**SIMPLE AND COMPLEX PREDICATES**

CHAPTER 3

Verbs and coverbs were shown in Ch. 2 to belong to clearly distinct word classes: verbs (also referred to as ‘generic verbs’) form a closed class whose members obligatorily carry verbal inflections, and cannot appear in a non-finite form. ‘Coverb’ is the term chosen here for a major lexical category (i.e. an open class) of predicative but uninflected elements.

In this chapter, the constructions which involve verbs and/or coverbs in predicative function are discussed. Verbs alone may function as simple predicates (§3.1). The combination of a verb and one or two unmarked coverbs in a single intonation unit will be referred to as ‘canonical complex verb’ (§3.2). It is these complex verbs that will form the basis for the discussion of argument structure (Ch. 4), generic verb semantics (Ch. 5) and coverb classes (Ch. 6) in the remainder of this thesis.

A special type of complex verb construction, with a verb in auxiliary function, is the progressive construction (§3.3). Coverbs may also be combined with a simple or complex verb in the function of secondary predicate (§3.4); in this function, they are either separated from the main predicate by an intonation unit boundary, or they are morphologically marked. Coverbs which occur in an intonation unit on their own, but cannot be analysed as secondary predicates, also occur in texts, although this use of coverbs as ‘semi-independent predicates’ is stylistically marked (§3.4). Section 3.5 describes the integration of Kriol loans into complex verbs. An overview of simple and complex verb constructions and their relative frequency is provided in §3.6.

### 3.1 Simple verbs as main predicates

Generic verbs, which are always inflected for person and tense/aspect/mood (see §2.4), may constitute the main predicate of a clause by themselves, i.e. as simple verbs. In this respect, they look like the one-word verbal predicates familiar from Indo-European languages. However, one has to bear in mind that in Jaminjung, verbs form a closed class of around 30 members. The use of three of these verbs (−ijga ‘GO’, −minda ‘EAT’ and −yu(nggu) ‘SAY/DO’) as simple verbs is illustrated in (3-1) and (3-2) (the verb roots are in boldface).
(3-1) gagawurli-wu yirr-ijga:::-ny, manamba \  
long.yam-DAT 1pl.excl-GO-PST upstream  
‘we went for long yam, upstream’  

(3-2) “ngayug=gayi gurrany medicine nga-minda-ny \  
1sg=ALSO NEG medicine 1sg:3sg-EAT-PST  
nga-yu=bunyag \  
1sg:3sg-SAY/DO.PST=3du.OBL  
‘me too, I didn’t take my medicine!’ I said to the two’

Considering the small number of verbs, the use of simple verbs is quite frequent in actual discourse: simple verbs make up around 40% of verbal predicates in texts (see also §3.6). This correlates with the semantically generic nature of these verbs: in many cases a simple verb will have a number of different interpretations depending on the (linguistic or extra-linguistic) context. For example, the verb -ijja ‘POKE’ can be read as ‘spear’ in a kangaroo hunting context, as ‘dig with digging stick’ in a yam digging context and as ‘stab’ in a knife fight context (see §5.4.5). The semantics of the generic verbs both as simple verbs and in combination with coverbs, and the role of pragmatics in their interpretation, will be examined in more detail in Ch. 5.

3.2 Canonical complex verbs

Despite some differences in terminology as well as in analysis, combinations of an uninflecting element (the Jaminjung coverb) and an inflecting verb are treated as complex predicates, functionally equivalent to simple predicates, in virtually all descriptions of Northern Australian languages.52 This is also supported by historical and comparative evidence. The types of complex predicates attested in the area constitute a continuum, ranging from the phrasal complex verbs of Jaminjung and some of the neighbouring languages, to languages where the two components are so tightly fused that they have lost any structural and semantic independence. Historical connections between these stages can be traced (see §7.1). In §7.2.1 it will be argued that the complex verbs of Jaminjung and other Northern Australian languages should be recognised as a distinct type of complex predicate, although they exhibit many formal and functional similarities to other complex predicates discussed in the literature.

This section summarises the arguments (from a synchronic perspective) for regarding one type of coverb-verb combination as complex predicates, as defined

in the recent literature (e.g. Alsina et al. 1997). This construction, termed ‘canonical complex verb’, will be contrasted with other types of constructions involving coverbs and verbs.

Canonical complex verbs consist of a verb and an unmarked coverb (or sometimes two coverbs). These two elements constitute a close-knit unit both formally and semantically, even though their components are clearly distinct phonological words. In addition to their cohesion in prosodic terms (§3.2.1), arguments for their status as complex predicates come from word order (§3.2.2), morphological marking and negation (§3.2.3), and argument structure (§3.2.4), as well as from speakers’ own translations and intuitions (see §1.4.3).

3.2.1 Prosody

Prosodic unity, i.e. occurrence in a single intonation unit as defined in §1.3.4, is regarded as criterial for complex verb status. A coverb which is separated from a verb by an intonation unit boundary – even if otherwise unmarked – is not analysed as part of a (canonical) complex verb, but as a semi-independent predicate (§3.4). This is true even if a combination of the same lexical items is also attested as a canonical complex verb.

By definition, therefore, canonical complex verbs in Jaminjung form a tightly-knit unit prosodically. This is taken to iconically reflect their status as linguistic expressions used to represent single events (as defined in §1.4.3) for the purpose of information packaging in discourse. This correlation is also assumed by Givón (1991), Foley & Olson (1985) and Durie (1997: 291), among others.

Within the complex verb, the coverb bears phrasal stress, indicated by pitch accent, and the verb secondary stress (at least if it immediately follows the coverb). In (3-3), the acute accent represents primary stress, the grave accent, secondary stress. In this and the following examples in this section, the coverb and the verb root are in boldface.

(3-3)  
\[
\text{díbird bà-mili-ji wirra}
\]
\[
\text{be.wound.around IMP-GET/HANDLE-REFL hair}
\]
‘tie up your hair’ (DP, KNX181)

Coverbs may also be pronounced with expressive prosody, such as interruption of rhythmic flow by pausing immediately before or after the coverb, lengthening, higher intensity, and stronger pitch modulation. The latter two properties are – somewhat inadequately – represented by an exclamation mark in (3-4).

(3-4)  
\[
\text{gan-ijja-m=biya julag \ } \text{!barr: gana-m \ }
\]
\[
\text{3sg:3sg-POKE-PRS=NOW bird smash 3sg:3sg:CHOP-PRS}
\]
‘he shoots birds then, he hits them’ (with a sling shot) (IP, F01014)
In this usage, coverbs are reminiscent of ideophones in other languages (Schultze-Berndt, to appear). Still, in these examples, they form part of the same intonation unit as the inflecting verb, and can therefore be regarded as constituents of a canonical complex verb construction (but see also §3.4.2).

### 3.2.2 Word order

Jaminjung generally has free phrase order; in particular, the ordering of noun phrases with respect to the verb is not fixed (see §2.6.2). In contrast, there is a much stronger restriction on the ordering of the constituents of complex verbs.

A coverb and a generic verb in a canonical complex verb construction are usually contiguous; the only constituents that can freely intervene between the two constituents are clitics. This contiguity also iconically reflects the conceptual unity of the complex verb (according to Behaghel’s first law), but it is not criterial for complex predicate status, either in Jaminjung or from a cross-linguistic perspective.

The preferred word order in the complex verb is that of the coverb preceding the generic verb, although the reverse order is also possible. The first type is amply illustrated throughout the thesis and in the texts in the Appendix; two further examples are given in (3-5) and (3-6). In (3-6), the two constituents are separated by a clitic on the coverb.

