257) is with the minimal descriptor *kardu pule*, “old man/boss/leader” (the old man in question was not co-present). Following a 0.7 second pause (line 259), Felix incrementally upgrades the reference by adding a proximal deictic *kanyi*, “this/here” (line 260). Because increments are grammatically parasitic on previously complete turns (Walker 2004), the upgrade is interpretable as “this boss/old man” or “the boss/old man [from] here”. Following another 0.7 second pause, also in line 260, Felix further increments the reference by producing a reference form that straddles both the “triangulation” and “proper name” categories: *nukunu Tungguyya*, “he Tungguy”.

The eventual naming of the composer was the result of two separate incremental upgrades. Each upgrade amounts to a relaxation of Minimization. A relevant question therefore is why did Felix not upgrade to a name in a single turn, which would have been more minimal than two separate upgrades? A possibility is that he had momentarily forgotten the name of the composer. This suggestion might receive some support from the delay provided in the two 0.7 second pauses. However, the extended turn lacks any of the word-search phenomena appearing elsewhere in this corpus (e.g.,

\textsuperscript{210} A Nangu man called Tjimarrarr received the first wurltjirri song (in my estimation) between 1930 and 1933 (see Fragment 30, p. 169).
\textsuperscript{211} A Dimirnin man called Mulindjin received the first malgarrin song (in my estimation) between 1932 and 1934 (see §3.1, Fragment 44 and Furlan (2005)).
\textsuperscript{212} The first of the djanba series is believed to have been composed in 1961 (Furlan (2005: 145), citing Lawrence Kolumboort).
drawl, word-search-words, the bare “human” nominal classifier *kardu*, slightly rising “continuous” intonation, etc.). In which case, this relaxation of Minimization may be driven by other motivations.\(^{213}\)

The djanba performance genre is primarily associated with the *yek dimirnin* clan of Murriny Patha people.\(^{214}\) The community of Wadeye (which was previously the mission of Port Keats) is located on the *yek dimirnin* estate. This particular recording was made in Wadeye. Because the composer was not himself co-present, by choosing the proximal deictic, *kanyi* (line 260), Felix associates the referent to the place where the conversation was taking place, namely Wadeye. Tungguy was a *kardu dimirnin* man (that is, a member of the *yek dimirnin* clan). Felix is also a kardu dimirnin man and a singer of djanba. The deictic *kanyi* (as part of the incrementally upgraded *kardu pule kanyi*) places the referent within country that forms part of the same patrilineal estate as the speaker’s. Because Tungguy is regarded as a “boss” for djanba, and because all the current bosses for djanba are kardu dimirnin, *kanyi* effectively places the referent within a sphere of influence in which the speaker also has a stake. The demonstrative *kanyi* thus serves as a stamp of epistemic authority with which to speak about the referent – “that old man was a kardu dimirnin boss like me”. This usage makes for the association of the referent to the current speaker in a way that is not “triangulated” via an anchored kinship link, but is indirectly mediated via a patrilineally determined link to shared country. The non-minimal complex reference form that is spread over three turns allows for the placement of the demonstrative *kanyi*, which would not be possible by choosing a name. Minimization is thus relaxed in favour of Association.

Here Felix uses a proximal demonstrative to associate the referent to himself, by means of a shared link to country. This contrasts with Lucy’s use of an exclusive free pronoun in Fragment 62 to disassociate the referent from her addressee. Although triangulations make excellent associative reference forms, they are not the only reference forms that are recruited to satisfy this preference. This brings us back to my earlier disclaimer relating to Table 11. Just because triangulations are associative...

\(^{213}\) Because Felix eventually produces the name *Tungguy* without any audible prompting from any of the other interlocutors, there is no reason for thinking that he is displaying circumspection about pronouncing the name. The old man is long deceased. He died sufficiently long ago that the formal restrictions on pronouncing his name would have been lifted many years previously.

