## **Acknowledgments**

I thank my language consultants in the community of Minjilang, who generously shared their language(s) with me and gave up their time for my work. In particular, I would like to thank David Cooper, James Cooper, †Rose Gularrangi, Henry Guwiyul, †Ilijii Lamilami, Isobel Lamilami, Heather Lee, Maggie Maburnbi, Charlie Mangulda, Annabelle Nabigeyo, Philomena Nabigeyo, Matthew Ngarlbin †Rachel Nimilga, †William Noinba, Kenny Ogden, Maureen Ogden, Heleana Wauchope, Shane Wauchope, Christelle Yarmirr, Daisy Yarmirr, and all the children at Mamaruni School. This book is a testimony to their knowledge in language and culture and underscores how Aboriginal people have shaped English, the language of the invaders, creatively, imbuing it with an Aboriginal character, which has resulted in a distinct kind of English that meets other varieties on eye-level. However, this book also reminds us of the fact that the contact with English has oftentimes been painful. In this connection I would like to dedicate this book also to the memory of Dwayne and Rose.

Dwayne was a bright young man and Rose an elder and pillar of the community. Unfortunately, their inner pain was so immense that they both could not see another way and they ended their lives. I had worked with Dwayne's parents and also with Rose. I got to know both highly gifted individuals. Their graves are at Minjilang and in Maningrida, and they remind us of the fact that what is often described as a boon – the bright lights of the industrialised world – is often a peril. This is especially true for fragile indigenous cultures that are perfectly adapted to the harshest environmental challenges, but which often are quickly destroyed by these bright lights and all the baggage that comes with it. I was immensely saddened when I learnt that Dwayne's and Rose's lives had ended, and I hope that a part of my work as a linguist helps build resilience and pride in the cultural tradition of Aboriginal people.

This book and I have benefitted from the constructive criticism and help from many colleagues and friends. I am grateful to Nick Evans, who was my host and mentor on a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the *Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation* working on Amurdak back in 2007. We were co-investigators on a project on the many languages (*Inyman kalmu*) of the Coburg Peninsula, which funded my first-ever field trip to Croker Island in 2010. Nick also suggested this project on Aboriginal English on Croker Island, whose results this book summarises.

I'd like to give due credit to Bruce Birch for his generous help in getting me started as a fieldworker on Croker Island, and for his invaluable support and expertise which have been important to my understanding of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal languages, especially in Iwaidja.

I also would like to thank my friends and colleagues who have supported this book in various ways, in particular: Eric Anchimbe, Peter Auer, Brett Baker, Rikke Bundgaard-Nielsen, Patrick Caudal, Steffi Hackert, Mark Harvey, Stephen Laker, Bernd Kortmann, Catherine Laliberté, Christian Mair, Hans-Jörg Schmid, Edgar Schneider, Hywel Stoakes, Stacey Sherwood, Theo Vennemann and Ronia Zeidan. Special thanks also go to Jeff Siegel for his very helpful referee's report suggesting valuable improvements.

Thanks also go to the North Australia Research Unit (NARU), Sabine Höng, Mamaruni School, especially Sue Tanner and Adam Dicks, as well as the Northern Land Council and West Arnhemshire Council for logistical support.

I also gratefully acknowledge the funding by the Australian Research Council that has supported this project under the Discovery Project scheme (DP130103935). I would like to thank the research support team at Western Sydney University, the School of Humanities and Communication Arts as well as The MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development for their invaluable support. In addition, thanks go to the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) and its Director, Bernd Kortmann, for sponsoring two research stays in 2015 and 2017, and the Center for Advanced Studies at the LMU Munich for awarding me a Visiting Fellowship in June/July 2017, which was kindly supported by Steffi Hackert and Ursula Lenker. I thank Bernd Kortmann for opening his series Topics in English Linguistics, and for his support, and everyone involved at De Gruyter Mouton, particularly Barbara Karlson, for all the support in the publishing process.

A special thanks goes to whatever saved four people from dying in a car accident in remote Northern Arnhem Land in November 2014.

Finally, and most importantly, my heartfelt thanks go to my wife Vanessa and my sons Owen and Anton for their love, support and understanding and for always having my back: I couldn't do what I do, couldn't be who I am, without you.