(3-5) yalumbarra **marrug** ga-**jga**-ny, yarrajgu, warnda-bina
King.Brown hidden 3sg-GO.PST afraid grass-ALL

‘the King Brown snake went into hiding – (being) afraid – into the grass’ (VP, NUN109)

(3-6) **jid**=biyang ba-**rum** miyarra=wung, yanth-irdbaj
go.down-NOW IMP-COME slow=COTEMP IRR:2sg-FALL

‘come down slowly now, you might fall’ (DB, D14018)

Much less frequently, the coverb follows the generic verb (again, clitics may intervene between the generic verb and the coverb). In the five texts reproduced in the Appendix, only 6 (amounting to 10%) of the complex verbs consisting of a verb and a contiguous single coverb are of this type.53 This means that roughly 90% of complex verbs have the order coverb – verb. Other text counts are also consistent with these figures.

A change in word order can often be observed when a clause is repeated, or constructed as parallel to the preceding one (the same is true for word order on

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53 These are in II/5, II/14, III/12, IV/9, IV/17 and IV/42.
the clause level; see §2.6.2). Repetition is very common where several speakers are present and spontaneously ‘co-constructing’ a text, as in (3-7).

(3-7) JM: gurrany **buru** yanj-ijga!
      NEG return IRR:2sg-GO

      MW: gurrany yanj-ijga **buru**! 
      NEG IRR:2sg-GO return

      ‘don’t go back!’ (E16498-9)

This change of word order in parallelisms suggests that we are dealing with an information structure phenomenon. I have not investigated the information structure correlates of word order in Jaminjung in much detail and will leave this issue open for further research.

A similar preference for an ordering where the non-inflecting element precedes the inflecting verb has been reported for most of the languages of the area with complex verbs (the reverse preferred order is attested in some of the Daly River languages, see Tryon 1974 for an overview). For some of these languages, it has been claimed that the word order within the complex verb is subject to semantic restrictions and can serve to distinguish semantically transparent from non-transparent complex verbs. In Jaminjung, though, the dispreferred word order is not restricted to particular classes of coverbs and/or verbs. There certainly is a tendency for the complex verb to occur in the preferred word order if it contains a verb that is used in a secondary sense, restricted to combination with certain coverbs. Examples with verb-coverb order like (3-8) to (3-10) are therefore extremely rare. In (3-8), -ma ‘HIT’ is used in a secondary sense of ‘totally affect’ (see §5.4.2.2); in (3-9) and (3-10), -arra ‘PUT’ is also used in secondary senses (see §5.2.4.3 and §5.2.4.5). However, this is a tendency rather than a hard-and-fast restriction, in contrast to the restriction on the use of coverbs separated from the verb by an intonation boundary (see §3.4).

(3-8) **yawayi**, nganji-**mangu** **malang** 
      yes 2sg:3sg-HIT.PST across

      ‘yes, you crossed it’ (commenting on ESB walking across a blanket) 
      (JM, E16372)

(3-9) **Namirra** gan-**karra-ny** **yurrg** nuwina yagbali
      <subsection> 3sg:1sg-PUT-PST show 3sg:POSS place

      ‘Namirra showed me her country’ (DMc, CHE378)

See Merlan (1994: 253) for an alternative explanation.

More than one coverb may combine with a single generic verb, although this is not very frequent (in the texts in the Appendix, only a single example, II/25, can be found). In this case, usually one of the coverbs precedes, and the other follows, the verb, as in (3-11) and (3-12). No more than two coverbs have been found with a single verb in the same intonation unit.

(3-11) *waga* =biya bunthu-*yu* thawu
sit=NOW 3du-BE.PRS immersed

‘the two are now sitting in the water’ (Frog Story) (DBit, E07234)

(3-12) *yawayi,* marraj ga-*jga-*ny *warrng-warrng*
yes go.past 3sg-GO-PST RDP-walk

‘yes, she walked past’ (IP, E08385)

This ‘sharing’ of a generic verb by more than one coverb is determined purely by semantic compatibility. It is most frequent for coverbs that belong to the same class (see Ch. 6), e.g. coverbs of spatial configuration in combination with the verb -*yu* ‘BE’, as in (3-12) above. But more generally, coverbs may combine as long as they are both compatible with the same verb (in the same reading), as is the case for the coverb of manner and the coverb of path with a verb of locomotion in (3-12) above. The coverbs do not even have to be of the same valency, i.e. share the same arguments (see also §4.3.2.4).

In some cases, however, one could argue that the complex verb formed with one of the coverbs serves as the semantic unit which then determines semantic compatibility with the other coverb. For example, the coverb *gabarl* ‘go close’ in (3-13) is not usually found with the verb -*ma* ‘HIT’, but only with verbs of locomotion and with - *mili* / - *angu* ‘GET/HANDLE’. However, *gabarl* can be combined with the complex verb consisting of the coverb *yurl* ‘chase’ and the verb -*ma* ‘HIT’, which presumably is interpreted as a locomotion verb. The semantic structure is represented by bracketing in (3-13).

(3-13) munuwi-ni *[gabarl  [yurl  gani-mangu]]* wirib \ bee-ERG go.close chase 3sg:3sg-HIT.PST dog

‘the bees came up close chasing him, the dog’ (Frog Story) (DR, E02145)

Cases where a constituent (other than a clitic) intervenes between a coverb and a generic verb in the same intonation unit are relatively rare. For example, in all texts in the Appendix, only two examples can be found (IV/26 and V/19); some further examples are given in (3-14) to (3-16). They show that the constituent intervening between coverb and verb may exhibit various relations to the
predicate; for example, it could be an absolutive (3-14), ergative-marked (3-15) or locational argument (3-16).

(3-14) yeah, **dalb** guyug **yirr-arr**a-m=ngarndi \  
yes light.fire fire 1pl.excl:3sg-PUT-PRS=SFOC2  
‘yes, we set fire to the firewood’ (IP, F01419)

(3-15) **burra-nga**yi-rna=yirrag wirib-di **jarl**, malajagu \  
3pl:3sg-SEE-IMPF=1pl.excl.OBL dog-ERG track goanna  
‘the dogs used to track them for us, the goannas’ (NG, E09808)

(3-16) **ga-jga**-ny=ni wagurra-bina **burduj** \  
3sg-GO-PST=SFOC1 rock-ALL go.up  
‘he went up on a rock’ (Frog Story) (DR, E01281)

Examples like (3-14) above suggest that, again, there are no clear semantic restrictions on the separability of verbs and coverbs by intervening constituents. Since these expressions meet the prosodic requirement of occurring in the same intonation unit, they have also been regarded as canonical complex verbs for the purposes of this study. Again, the marked word order often alternates with the unmarked word order under repetition, with no difference in interpretation (compare e.g. V/19 and V/18 in the Appendix).

To summarise: a canonical complex verb is constituted by a single generic verb and usually one, but sometimes two coverbs, in a single intonation unit. Coverbs and verbs in a canonical complex verb are usually, but not necessarily, contiguous, and occur in either order, although the order coverb – verb is clearly preferred.

This last observation has an interesting correlate. For complex verbs that semantically express a cause-effect relation – which is a very common type – the preferred order of coverb preceding the verb often results in an anti-iconic ordering, as in (3-17).

(3-17) **burrurrug** gan-**ijja**-ny \  
scatter 3sg:3sg-POKE-PST wood-ERG/INSTR  
‘he hit it with a pointed end such that it scattered, with a stick’ (lit.: ‘he scatter-poked it with a stick’) (Lego wall, in Change of State videos) (DP, F02085)

This is in striking contrast with the iconicity restrictions reported for serial verbs in the literature (e.g. Lane & Pawley 1992: 3, Lord 1993: 237, Durie 1997), but quite comparable to the possibilities for Germanic (though not English) separable particle verbs (e.g. German *totschlagen* ‘hit dead’). This lack of iconicity suggests that Jaminjung complex verbs are lexicalised to a degree similar to that of
particle verbs: the subevents are presented, and stored in the lexicon, as a single integrated event. (It should also be noted that there are no compound verbs, distinct from canonical complex verbs, in Jaminjung). On the other hand, where a coverb is separated from a simple or complex verb by an intonation unit boundary and is interpreted as a resultative predicate, iconic ordering holds (see §3.4.3).