\(^{214}\) The *kardu djanba* are the spirits of kardu dimirnin clansmen. The kardu djanba are the “little people” who pass on djanba songs to composers, whilst they are dreaming. Most of the composers of djanba were either kardu dimirnin clansmen, or spouses of kardu dimirnin clansmen.
reference forms par excellence, this should not preclude other reference forms from being recruited to satisfy Association. As we will see in due course, just because names are the preferred forms for use as recognitionals, this should not preclude other categories of reference forms being recruited to satisfy Targeted Recipient Design.

In sum, self-association is frequently used for positioning oneself as an authority on the business at hand. Fragment 63 shows that self-association can be achieved with reference forms that are outside the triangulation category, whereas Fragment 62 shows that the process is risky if the basis for claiming authority is flimsy. In the next section we will see a further authoritative claim performed with a self-associated avoidance recognitional. Particularly relevant is how such forms simultaneously satisfy several preferences at the same time.

### 8.4 Complementary preferences: Circumspection and Association

In §8.2 we saw how under conditions of taboo, the default reference forms for globally initial reference, names, are the forms to be avoided. We also know that names are the most specific of the regular reference categories. This is one of the reasons that they make such good recognitionals. However, triangulations are also reasonably specific reference forms. This is one of the reasons why, after names, triangulations are the next most frequently used reference forms for globally initial reference. Under conditions of name avoidance, speakers are most likely to choose triangulations as avoidance recognitionals. This makes Association and Circumspection highly complementary preferences. The former leans toward triangulations, the latter leans away from names. If the chosen propositus is a co-present conversationalist, then the triangulation will simultaneously satisfy both preferences.

It is because the two preferences are complementary that Circumspection is useful in revealing how these preferences integrate with other preferences. In our next fragment, we will see how very complex triangulations are recruited as avoidance recognitionals with additional associative benefits.

**Fragment 66** Two different speakers each repair a verbal cross-reference – each upgrading using complex triangulations.

Ninbingi (2005-07-15)B01a

9 Eliz Tidha thanggurda warda panguyu.

“Tidha ((totemic name)), what’s that place called?”

10 (0.14)
Fragment 66 is extracted from the same ethnomusicological session as Fragments 54 and 64. The discussion relates to the text of a particular djanba song. Because there were many enthusiastic consultants contributing to the discussion, there is considerable overlap in this fragment. Djanba songs are received by composers in dreams. The text of this song reports a question and answer sequence between a man and his wife.215 This question and answer sequence took place within the context of the particular dream in which the composer received the song. In line 9, Elizabeth reproduces part of the first line of the song. Her utterance reports part of the man’s question to his wife, Tidha, thanggarda warda panguyu?，“Tidha, what’s that place called?” Tidha is a totemic name for people of the Yek Nangu clan. The Murriny Patha clans are exogamous, so only one of these two people can be addressed as Tidha – either the husband or the wife, but not both. In line 12, Mary treats Elizabeth’s utterance as potentially unclear as to which of the two was the reported addressee and which was the reported speaker. She other-repairs the utterance by providing the framing speech verb, mengedhawa, “he/she was saying to her”. The indirect object pronominal, -nge, in the speech verb mengedhawa, is third singular

215 The text of djanba 59 is as follows:

Husband: “Tidha thanggurda warda panguwathuyu werrpi kingawatkurranya?”
   “‘Tidha, what’s that place over there where there is smoke visible from a long way off?’”
Wife: “Daka ninbingika pangardaya ngurra kalakkalak kanambepkema.”
   “‘That over there is Ninbingi, where the clouds are forming.’”
feminine, “to her”. This reveals that it was the husband who addressed the wife as *tidha* and not the other way around.

The verb *mengedhawa* is a multiply-denoting expression that is employed for referring to two referents – a subject referent and an indirect object referent. Effectively, it is used to refer to both the reported speaker and the reported addressee, at the same time. In lines 13 to 18, Elizabeth and Mary each elaborate on the individuals referred to with this verb. Each use complex non-minimal reference forms to avoid naming the husband. Each of these non-minimal forms include triangulations. Because Elizabeth and Mary predominantly speak in overlap, I will discuss their respective elaborations in turn.

In a turn spanning lines 13 and 15, Elizabeth recycles the speech verb *mengedhapirri*.216 She here upgrades the reference to the husband by producing a non-minimal, complex expression, *mengedhapirri nukunuwathu Tjarriwurdi niyurnuya*, effectively: “He, Tjarriwurdi’s [son] was saying to her”. Tjarriwurdi, who is not present, is a woman whom Elizabeth calls *kale*, “mother”. Her son would therefore be Elizabeth’s *ngathan*, “brother”. Given the very strong restrictions on naming opposite-sex-siblings, there is thus a strong motivation for Elizabeth to be circumspect about how she refers to this man. Because this is a recognitional reference form that avoids the naming the individual (though certainly Elizabeth knows the name and doubtlessly expects her interlocutors to also know the name) the reference form is an “avoidance recognitional”.

This complex reference form is one that straddles two of our regular reference categories: the “free pronoun” category and the “triangulation” category. The triangulation is an “elided progeny construction” where an elided kinterm (son/daughter) is anchored to a named third-person propositus (Tjarriwurdi, the man’s mother). Possession (or in this case, “parenthood”) is marked with the third person singular feminine possessive pronoun, *niyurnu*, which agrees in gender with the propositus, *Tjarriwurdi*.

In line 18, Elizabeth upgrades the reference to the wife by producing her name, *Kandilmun*. The name is both specific and minimal. By contrast, the reference to the

216 Here, however, it gains a serialising verb form *=pirri*. This form gives the construction the literal reading, “he was saying to her whilst he was standing up”. The recycling of the speech verb displays the preference for self-correction in repair, rather than other-correction (Schegloff et al. 1977).
husband (*nukunuwathu Tjarriwuri niyurnuya* plus the verbal subject of *mengedhapirri*) is quite specific but not minimal.

In line 16 Mary produces an utterance that overlaps Elizabeth’s upgraded reference to the husband. Here, Mary also upgrades her prior reference to the same man (line 12). Like Elizabeth’s reference, the complex of expressions that Mary recruits for referring also straddles the same “free pronoun” and “triangulation” categories. Although her upgrade is similar to Elizabeth’s, it is even more complex (both grammatically and semantically) and even less minimal. The utterance consists of three latched TCUs, each of which can be construed as “single reference forms”. The middle TCU, *pipin ngay niyurnu*, is also an “elided progeny” construction. The elided kinterm (*son/daughter*) is firstly anchored to the same third person propositus that Elizabeth had chosen (*Tjarriwuri, the man’s mother*) though in Mary’s version, the mother is herself anchored to the speaker (*pipin ngay, “my aunt”*). This reference is thus a double triangulation – firstly via a third person propositus and secondly, via an embedded first person propositus. Here the speaker associates the referent to herself, by the way of the mother. However, latched onto this reference Mary produces an additional “single reference form” – also a triangulation, *puwarli ngay nyiniya*, “that’s my cousin/that cousin of mine”.

This final “single reference form”, like the former, is also one that avoids producing a name. However, it is also one that explains the speaker’s motivation for avoiding the name. Close opposite-sex cousins, like opposite-sex siblings, are also people whose names should not be pronounced, so certainly the utterance is cast with Circumspection in mind. However, although the need for avoidance is spelt out plainly for all hearers, the genealogical information that this reference form provides is redundant, because a son of one’s aunt is necessarily one’s cousin.

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217 The first TCU is a free pronoun + verb combination, the second is an elided progeny triangulation and the third is a kinterm embedded within a minimal description.