3.2.3 Morphological marking and negation

In addition to prosodic unity, one of the main criteria adduced in the literature for complex predicate status is that all of the predicate’s constituents share their values for person, tense, aspect and mood, and polarity. For example, in serial verb constructions, regularly either only one verb inflects, or all verbs take the same morphology under agreement, even though all verbs have the potential of taking their own inflections when used outside the serial construction.

In Jaminjung, this property – which in complex predicates of other languages is a property of the construction – is already determined by the characteristics of the lexical categories involved. Since coverbs cannot be specified for verbal categories (see §2.3), their interpretation with respect to person/number and tense/aspect/mood depends on the marking on the verb, which is obligatory (see §2.4). For example, in (3-18) below, the clause as a whole has a present tense interpretation, and the coverb mud ‘make a hole’ cannot be interpreted as bearing a different tense value.

(3-18) **mud-mud burru-wirri-ji wirib thanthu**

RDP-make.hole 3pl-BITE-REFL.PRS dog DEM

‘they are biting holes in each other, those dogs’ (IP, F03645)

Similarly, if the verb, as in (3-18), is marked as reflexive, the complex verb as a whole may only take a single core argument (see §4.2.2.2).

The dependence of coverbs on verbs in terms of morphological marking is a necessary criterion, but not in itself sufficient to distinguish canonical complex verbs from other types of coverb-verb combinations, discussed in §3.3 and §3.4. It therefore has to be combined with the prosodic criterion described in §3.2.1.

Further evidence for regarding the coverb-verb complex as a single complex predicate comes from negation. The constituents of a complex verb cannot be negated individually (cf. Foley & Olson 1985: 27ff.). In Jaminjung, both sentence and constituent negation are achieved with the negation particle *gurrany*. In the case of sentence negation, *gurrany* usually precedes the (verbal or nonverbal) predicate. This is in line with the cross-linguistic tendency for a marker of sentence negation to precede the verb (Dryer 1988: 102).
With complex verbs, the negation particle has scope over the whole complex verb, regardless of which of its components comes first. For example, both (3-19a) and (3-19b) are comments on similar videotaped scenes, where someone hits a Lego wall with various instruments but without any effect. In these examples, the result of ‘scattering’ is not negated independently of the ‘falling’, regardless of word order (which is particularly clear in this case because no ‘falling’ took place in either of the scenes described). What is negated in both cases is the complex verb consisting of the coverb *burrurrug* ‘scatter’ and the verb *-irdba* ‘FALL’. In order to negate only the resultant subevent but not the causal subevent, a secondary predicate construction has to be used (see §3.3.3 for an example).

(3-19a)  
\[ \text{gurrany } \textit{burrurrug} \text{ ga-w-} \textit{irdba} / \text{ damarlung } \backslash \]  
\[ \text{NEG scatter 3sg- FUT-FALL.IMPF nothing} \]  
‘it wouldn’t fall down, nothing’ (Lego wall in Change of State videos)  
(DP, F02082)

b)  
\[ \text{gana, damarlung, gurrany ga-w-} \textit{irdba} \text{ } \textit{burrurrug} \backslash \]  
\[ \text{3sg:3sg:CHOP.PST nothing NEG 3sg-FUT-FALL.IMPF scatter} \]  
‘he hit it, nothing, it wouldn’t fall down’ (Lego wall in Change of State videos)  
(DP, F02092)

### 3.2.4 Argument structure

Complex predicates have been defined in the recent literature (e.g. Butt 1997: 108) mainly by their argument structure properties. Each of the constituents of a complex predicate may contribute semantic participants and play a role in determining the argument structure of the complex predicate. Syntactically, on the other hand, the complex predicate functions like a simple predicate, in that it allows only one set of morpho-syntactic arguments. This difference in semantic and syntactic properties gives rise to the concept of argument fusion or argument sharing (see e.g. Foley & Olsen 1985, Mohanan 1994, 1997, Shibatani 1996, Butt 1997, Durie 1997). One syntactic argument slot may be ‘shared’ by the semantic arguments of more than one predicative element.

The argument structure of Jaminjung complex verbs is discussed in some detail in the following chapter (Ch. 4), but the relevant results of the discussion will be briefly summarised here. The first question that might be raised is whether the coverbs can themselves be regarded as arguments of the verb. It was shown in Ch. 2 that coverbs constitute a lexical category distinct from nominals. They never take adjectival modifiers, or form part of a noun phrase with a determiner. Furthermore, several of the neighbouring languages, for example the Jarragan languages (Kofod 1996b, 1997) have gender or noun class systems, with verbs agreeing with core arguments in gender. Their complex verbs are similar to the
Jaminjung ones in all relevant respects. Coverbs in these languages do not show any signs of having a gender feature, and verbs only agree with core arguments in gender, but never with coverbs. However, it will be shown in §4.2.3.3 that coverbs may fulfill the valency requirements for a few verbs with propositional participants, including -yu(nggu) ‘SAY/DO’.

A second question concerns whether coverbs contribute at all to the argument structure of complex predicates. In many instances, the coverb could be interpreted as a kind of adverbial modifier in an endocentric construction (as suggested by Cook 1988 for Wagiman). However, there are some cases which clearly show that the coverbs have a semantic valency of their own.

For example, when occurring in the progressive construction (see §3.3.1) with a formally intransitive verb in auxiliary function, bivalent coverbs, like *burlug* ‘drink’ in (3-20), nevertheless allow for the expression of two core arguments in the absolutive.

(3-20) \[
\text{[janyungbari buliki]}_{\text{NP(ABS)}} \text{ burlug-mayan ga-yu [gugu]}_{\text{NP(ABS)}}
\]
\[
\text{another cow drink-CONT 3sg-BE.PRS water}
\]
\`
the other cow is drinking water’ (Farm Animals 14) (DMc, E13035)

Except in the progressive construction, bivalent coverbs do not combine with monovalent verbs. A number of other restrictions on the combination of coverbs and verbs can be argued to be based on valency (see Ch. 4 for details).

These observations suggest that coverbs have semantic participants, and determine the syntactic behaviour of complex verbs jointly with the verb. They therefore cannot simply be regarded as adverbial modifiers of the generic verb. Rather, in terms of argument structure, they resemble verbs in a serial verb construction. Complex predicates where all constituents contribute to the argument structure of the complex expression are sometimes regarded as possessing multiple heads (see e.g. Butt 1997: 108, Andrews & Manning 1999). They are also clearly instances of exocentric constructions. However, in some descriptions of Northern Australian languages (e.g. Merlan 1982: 125 for Mangarrayi), an exocentric and an endocentric type of complex verb are explicitly distinguished. In those types regarded as endocentric, the verb semantically functions as a hyperonym of the complex verb, and may substitute for it; in other words, the coverb is treated as optional (an example would be a verb of motion with a coverb of manner of motion, as in (3-12) above). The semantically less transparent complex verbs, like e.g. (3-8) to (3-10) above, are treated as exocentric.

This analysis does capture the differences in semantic interpretation between these types of complex verbs. However, these do not correlate with structural differences; in other words, the construction in itself is neutral as to these semantic differences. ‘Obligatoriness’ of the coverb is a problematic criterion of
endocentricity, since, although all verbs may function as simple verbs, omission of a coverb from a complex verb is rarely meaning-preserving (see also §2.3.1.1 for further discussion and examples). Moreover, often the substitution of a simple verb for a complex verb may be semantically possible but is never or rarely observed in texts, because the more specific complex verb is chosen for pragmatic reasons. One example, discussed in more detail in §5.4.1.1, concerns the translation equivalent of ‘scratch’. The combination of the coverb warrany ‘scratch’ and the verb -mili/-angu ‘GET/HANDLE’ would, on a superficial analysis, be treated as non-transparent and consequently exocentric, since -mili without a coverb usually receives the interpretation of ‘get’. However, one speaker on one occasion used -mili as a simple verb when she was clearly referring to scratching.