TCU 1: *me -nge -dha -wa nakuwu-gahu* 3S.S.say.PSTIMP-3SIO -PST -EMPH 3S-MTOP
   “It was him who was saying to her”

TCU 2: *[pipin=ngay]=niyurnu* [fa.zi=1SPOS]=3SF
   “my aunt’s [son/daughter]”

TCU 3: *puwarli=ngay nyini-ya* cross-cousin=1SPOS anaph-PART
   “That [is] my cousin/that cousin of mine”

218 *Pugarli/puwarli*, “cross-cousin”, is unmarked for gender.
Here we have not only a massive relaxation of Minimization. The use of three “single reference forms” does not increase the likelihood of achieving recognition because the second permutation is genealogically redundant. Rather, the gains are in the sphere of Association. Here, Mary twice associates the referent to herself; at first indirectly, by way of the aunt and then later directly, by choosing herself as propositus for the kinterm *puwarli*, “cousin”. It is worth noting that the first triangulation *pipi ngay niyurnu* (“my aunt’s [son]”, line 16) was partly produced in overlap with Elizabeth’s line 15, whereas the subsequent triangulation was produced in the clear. If the hearers of her first upgrade were to have missed the relationship between the speaker and the referent (for instance, because of the overlap), then they would have been left in no doubt as to the nature of the relationship upon hearing the second triangulation. Not only does *puwarli ngay nyiniya* restate the relationship within clear “airspace” and in very unambiguous terms, it also ramps up Association by bringing the referent one step closer to ego. Her claim of genealogical proximity to the referent flags her own contribution to the discussion as one that comes with a certain epistemic authority. She knows what she knows because the events in question centred around her own kinsman.

By definition, avoidance recognitionals are reference forms that satisfy Targeted Recipient Design. Additionally, both Elizabeth’s and Mary’s avoidance recognitionals are quite specific, so they each satisfy Specification. Since they are used for avoiding names, naturally they also satisfy Circumspection. However, in this fragment Mary managed to choose her own relative as propositus for her elided progeny triangulation, and herself as propositus for the kinterm *puwarli*. Her complex avoidance recognitional thus additionally satisfies Association. Clearly not all triangulations satisfy Association (as Elizabeth’s form shows). The lesson however is that Association and Circumspection, although dealing with rather different business, are naturally compatible preferences. As long as speakers choose triangulations to satisfy Association, these preferences do not come into conflict.

We’ve now seen on several occasions that current speakers associate the referent to themselves when making claims of epistemic authority. In the next section we’ll see that the association of a referent to an addressed recipient has quite a different effect.
8.5 Complementary preferences: Association, Specification and Targeted Recipient Design

Amongst the Maya, Brown (2007: 189-191) and Haviland (2007: 241) state that for Tzeltal and Tzotzil respectively, kinship references are preferably reckoned through the addressee, rather than through the speaker – even when the person being referred to is the speaker’s own close kin. Neither of these researchers suggest reasons as to why this might be the case. A cursory examination would suggest that addressee-association is the preferred option in Murriny Patha conversation. However, a global analysis reveals the situation to be more complicated that a simple preference for reckoning kinterms through the addressee.

Fragment 67

Different speakers reckon kinterms using the same propositus.

Sorrow (2004-08-08B03b)

277 Phyl panmardaraki nyina:thu karda kanyi,  
    She'd had enough of it all....  
(0.1)
278 Eliz pangu pangu.  
    There there [Peppimarteni].  
(1.3)
280 → Eliz Ngarra ku kanggurl nyinyire warda lutj mam ngayya.  
    [It was] when your late “grandson” passed away on me.  
(0.5)
283 Phyl Yeah;  
    Yeah.

((172 lines removed)) ((2 minutes, 56 seconds))

455 Phyl Daka wurammadungkarelk…  
    He took himself away to another place [to Tjindi].  
(0.76)
457 Eliz *(Tjindi nganako.)*  
    (Tjindi, wasn’t it?)  
(0.9)
458 Phyl Ah?  
(0.8)
460 Eliz xox [xΧ]²

462 → Phyl [Awu] "ka‘nyungu "ngarihaknu; kanggurl ngay manggal.  
    “No I’ll follow this way”, my “grandson” said to me.  
(0.7)
463 Eliz Mm:*

465 Phyl nungamburrktharra malgarrin; ah hm hm hm mm.  
    He was dancing Malgarrin.

((138 lines removed)) ((3 minutes, 15 seconds))

603 Eliz Ha ha ha

604 (0.35)

605 → Phyl <<Awu bematha kanggurl ngay pangu wurdamna>mal>tidamhath"a".  
    Oh my “grandson” was there laughing at him so much his
sides were aching.

The two women in Fragment 67 are old friends. Phyllis is in a classificatory “mother” relationship to Elizabeth. Elizabeth generally makes initial references to her living children by name. In line 281, Elizabeth makes globally initial reference to her own deceased son with an altercentric kinterm kanggurl nyinyi, “your grandson” (in this case, woman’s br.so.ch), a globally initial reference form. This is a triangulation that associates the referent to her addressee, Phyllis. She prefices the kinterm with the nominal classifier ku, which marks the referent as deceased (Walsh 1993, 1997); effectively, “your late grandson”. This is a reference form that shows Circumspection because she has avoided the default reference form, her son’s name.

Three minutes later in line 462, Phyllis re-refers to Elizabeth’s son by reproducing the same kinterm, kanggurl, that Elizabeth had used previously. In so doing, she also replicates Elizabeth’s prior selection of her (as in, Elizabeth’s selection of Phyllis) as the propositus for the kinterm. The chosen triangulation is a globally subsequent reference form occurring in globally subsequent (and locally subsequent) position.

A further three minutes later (line 605), this formulation is again replicated. Again she anchors the kinterm kanggurl to herself, rather than to her addressee. Phyllis could have just as easily have shown Circumspection and avoided naming the individual by referring to him as wakal nyinyi, “your son”.

Feasibly, Elizabeth used the altercentric reckoning through the addressee for the first mention (line 281) because such forms are highly recognition al. This strategy places the referent squarely within the addressee’s own genealogy, thus inviting the addressee to find a person that they know about, that relates to them in the manner specified by the kinship relation. The nominal classifier ku (in ku kanggurl nyinyi) marks the specified “grandson” as deceased, thus distinguishing him from Elizabeth’s remaining sons and from any further kanggurls of Phyllis’ that are alive. This initial reference is one that favours Specification (prefer specific reference forms that maximize the potential for achieving recognition). It is also one that simultaneously satisfies both Circumspection and Association.

If, in Murriny Patha conversation, the preference for Association really is differentially weighted in favour of the addressee, as Brown and Haviland suggest
that it is for the two Mayan languages, why in lines 462 and 605 did Phyllis not also associate the referent to her addressee by anchoring the kinterm for “son” to Elizabeth? I suggest that the anchoring of kinterms is pragmatically motivated. Perhaps a better explanation might be that the “altercentric” reckoning in line 281 was motivated by the need to achieve recognition. The ten minutes of conversation that follow this globally initial reference consist of a series of reminiscences about Elizabeth’s deceased son. Given that in line 281, recognition of the referent had already been established, it would hardly be necessary to continue using such high quality recognitionals for those globally subsequent references to the same person, given that the person is already established within their shared common ground. On the other hand, Phyllis’s self-associations might be explained as authoritative claims on the referent, claims that validate her telling of stories about a person closely connected to her interlocutor.

The passage conforms to the basic global pattern described in §7.2.2, where globally initial reference is done with specific reference forms and thereafter, more general forms are used. Note that in lines 462 and 605, Phyllis does not persist with the use of the nominal classifier ku, which Elizabeth had used specifically to mark the referent as deceased. All of the globally subsequent triangular references to the deceased son (lines 462 and 605, inter alia) are done with forms that are less restrictive than Elizabeth’s globally initial reference, even those that are also locally initial (e.g., line 605).

The degree of specificity that can be applied to an expression is an important factor for securing the recognition of one’s interlocutors. Even within the Murriny Patha classificatory kinship system it is sometimes possible to restrict the set of potential referents. Reduplicated kinterms such as yileyle or yilele (yile-RE DUP, father-REDUP) and kanggurlanggurl (kanggurl-REDUP, fa.fa-REDUP) specify biologically determined kinsmen rather classificatory kin. However, the other important factor in securing recognition is the degree to which the expression is perceived as being recognitional. Addressee-associated triangulations such as kinterms are extremely recognitional because the supposition that the speaker will know the referent is built into the expression itself.