Since at least some coverb-verb combinations are clearly exocentric in nature, the canonical complex verb construction is treated here as a single construction type which is principally exocentric, and which is neutral as to differences in the semantic relationship between coverb and verb. Its constructional meaning is extremely general: canonical complex verbs are used to describe a unitary macro-event, as defined in §1.4.3. Whether coverb and verb describe clearly separate subevents or not, and whether those subevents are interpreted as simultaneous or sequential, is not structurally reflected in the expression itself.

3.2.5 Summary

In this section, Jaminjung complex verbs were shown to function syntactically as a single predicate. They form a close-knit unit prosodically, and usually also in terms of word order. The constituents of the complex predicate share their values for tense/aspect/mood and polarity, and take a single set of morpho-syntactic arguments, the argument structure being jointly determined by coverb and verb. This means that Jaminjung complex verbs have to be regarded as exocentric complex predicates, on a par with, for example, serial verbs or particle verbs (see §7.2.3 for further discussion of the similarities and differences with respect to other types of complex verb constructions). In the terminology of Role and Reference Grammar, they can be regarded as nuclear junctures (see e.g. Foley & Van Valin 1984, Foley & Olson 1985, and Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 448).

The canonical complex verb construction does not indicate anything about the semantic relationship between coverb and verb. For example, it is neutral as to whether the coverb encodes the manner or the result of the event type encoded by the verb. It was argued in the previous section that its constructional meaning is simply the representation of two (or more) subevents as a unitary macro-event. This construction is represented schematically in Fig. 3-1. Recall from the discussion in §3.2.2 that the order of the constituents is not fixed (although the preferred word order is coverb-verb), that other constituents may (if rarely)
intervene between coverb and verb, and that more than one coverb may combine with a single verb in the same intonation unit.

Fig. 3-1. *The canonical complex verb construction*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coverb</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>(Coverb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Unitary macro-event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, there are restrictions on what may be represented as a unitary macro-event. That is, not any coverb may combine with any verb, but the two have to be semantically compatible. The semantic relations that may hold between the constituents of canonical complex verbs will be investigated in more detail from the perspective of argument structure in Ch. 4, from the perspective of the generic verbs in Ch. 5, and from the perspective of the coverbs in Ch. 6. A summary of the lexicalisation patterns in canonical complex verbs can be found in §6.21.

Note that under the definition of ‘lexicon’ and ‘grammar’ adopted in §1.4.1.3, canonical complex verbs can be considered as expressions licensed by a grammatical construction which are at the same time lexicalised to a greater or lesser degree, i.e. which form part of the conventionalised set of expressions in a language.

### 3.3 Complex verb constructions with marked coverbs

In §3.2, canonical complex verbs were defined as consisting of one or more unmarked coverbs, combining with a verb under a single intonation contour. In this section, a number of constructions that combine coverbs and verbs will be discussed with the purpose of distinguishing them from canonical complex verbs. They all have in common that the coverb is marked. In the first two constructions, the marker is the ‘continuous’ derivational suffix -*mayan* (see also §2.3.2.2). In the first construction, discussed in §3.3.1, the derived coverb combines with one of two verbs in auxiliary function. This construction has the clear characteristics of a progressive construction and will be distinguished from a construction involving a coverb marked with -*mayan* in combination with any other verb (§3.3.2). In the third construction (§3.3.3), the coverb is marked with the ‘cotemporal’ clitic =*(C)*ung, which may also follow nominals and verbs (see §2.5.2), and functions as a secondary predicate.
3.3.1 The progressive construction

Jaminjung has a periphrastic progressive construction very similar to that found in English, and many other languages. In Jaminjung, however, this construction bears a close formal relationship to canonical complex verbs, which is reflected in the existence of lexicalised complex verbs originating in progressives.

The productive progressive construction combines a coverb derived with the continuous suffix -mayan with either -yu ‘BE’ or -ijga ‘GO’ in auxiliary function. As already indicated in §2.3.2.2, the suffix -mayan has a very similar function to the English suffix -ing.

(3-21) bulug-mayan=biya yurru-yu, ngiyina, minyga, 
drink-CONT=NOW 1pl.incl-BE.PRS DIST what’s.it.called 
gugu ti: \ 
water tea
‘let’s be drinking now, that, what’s it called, tea’ (IP, F03731)

The verb in the progressive construction can be in both present and past tense, and more rarely, also in potential/future mood, but there are only a few examples of irrealis, and no examples of imperative marking, with progressives. These restrictions on tense/mood marking, as well as its general productivity, suggest that we are dealing with a construction that is different from, although formally related to, the canonical complex verb construction.

The progressive also allows for a specific argument structure which is not attested with other complex verbs. Even though the verb functioning as auxiliary is formally intransitive, the progressive construction still allows for two absolutive arguments to be expressed, provided the coverb is bivalent. This is illustrated in (3-20) and (3-21) above (see also §4.3.1.2). The fact that the valency of the verb does not result in a restriction on the argument structure of the complex predicate is another piece of evidence for the grammatical function of this construction. Indeed it functionally corresponds to the typical progressive as characterised by Bybee & Dahl (1989: 80f.): it signals that an activity is ongoing at reference time, and requires a steady input of energy. The use of -ijga ‘GO’, rather than -yu ‘BE’, adds a semantic component of habitual or prolonged activity; compare (3-22) below with (3-21) above (see also §5.2.1.1 and §5.3.2.3 for further discussion and examples).

(3-22) gurrany=biya nga-ngga burlug-mayan / marring \ 
NEG=NOW 1sg-GO.PRS drink-CONT bad
‘I don’t drink (alcohol), it’s bad’ (MW, E16522)

Still, the constituents of the progressive construction show the same ordering possibilities as those described for canonical complex verbs in §3.2.2: the
continuous-marked coverb and the verb are usually contiguous, and never separated by an intonation boundary. Although the order coverb-verb, as in (3-21) above, is clearly preferred, the reverse order is also attested, as in (3-22) above. Only very occasionally, other constituents can intervene between coverb and verb, as in (3-23).

(3-23) wurrg-mayan nganthanug mali ga-yu=ngarndi, chuck-CONT what:DAT thing 3sg-BE.PRS=SFOC2

‘why is she throwing around things?’ (IP, F01521)

The schematic representation in Fig. 3-2 also shows the similarities to the canonical complex verb construction (see Fig. 3-1 in §3.2.5).

Fig. 3-2. The progressive construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coverb-mayan [-yu ‘BE’ / -ijga ‘GO’]Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presumably because of this formal similarity between the progressive construction and canonical complex verbs, we find a curious type of ‘lexicalised progressive’ in Jaminjung. This is not formed with the productive suffix -mayan, but is otherwise similar to the productive progressive in that it is restricted to the two verbs that can take on an auxiliary function, -yu ‘BE’ and -ijga ‘GO’. The ‘lexicalised progressive’ also shows the same argument structure properties as the productive progressive, i.e. it allows for two absolutive arguments if the coverb in question is bivalent (see §6.3 for examples). On the other hand, combinations of this type are also similar to canonical complex verbs: they do not alternate with simple (i.e. non-progressive) expressions. Rather, the coverbs occurring in these combinations simply may not combine with verbs other than the two auxiliary verbs. As (3-24) shows, the resulting complex verbs are not restricted in their tense and mood values, but freely occur in irrealis (and also imperative) mood.

(3-24) gurrany garrwaja yanj-iyaj, girrb ba-iyaj

NEG swear IRR:2sg-BE quiet IMP-BE

‘don’t swear, be quiet!’ (JM, NUN020)

Crucially, the coverbs in these combinations bear one of a number of endings including -ja in garrwaja, the coverb in the example (3-24) above. These endings have to be regarded as non-productive or at most semi-productive, but presumably originated from a productive suffix with a similar function to -mayan ‘CONTinuous’. This is corroborated by the fact that coverbs of this type do not take the productive suffix -mayan. These coverbs are listed as ‘coverbs of con-
tinuous activity’ in §6.3. In one sense, the coverbs derived with the productive suffix -mayan also belong to this class (without being listed in §6.3). However, the coverbs bearing the non-productive endings often (though not always) have no underived counterpart and can therefore only form complex verbs with -yu ‘BE’ and -ijga ‘GO’. Consequently, the resulting complex verbs are no longer restricted to expressing a progressive meaning, but become the unmarked type of complex predicate expressing a certain lexical meaning. These lexicalised progressives are therefore treated here as canonical complex verbs. However, it has to be recognised that the boundary between these and the productive progressive construction is somewhat fuzzy.

3.3.2 Other verbs combined with continuous-marked coverbs

In addition to occurring in the progressive construction, coverbs derived with the continuous suffix -mayan may also combine with other verbs. Combinations of this type pose a problem for the analysis (which is why they are treated as a distinct construction type here). On the one hand, they exhibit similarities to canonical complex verbs: they may be part of the same intonation unit, and in this case show the same ordering preferences as canonical complex verbs. Examples are (2-80) in §2.3.2.2, IV/6 in the Appendix, and (3-25) and (3-26) below.

(3-25) larrwa  gana-ma-ya  bu’-mayan
     pipe  3sg:3sg-HAVE-PRS  blow-CONT
     ‘he has got a cigarette (and is) smoking’ (Topological Relations Picture book) (DP, SPA048)

(3-26) jarr-mayan=biya  gan-arra-m=ngarndi  ba-ngawu!
     put.down.one-CONT=NOW  3sg:3sg-PUT-PRS=SFOC2  IMP-SEE
     ‘she keeps putting them down, look!’ (books in TEMPEST videos) (IP, E08185)

The puzzling fact about this construction type is that the atelic coverb may combine with presumably telic verbs (as in (3-26) and IV/6) as well as with atelic verbs. With telic verbs, the reading contributed by the continuous-marked coverb is a repetitive one: in IV/6, the white man repeats the shooting, and (3-26) describes a video-taped scene where a woman is stacking books, putting them down one after the other. Furthermore, unlike in canonical complex verbs, collocational restrictions between coverb and verb do not seem to hold in these cases. For example, the coverb ngabuj ‘smell’ in (2-80), in its underived form, only combines with the verb -mili/-angu ‘GET/HANDLE’, but not with -ruma ‘COME’. Similarly, unmarked bu ‘blow’ only combines with -arra ‘PUT’, but not with -muwa ‘HAVE’, as it does in (3-25).
Alternatively, therefore, expressions like (3-25) and (3-26) could be analysed as combinations of an adverbial subordinate clause (or, alternatively, a secondary predicate\textsuperscript{56}) in combination with a main predicate, where the continuous-marked coverb has a function similar to coverbs with a simultaneous reading in other languages. This analysis is even more plausible where the continuous-marked coverb (possibly with its arguments) is separated from the verb (the main predicate) by an intonation boundary, as in (3-27) and (3-28).

(3-27) 
```
\begin{verbatim}
wagurra=biyang dibird gani-ma-m, mung-mayan \ 
\bf{\text{rock=NOW be.wound.around 3sg:3sg-HIT-PRS look.at-CONT}}
\end{verbatim}
```

‘it winds around a rock, looking (at you)’ (snake on hat in Men & Tree 1.7) (DR, D22033-4)

(3-28) 
```
\begin{verbatim}
Depot warrg nga-gba \ 
\bf{\text{<place.name> work 1sg-BE.PST}}
\end{verbatim}
```

```
\begin{verbatim}
nindu, dimana\textsuperscript{57}, ngama-ngamang-mayan \ 
\bf{\text{horse horse RDP-ride-CONT}}
\end{verbatim}
```

‘I worked at the Depot \ riding horses \’ (DM, E19450-3, recorded by Mark Harvey)

A satisfactory analysis of continuous marked-coverbs in combination with verbs other than the ‘auxiliary’ verbs -\textit{yu} ‘BE’ and -\textit{ijga} ‘GO’ demands further investigation. Therefore, combinations of this type will be left out of consideration in the remaining chapters.

In the interest of clarity, the similarities and differences between the four construction types discussed in the preceding sections are summarised in Table 3-1 below. These are the canonical complex verb construction (CCV, §3.2), the subtype of canonical complex verbs that resemble a lexicalised progressive (§3.3.1), the productive progressive construction (§3.3.1), and the combination of coverbs marked with the continuous-suffix with verbs other than the ‘auxiliary’ verbs -\textit{yu} ‘BE’ and -\textit{ijga} ‘GO.

\textsuperscript{56} See König & van der Auwera (1990), Müller-Bardey (1990), and Haspelmath (1995) for a discussion of the use of present participle forms as secondary predicates.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Nindu} and \textit{dimana} are dialectal variants for ‘horse’.
Table 3-1. Comparison of different complex verb constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction type Property</th>
<th>Canonical Complex V</th>
<th>Lexicalised Progressive</th>
<th>Productive Progressive</th>
<th>Coverb-mayan + Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous-marking of coverb</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(non-productive endings)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restriction to auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions w.r.t. T/A/M-marking</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four construction types could be distinguished and treated as constructions in a ‘family resemblance’ relationship, following Goldberg (1995) (see also §1.41.1). For the purposes of the present study, the lack of a productive continuous-marking suffix will constitute the main criterion for the inclusion of combinations of the ‘lexicalised progressive’ type with the canonical complex verb construction, which will be considered further in Chs. 4, 5 and 6.

3.3.3 Cotemporal-marked coverbs as secondary predicates

For several Australian languages, clitics have been described which may attach to “nominal predicates which describe the state of a participant at the time when the action described by the main predicate is taking place” (Dench 1995: 181; see also Dench & Evans 1988: 14), or which facilitate a secondary predicate reading of nominals (Hale 1983: 32ff., Simpson 1991: 200 for Warlpiri). These forms are usually glossed as ‘then’, ‘now’, or ‘still’.

Depictive secondary predicates describe a condition that holds for one of the arguments during the assertion time of the main predicate (e.g. raw in She ate the fish raw). Resultative secondary predicates describe a condition that holds for one of the arguments as a result of the event denoted by the main predicate (e.g. open in She cut the fish open).

The clitic =(C)ung in Jaminjung has a similar function: it indicates cotemporality of an event or condition with the speech situation (when following the main predicate), or dependence of temporal interpretation on the main predicate (when following a predicative nominal or coverb) (see Schultze-Berndt 1999 for details). Coverbs marked with the cotemporal clitic =(C)ung can be analysed as secondary predicates: they may have either a depictive reading, as in (3-29), or a resultative reading, as in (3-30). However, this semantic criterion is not sufficient to warrant a secondary predicate analysis. Coverbs may well have a resultative or depictive interpretation when part of a canonical complex predicate. The clitic =(C)ung, in addition, has the effect that the event encoded by the coverb is
asserted independently of the main predicate, which is a further criterion for the secondary predicate status (cf. e.g. Nichols 1978, Winkler 1997).

\[(3-29)\] nginy=nyung na-ruma-ny wurrgurru=marraj
bare.teeth=CO TEMP 2sg-COME-PST devil=SEM BL

‘showing your teeth you came like a devil’ (IP, F01251)

\[(3-30)\] majani janga yawurr-inangga-ji \ may be sore IRR:3pl-CH OP-REFL
digirrij=ung \ die=CO TEMP

‘maybe they will hurt each other \ severely \ (lit. ‘dead’)’ (IP, E09244)

As (3-29) and (3-30) also show, the co temporal-marked coverb may be part of the same intonation unit as the main predicate, or be separated from it by an intonation boundary. When it is part of the same intonation unit, it may appear in anti-iconic order with respect to the verb, just like coverbs in canonical complex verbs.