In a small speech community like Wadeye, almost all kin-based references have the potential to be used as recognitionals because, at least amongst adults, it can be
safely assumed that one’s interlocutors will know the relation in question. Thus, even kinterms that are anchored to a first person propositus can be safely assumed to be recognitional (as in line 59 of Fragment 68).

Fragment 68 Wurltjirri (2005-07-15Jb04b)

57 Eliz i nyinika wu- and that one....
58 (0.5)
59 Eliz murndak wa’rda* manganort yalgay. ←association to self
A long time ago my father got ((composed)) it ((the song)).
60 (0.6)
61 Felix we yu. ←recognition signalled
Oh yeah.

This is not an assumption that can be made in large societies. If I refer to my father with the self-anchored kinterm, my father, I can’t expect you, the reader, to recognize who I’m talking about unless I happen to know that you know him personally, or I know that you know something about him. So unless I know that you know (of) him, the form would be clearly non-recognitional. If on the other hand, when talking to you, I use the altercentric kinterm, your father, then I can assume you know who I’m talking about, even if I don’t personally know your father at all.

Recall Schegloff’s (1996a: 459) set of contingencies for when recognitionals ought to be used: “a) If the speaker may (or ought to) suppose the recipient to know the referent; b) if the speaker may be supposed by recipient to have so supposed; and c) if the speaker may suppose the recipient to have so supposed.” Addressee-association makes the supposition of prior knowledge absolutely explicit. In addition to personal names, Schegloff (ibid.) lists recognitional descriptions (or descriptors) as another variety of recognitionals. Although not stating what it is about these expressions that makes them recognitional, the two examples he gives are clear addressee-associated triangulations (in addition to being descriptions): “‘the woman who sits next to you,’ [and] ‘the guy you bought your car from’” (ibid.). Kinterms and other addressee-associated triangulations make first class recognitionals partly because they are quite specific reference forms, but also because they make obvious the satisfaction of Targeted Recipient Design.

We all have various networks of intimates and associates. There are some people with whom we have very close dealings and others that we know merely as colleagues or associates. Yet others we know only by reputation or because they were previously mentioned. By associating a referent to an addressed recipient, a speaker effectively
places the referent squarely within a specified network of associates (see Figure 8.2). An addressee-anchored kinterm like your uncle places the referent within the addressee’s own kinship network. Your boss places the referent within the addressee’s network of work colleagues. These forms draw the addressee’s attention to the obvious recognizability of the referent, to the supposition of prior knowledge, and to the manner of association. This action effectively states, “You are connected to this person in the specified manner and I know that you should be able to work out who I’m talking about because I’m aware of the nature of your connection to this person”. The act of associating the referent to the addressee is thus visible as an active invitation to find the person that the speaker knows to be connected to the addressee. It is visible because the manner of association is made so explicit. It is this obvious invitation to recognize the referent that makes these reference forms personally designed for targeted recipients.

Figure 8.2 The association of the referent to an addressed recipient places the referent squarely within a specified network of social relations for which the addressee is also a member. Addressee-associated kinterms place the referent within the addressee’s kinship network.

Addressee-associated triangulations are thus forms that simultaneously satisfy Association, Targeted Recipient Design and Specification. This makes them such high quality recognitionals that they are unlikely to fail in securing recognition, except perhaps if the referent is underspecified (e.g., your uncle might fail if the recipient has a large number of uncles) or if the recipient has a memory lapse. The expression ku kanggurl nyinyi, “your late grandson” in Fragment 67 (the globally initial reference in line 281) is a reference that simultaneously satisfies five
preferences: Targeted Recipient Design (in being a recognitional), Association (in being an addressee-associated triangulation), Circumspection (in being an avoidance recognitional), Specification (in being a specific reference form) and Minimization (in being a minimal reference form).