Coverbs occurring in this type of construction may often form a canonical complex verb with the same verb. For example, in (3-31a), the coverb *jarndang* ‘go down completely’ is both marked with \(=(C)ung\), and separated from the verb -ma ‘HIT’ by an intonation unit boundary. The event of (the dog’s) falling down completely is thereby asserted independently of the ‘pushing’ or ‘hitting’ described by the verb. When the same scene is summarised again in the subsequent intonation unit (3-31b), *jarndang* is used as part of a complex verb, in anti-iconic ordering and with no intonation boundary intervening between coverb and verb.

\[(3-31a)\] jag=gung ganuny-ma!
go.down=CO TEMP 3sg:3du-HIT.PST

\quad jarndang=ung \
go.down.completely=CO TEMP

\[(3-31b)\] wirib jarndang gani-ma,
dog go.down.completely 3sg:3sg-HIT.PST

\quad mayi barraj=ung \ 
person further=CO TEMP

‘it pushed the two such that they went down! all the way down \(\backslash\) it pushed the dog right down, and the person too \(\backslash\)’ (Frog Story) (IP, F03227-30)

However, not all expressions with a cotemporal-marked coverb have semantically equivalent complex verb expressions. For example, most coverbs of
spatial configuration do not form unmarked complex predicates with verbs of contact/force like -ma ‘HIT’, but may combine with them in a resultative interpretation when marked with =(C)ung, as illustrated in (3-32).

(3-32)  
\[
gani\text{-}ma\text{-m} \text{ mugurn}=\text{ung}=\text{biyang}  
\]
\[
3\text{sg}:3\text{sg}\text{-HIT-PRS} \quad \text{lie}=\text{COTEMP}=\text{NOW}  
\]

‘he hits someone such that he/she lies down’

Another difference between this type of secondary predicate construction and the canonical complex verb construction, which provides evidence for the claim that coverbs in this construction make an independent assertion, is that coverbs marked with =(C)ung can be negated independently (cf. §3.2.3 above). This is illustrated in (3-33). It is clear from the context that the ‘falling’ is not negated here, but only the (potential) result, the dying.

(3-33)  
\[
maja=gung \quad \text{gurrany} \quad \text{digirrij}=\text{ung} \quad \text{ga-rdba}-\text{ny},  
\]
\[
\text{like.that}=\text{COTEMP} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{die}=\text{COTEMP} \quad 3\text{sg}-\text{FALL-PST}  
\]
\[
\text{jalag}=\text{ung} \quad \text{ga-yu}  
\]
\[
\text{good}=\text{COTEMP} \quad 3\text{sg}-\text{BE.PRS}  
\]

‘(The young bird fell down from the nest to the ground). However, it didn’t fall such that it died, it is still all right’ (bird in children’s book)  

(DR, BAR012/13)

Combinations of a verb with a coverb marked with the clitic =(C)ung, just like the combinations with a continuous-marked coverb discussed in §3.3.1 and §3.3.2, therefore have to be distinguished from coverb-verb combinations in a canonical complex verb construction with unmarked coverb, even when both constituents form a close-knit unit prosodically. Only canonical complex predicates as defined in §3.2 will be considered for the description of argument structure in Ch. 4 and for the establishment of coverb classes on the basis of the attested combination with verbs in Ch. 6.

### 3.4 Coverbs as semi-independent predicates

In §3.2, canonical complex verbs were defined as consisting of one or more unmarked coverbs, combining with a verb under a single intonation contour. We will now turn to the use of unmarked coverbs as predicates in an intonation unit on their own, without an accompanying verb. These have to be distinguished both from coverbs in canonical complex verbs and from case-marked coverbs in a non-finite subordinate clause, as discussed in §2.6.5. Coverbs as semi-independent predicates often form an intonation unit by themselves, but may alternatively occur with an argument (usually just one).
The interpretation of unmarked coverbs in a separate intonation unit is to a large extent dependent on the linguistic and extra-linguistic context; for this reason, they are termed ‘semi-independent predicates’ here. Not only are coverbs non-finite and cannot encode temporal and aspectual information, or cross-reference arguments, but also semantic information that would be encoded by a verb in a canonical complex verb construction is missing from these expressions.

Three main types of semi-independent predicates can be distinguished according to their interpretation. Possibly, prosodic correlates of these different types could also be found on closer investigation. Coverbs as semi-independent predicates can have imperative illocutionary force (§3.4.1), occur in narrative sequence (§3.4.2), or have a secondary predicate interpretation (§3.4.3). Tentatively a fourth type is distinguished, involving a restricted set of phase coverbs which indicate completion of an event (§3.4.4).

### 3.4.1 Coverbs with imperative illocutionary force

Coverbs on their own, i.e. without a verb, can be used in the function of imperatives. Recall that inflected imperative forms of verbs also exist, and these may form complex verbs with coverbs (see §2.4.1.3.1.3). The use of a bare coverb with imperative illocutionary force is more frequent for some coverbs – like the directional buyi ‘keep going’ – than for others, and is generally more frequent in speech directed to children. The textual example in (3-34) is from a video where a group of children were given orders to demonstrate their understanding of the language. It shows both imperative verb forms (3-34a, c) and coverbs as semi-independent predicates (3-34a, b, d).

(3-34a) DM: ya, langiny ba-raa!  
yes  wood  IMP-APPROACH  
y a  maja=na buyi! warrn g!  
yes  thus=NOW keep.going  walk  
‘go to the tree! yes like that now, keep going! walk!’

b) MM: walig!  
round  
‘around!’ (i.e. around the tree)

c) DM: walig-walig ba-wurr-i jga!  
RDP-round  IMP-2pl-GO  
‘go around, all of you’

d) MM: walig buyi!  
round keep.going  
‘around (and) keep going!’
Verbless negative imperatives may be formed by adding the privative suffix -marnany (Ngaliwurru: -miyardi) to a coverb (see §2.3.2.4).

3.4.2 Coverbs in narrative sequence

Where coverbs are used as semi-independent predicates with declarative rather than imperative illocutionary force, they always have a stylistic effect of immediacy of description. Coverbs in this type of construction are quite frequent in Jaminjung texts (they are somewhat under-represented in the texts in the Appendix; see §3.6 below), with large differences in frequency depending on the individual speaker. They are most common in comments on an ongoing situation, in narratives, and particularly in procedural texts. (3-35) is a fragment from a longer procedural text, co-constructed by two speakers, on hunting and cooking echidna. In six subsequent intonation units, not a single inflecting verb is used. In the first three intonation units (3-35a-c), the coverb occurs with an absolutive noun phrase representing a patientive participant.

(3-35a) NG: jungguwurru yirr, echidna move.out

‘(we used to go up the hill for porcupine), pulled out the porcupine,’

b) guyug luba dalb,
fire big light.fire

‘lit a big fire’

c) en jiyab bulg,
and liver take.out.guts

‘and took out the liver,’

d) gub-gub biya:, bulg \ RDP-come.out NOW take.out.guts

‘took (them) out then, took out the guts’

e) VP: bum \ apply.smoke

‘smoked it’

f) NG: murl, ... gunjalg \ roast ground

‘roasted it, (in the) ground’ (E09789-95)
Frequently, coverbs used as semi-independent predicates are pronounced with expressive prosody (see §3.2.1 above), represented by an exclamation mark in the transcription of (3-36) below.