It is to be expected that because addressee-associated triangulations are recognitionals, they should have something in common with other recognitionals. In this light, these forms should provide insight into the workings of all recognitionals. In a sense, all recognitionals imply a supposed “prior knowledge association” of the referent to a targeted recipient. Addressee-associated triangulations make the supposition of prior knowledge explicit and explicate the manner of further associations (kinship, place of work, etc.). In some ways, names are like addressee-associated triangulations except that the manner of association is not explicated and the supposition of prior knowledge is implied. Because the manner of the implied association is not explicated, names do not specify which network of associations the referent belongs to (see Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3 Personal names used as recognitionals imply a “prior knowledge association” between a targeted recipient and the referent, where the referent is placed in some network to which the targeted recipient also belongs. However, the question of which network the referent is being placed in remains unclear.

The implied “prior knowledge association” also underpins the least typical variety of recognitionals. Recall from Chapter 7 that when a speaker uses a locally subsequent reference form in globally initial position, this was seen as inviting recipients to find a topically salient person that is potentially on their minds.
In Fragment 44 (re-presented, in part, as Fragment 69) the topically salient composer Mulindjin was referred to for the first time with the locally subsequent verb form *kandjinkuwadhadini*, “he had two who were siblings”. There was also the anecdotal example of Saddam Hussein being “first-mentioned” with the locally subsequent *him* (in *Ladies and Gentlemen, we got him*).

**Fragment 69**  
**Verbal x-ref for a salient participant**  
Wurrtjirri (2005-07-15)J04b

217 Felix Be malgarrin.1  
And malgarrin....

218 Eliz L Kanburrin wardawa. (. ) yi: (0.8) wakal perrken’gu=  
Kanburrin wara-wa yi wakal perrken’gu  
woman’s name already-EMPH and child two

219 NR L ‘x x x x x x x x x x (whispered) x x x x x x x x x x’.

220 Eliz =kandjinkuwadhadini. ← globally initial verbal x-ref  
kandji -n’gu -wa -dha =dini  
3Ss.have.PSTIMP -3DAUCDO -EMPH -PST =3Ss.sit.PSTIMP
He had two of them.  
((Kanburnin a:nd [what’s her name] were already [born at the time].  
(0.8) He [already] had two kids)).

221 (0.22)

222 Felix yu::ku:y. ← recognition signalled  
That’s right.

Locally subsequent verbal cross-reference and locally subsequent English pronouns are forms that favour Generalization, rather than Specification. This makes them disinclined towards achieving recognition. However, when these forms are used to “first-mention” a topically salient person, the speaker makes an assumption that targeted recipients will know who is being spoken about. If the recipients suppose the speaker to be making such an assumption, and the speaker supposes his recipients will suppose him to be making such an assumption, then as per Schegloff’s (1996a: 459) set of requirements for when recognitionsals ought to be used, the form is clearly being used as a recognition. We can call this very specialized usage the “recognitional inversion” of form and position.220

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219 Recall also that the same can be said of globally subsequent free pronouns, when used for globally initial reference (see §7.3.2.3).

220 “Recognitional inversions” also include the use of a globally subsequent free pronoun in globally initial position. Recall from Fragment 50 that this pattern was also used to invite recipients to recognize the referent.
Figure 8.4 Using a locally subsequent reference form for globally initial reference to a salient person places the referent within a network of people known to the recipients. However, the question of which network the referent is being placed in remains unclear.

Recall the disclaimer relating to Table 11 (p. 207) that just because a category of reference form doesn’t ordinarily satisfy a particular preference, this shouldn’t preclude its being able to satisfy that preference. Ordinarily, verbal cross-reference does not satisfy Targeted Recipient Design. However, if the locally subsequent reference form is used for globally initial reference, and if the speaker uses an implied “prior knowledge association” to invite the targeted recipients to identify the referent, then the reference is recipient-designed as a recognitional (albeit, in cryptic fashion); thus perfectly satisfying the preference. Recognitional inversions also place the referent within some network about which the targeted recipients have some prior knowledge. Like names, they fail to specify which network the referent belongs to, and the basis of that prior knowledge (see Figure 8.4).