(3-36) jungulug-di=biya kroba dud gan-angga-m !deb:!
    one-ERG/INSTR=NOW crowbar hold.one 3sg:3sg-GET/HANDLE-PRS knock!
    .. thanthiya-gurna ngayiny, malajagu \
    DEM-?? meat/animal goanna
    ‘one then picks up a crowbar (and) !knock! .. that animal, the goanna’
    (IP, F01568-9)

A further stylistic effect that can be achieved with coverbs as semi-independent predicates is their iteration, iconically representing a repeated action. While reduplicated coverbs (see §2.3.2.1) only carry a single word stress, each repeated coverb receives its own word stress. The following utterance describes how sticks for obtaining tree honey are made from a piece of fibre by chewing them intensely. All instances of jang ‘chew’ in (3-37) carry emphatic stress.

(3-37) wardi gad yirra-nangga:,
    tree.species cut 1pl.excl:3sg-CHOP.PST
    ^jang ^jang ^jang ^jang, yathang=ung \
    chew all.right=COTEMP
    ‘We cut (bark off?) the wardi tree, chew!, chew!, chew!, chew!, all
    right then’ (EH, E18171-2)

Coverbs used as semi-independent predicates in narrative sequence have a clear stylistic effect of vividness of narration or description. This effect is not unlike that of stripped verb stems in some registers of spoken language in familiar European languages, e.g. Engl. smash! or German keuch! ’gasp’ or schwitz! ‘sweat (v)’. In this respect, Jaminjung coverbs are also reminiscent of ideophones as described for many other languages (see Schultze-Berndt, to appear).

The use of an unaccompanied coverb leaves the participants and the temporal interpretation unspecified and open to inference from the context. It is as if the hearer is invited to become more involved in the ‘decoding’ of the reported event by having to supply the information about the participants and temporal reference which would be contained in the generic verb in a canonical complex verb construction. In addition, the hearer may also have to reconstruct some semantic information that would be contributed by the generic verb. It is consistent with this characterisation that coverbs in this usage are often accompanied by iconic gestures.

Expressions of this type are only employed in highly contextualised genres, i.e. narratives and procedural texts, conversations, and comments on ongoing situations. When asked to repeat an intonation unit for clarification, or for
translation out of context, speakers will supply the appropriate generic verbs, i.e. produce canonical complex verbs. Coverbs as semi-independent predicates are also absent from isolated elicited sentences, and from other more decontextualised genres. For example, they are not found in descriptions of photos for a booklet decided upon – often with lengthy discussions – by a group of speakers and dictated to me (the genre closest to written texts that is attested for Jaminjung).

3.4.3 Coverbs in a secondary predicate reading

Frequently, a coverb functioning as a semi-independent predicate in a separate intonation unit clearly predicates on one of the arguments of the (simple or complex) predicate in the preceding intonation unit, and receives a resultative or a depictive reading with respect to this predicate. In this case, illustrated in (3-38) and in (3-40) below, the coverb could be analysed as a secondary predicate. Their interpretation is similar to that of the marked coverbs described in §3.3.3, even though they do not bear the cotemporal marking (compare e.g. (3-38) below with (3-30) in §3.3.3).

(3-38) jamang ngarrg burr-angga-m \ 
finally strangle 3pl:3sg-GET/HANDLE-PRS

digirrij \ 
die
‘finally they strangle it, dead’ (IP, F01033)

A coverb as semi-independent predicate in a depictive reading is illustrated in (3-39).

(3-39) ngiyi=biya wurlgba gan-antha \ 
PROX=NOW carry.on.shoulder 3sg:3sg-TAKE.PRS

burdurdubba \ 
gallop
‘here it is carrying him away \ galloping \’ (deer -> boy, in picture book) (IP, F03224-5)

Coverbs used in this way may always also form a canonical complex verb with the verb in the preceding intonation unit, since depictive and resultative relationships are among those lexicalised as complex predicates. This is illustrated in the – spontaneously produced – ‘minimal pair’ in (3-40). In (3-40a), the coverb jarlwab ‘safe’ appears as a secondary predicate, separated from the main predicate by two intonation boundaries. In (3-40b), the same coverb and the same verb constitute a complex predicate. This time, the coverb wurlurlu ‘enter a
three-dimensional container through an opening’, which is part of the main predicate in (3-40a), is used as a secondary predicate in (3-40b).

(3-40a)  
\[
\text{wurlulu nga-w-arra, mhm } \\
\text{enter.through.opening } 3\text{sg:3sg-FUT-PUT} \\
\text{ngarrgina-bina tin box } \\
\text{1sg:POSS-ALL tin box} \\
\text{jarlwab } \\
\text{safe} \\
\text{‘I am going to put it in, mhm into my tin box (in a) safe (place) (food) (IP, E08042-44)}
\]

b)  
\[
\text{jarlwab ganarra-m na, safe } 3\text{sg:3sg-PUT-PRS NOW} \\
\text{wurlulu } \\
\text{enter.through.opening} \\
\text{beg-gi } \\
\text{bag-LOC} \\
\text{‘she saves it now, (putting it) inside in a bag’ (IP, E08029-30)}
\]

The reverse generalisation, however, does not hold: not all coverbs found in a complex predicate may also be used as secondary predicates in this way. Unlike word order in the canonical complex verb (see §3.2.2), therefore, the possibility to have coverb and verb separated by an intonation boundary is a test for the degree of semantic transparency of a coverb – verb combination. Specifically, where generic verbs have secondary senses which require the presence of a coverb (see Ch. 5), the coverb may not be separated from the verb in this way.

Although the occurrence of coverbs in a secondary predicate construction is subject to semantic restrictions, the difference between this construction and the canonical complex verb construction should not be regarded as a difference in semantic interpretation, but as a difference in information packaging. This is shown most clearly where complex verbs and secondary predicate constructions with the same verbs and coverbs are used to describe the same situation, as in (3-40) above. The difference is that the complex verb makes a single assertion, whereas, when separated by an intonation boundary, both predicates constitute independent assertions. The latter strategy of information packaging is often employed when the main predicate is already a complex predicate, as in (3-38), (3-39) and (3-40) above.
3.4.4 Phase coverbs as event delimiters

In some cases, coverbs used as semi-independent predicates stand in a clear semantic relationship to the preceding predicate, but cannot be interpreted as depictive or resultative secondary predicates. Rather, they function as delimiters of the event encoded in the preceding intonation unit(s), and serve the function of temporally structuring discourse. Usually the coverb is *burrb* ‘finish’, as in (3-41) and (3-42), but other potential temporal delimiters, such as *darrug* ‘set, go down (of celestial body)’ in (3-43), have also been found.

(3-41) \[ \text{warrg} = \text{biya yiny-agba::,} \]
\[ \text{work=} \text{NOW 1du.excl-BE.PST} \]
\[ \text{burrb} \]
\[ \text{finish} \]
\[ \text{‘the two of us worked, (then) finished’ (DM, E19591)} \]

(3-42) \[ \text{ga-rna-ya=} \text{biya guyug luba=} \text{biya::::::,} \]
\[ \text{3sg-BURN-PRS=} \text{NOW fire big=} \text{NOW} \]
\[ \text{burrb} \]
\[ \text{finish} \]
\[ \text{‘bud gani-ma-m \} \]
\[ \text{cook.on.coals 3sg:3sg-HIT-PRS} \]
\[ \text{‘it burns now, a big fire, (until) finished \ she (then) cooks it (meat) on the coals’ (VP, E11265-6)} \]

(3-43) \[ \text{m.=} \text{biyang gani-wardagarra-nyi waladbari-ni alibala \} \]
\[ \text{ritual=} \text{NOW 3sg:3sg-FOLLOW-IMPF old.man-ERG/INSTR early} \]
\[ \text{gani-wardagarra-nyi::, darrug \} \]
\[ \text{3sg:3sg-FOLLOW-IMPF go.down(sun)} \]
\[ \text{‘in the morning then the old men followed the M. (initiation) ritual \ they went on (with the ritual), (until) sunset’ (DM, E19150-1)} \]
\[ \text{(recorded by Mark Harvey)} \]

Often, if not always, a special intonational pattern is used in expressions like those in (3-41) to (3-43): the last syllable of the first intonation unit is lengthened, the boundary is marked by rising intonation, and the coverb receives final, falling intonation. This type of semi-independent predicate therefore appears to be more integrated with the preceding intonation unit than the types discussed in §3.4.1 to §3.4.3, i.e. coverbs used with imperative illocutionary

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58 See Wilson (1999: 76ff.) for a comparable construction in Wagiman, and the discussion of an example very similar to (3-43).
force, coverbs as semi-independent predicates in narrative sequence, and unmarked coverbs functioning as secondary predicates. Whether coverbs used as semi-independent predicates exhibit a semantic relationship to a verb in a preceding intonation unit or not, they have to be distinguished from coverbs in a canonical complex verb construction by the prosodic criterion.