Although normally the referential expressions used as recognitionals are quite specific reference forms, in “recognitional inversions” we have an exception. Verbal cross-references and English pronouns used for globally initial reference are very general reference forms. We thus have two separate processes by which recognition is achieved: by using recognitional forms that invite targeted recipients to identify the referent, and by using specific forms that restrict the set of potential referents. In most cases a single referential item encapsulates both processes, but here is a case where it doesn’t. We can now see why we really need two distinct preferences dealing with the business of achieving recognition. Subsuming Targeted Recipient Design and
Specification under a single banner obscures some of the detail of their operationalization.

## 8.6 Conclusion

Referential design is the interactionally contingent, choice-governed shaping of referential expressions. Six conversational preferences manifest themselves as referential design principles. Each of the six basic referential categories – proper names, nicknames, triangulations, minimal descriptions, free pronouns and verbal cross-reference – simultaneously satisfies multiple preferences, yet no category is able to satisfy all of the preferences. Some of these preferences complement each other while others conflict with each other. Various preferences combine forces in a tug-of-war that pulls referential design in a variety of different directions. At any given moment in the interaction, a speaker’s optimization of these compatible and conflicting preferences leads him to choose reference forms from the categories of expression that best suit the appropriate mix of preferences they need to satisfy. Usually the appropriate mix is achieved within a single turn at talk, though at other times the optimization must be spread over multiple turns at talk.

Examining usage of Circumspection and Association provides genuine insight into how all of the preferences work together as a system. By cutting names out of the equation, Circumspection provides information about the properties of names (specificity, minimality, recognizability and the property of not being used for description), properties that are not necessarily obvious until alternatives are used in their stead. No avoidance recognitional will have all of these properties and every avoidance recognitional will have some other properties that names do not have. Whichever reference form a speaker chooses to use instead of a restricted name (except perhaps a nickname, or someone else’s name) will ultimately require a sacrifice in Minimization, Specification and/or Targeted Recipient Design (recall Table 11). The forms speakers ultimately choose reflect the prioritization that they give to these three preferences, as well as to any other preferences that the chosen reference form has the capacity to satisfy.

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221 However, Elizabeth’s triangulation, *ku kanggur nyinyi*, “your late grandson” (line of 281 of Fragment 67), holds the record in satisfying five out of the six.

222 For example, nicknames have many of the properties of names, except that they generally do describe the referent in terms of certain physical characteristics. They also have the property of being “not names” and are thus immune to the constraints of taboo.
Association is the preference that groups people together. It is for this reason it may be recruited for culturally specific purposes. Persons referred to with associative reference forms are grouped with a co-present conversationalist. Indirect reference to a group is a natural outcome of associative references to individuals. The salient groupings will be locally constructed and may also be culturally specific (such as patrilineal clans). In Murriny Patha conversation we see associative reference forms used contrastively for accentuating differences between particular groups, and used conjointly for forging solidarity. We also see self-association used for authoritative positioning, and addressee-association for inviting recognition.

Murriny Patha conversation is well placed to provide useful lessons about the nature of recognition. Because of the frequency of naming restrictions, the full range of reference forms that may be used as recognitionals are more likely to surface in a one-hour snapshot of Murriny Patha talk-in-interaction than in a comparative corpus of English. As a result, we have been able to identify a variety of different recognitionals and gain insights into what they have in common. What they all do have in common is a supposed prior knowledge association of the referent to a targeted recipient. Recognitionals vary as to whether this supposed prior knowledge association is made explicit or implied.

In the next chapter we will see a different sort of referential design that is detached from referential expressions, and is extended into the prosodic domain. Even though Prosodic Reference does not apply to the level of individual expressions, we still find that two of our preferences, Minimization and Specification, still apply within the prosodic domain.