3.5 The integration of Kriol loans in complex verbs

Present-day Jaminjung and Ngaliwurru speech exhibits a large number of loanwords from Northern Territory Kriol, and code-switching is very frequent (see also §1.2.5). In subsequent chapters, reference will repeatedly be made to the use of loanwords from Kriol in complex verbs as evidence for the productivity and the semantic basis of complex verb formation. Therefore, this section gives a brief overview of the attested patterns.

3.5.1 Kriol verbs borrowed as coverbs

Kriol verbs may function just like coverbs in canonical complex verbs. That is, they combine with Jaminjung verbs in the same position as Jaminjung coverbs do, within the same intonation unit. This usage of Kriol loans is also attested for other languages of the region (see e.g. McConvell 1985b).

The main difference between Jaminjung coverbs and Kriol loans in the same function is that many transitive verbs in Kriol have a ‘transitive’ suffix -im, which they retain when used as coverbs. On Jaminjung coverbs, there is no transitivity marking.

Evidence for the functional equivalence of a Kriol verb in coverb position and a Jaminjung coverb is that they are often spontaneously produced as translation equivalents of one another. For example, the speaker of (3-44b) corrects the speaker of (3-44a) by substituting Jaminjung equivalents for his Kriol loans.

(3-44a)  openim=biyang nga-bili  minyga bringgla
  open:TR=NOW  1sg:3sg-FUT:GET/HANDLE what’s.it.called sprinkler
  gani-yu yurrag=mulu
  3sg:3sg-SAY/DO.PST  1pl.incl.OBL=COLL
  ‘I’m going to turn on the sprinkler, he told all of us’ (quoting a man who turned on sprinklers on the lawn where a group of people were sitting and told them to move) (MM, D11024)

b)  bawu nga-bili  gugu imin tok
  open  1sg:3sg-FUT:GET/HANDLE water he:PST talk
  ‘I’m going to turn on the water, he said’ (DP, D11025)
The examples in (3-45) and (3-46) show that the borderline between code-switching and borrowing is sometimes difficult to determine: in (3-46), for example, the inflected verb form is the only Jaminjung word in the intonation unit.

(3-45) jamana gan-anja werim ole taim
foot/shoe 3sg:3sg-TAKE.PRS wear:TR all.the time
‘she is wearing shoes all the time’ (DR, CHE177)

(3-46) rait, shiftim yirr-ijga-ny na natha pleis \right shift:TR 1pl.excl-GO-PST LOC another place
‘right, we moved over to a different place’ (to look for yam) (NG, E01055)

Further examples for Kriol verbs used as coverbs can be found throughout Ch. 5, and in II/10, II/13, II/28, III/25-26, III/35, and III/38 in the Appendix.

3.5.2 Jaminjung coverbs with Kriol verbs

A pattern in which a Kriol verb functions like the inflecting verb in a complex predicate, in combination with a Jaminjung coverb is also attested. Most frequently, the Kriol verb is the past tense auxiliary bin, as in (3-47) (for a further example, see II/7 in the Appendix).

(3-47) thei bin bag-bag <x the: x> mangarra \ 3pl PST RDP-break 3pl? plant.food
‘these broke off their plants’ (yam roots, instead of digging them up whole) (DR, E09396)

Lexical Kriol verbs may also be used in combination with a Jaminjung coverb, as in (3-48) and (3-49). (3-49) is typical of speech addressed to children. Sometimes even a Kriol and Jaminjung translation equivalent are juxtaposed to one another, as in (3-50).

(3-48) wi bin.. go buru then, motika-bina \ we PST go return then car-ALL
‘we went back then, to the car’ (NG, E01071)

(3-49) tharrei:: yu getim durd!
there you get:TR hold.one
‘there::re you pick it up!’ (DR)
Thus, Jaminjung coverbs and Kriol verbs are rather flexible in their combinations. (Note, however, that Kriol verbs never take Jaminjung verbal inflections.) Examples in subsequent chapters will be mainly of the type illustrated in §3.5.1, that is, of Kriol verbs functioning as coverbs, but this should not be taken to represent the only possibility of integrating loans.

3.6 Summary

In this section, several simple and complex predicate constructions were distinguished. The simplest type of predicate consists of an inflected verb alone (§3.1). Canonical complex verbs, as defined in §3.2, combine an inflected verb and one or more unmarked coverbs in a single intonation unit. Both simple verbs and canonical complex verbs represent unitary events.

The periphrastic progressive construction was discussed in §3.3.1. It bears a close formal relationship to the canonical complex verb construction in terms of prosodic integration and word order, but the coverb in this case is marked with the continuous suffix -mayan, and the verb is either -yu ‘BE’ or -ijga ‘GO’ in auxiliary function. Continuous-marked coverbs may also combine with other verbs than -yu ‘BE’ and -ijga ‘GO, but it is unclear whether the resulting combinations should be analysed as complex predicates, or whether the coverb here has an adverbial function (§3.3.2). Coverbs marked with the cotemporal clitic =(C)ung (§3.3.3) were also distinguished from unmarked coverbs in canonical complex verbs, in that they were analysed as secondary predicates.

Unmarked coverbs constituting the only predicate in an intonation unit were also identified as a distinct construction type, termed ‘semi-independent’ predicates here. Depending on their illocutionary force, and the presence or absence of specific semantic relationships to the preceding predicate, several subtypes of semi-independent predicates can be distinguished. In the absence of a clear semantic relationship to a preceding predicate, coverbs may be used with imperative illocutionary force (§3.4.1) or in narrative sequence (§3.4.2). Both types of expression are stylistically marked and restricted to highly contextualised discourse. Unmarked coverbs in a separate intonation unit may also function as secondary predicates if they are in a depictive or resultative relationship with respect to a preceding (verbal) predicate (§3.4.3), or as phase predicates if they delimit the event encoded in the preceding intonation unit (§3.4.5).
Recall also that coverbs may function as the sole predicate in a non-finite subordinate clause, of the type discussed in §2.6.5. Coverbs in this function always carry one of a number of case markers indicating the semantic relationship of the subordinate clause to the main clause, e.g. purposive or anterior.

Table 3-2 presents an overview of the relative frequencies of these constructions in the five texts reproduced in the Appendix (other construction types, e.g. nominal predicates, were left out of consideration in the text count). Note that none of the texts contains a progressive form or a coverb marked with the cotemporal clitic; this is clearly an artefact of the sample (see §3.3.1 for an overview of text types with frequent occurrences of the progressive). Combinations of a Kriol loan used as coverb and a Jaminjung verb (§3.5.1) were counted as canonical complex verbs. Predicates consisting only of Kriol words or of the Kriol auxiliary bin and a Jaminjung coverb (§3.5.2) were not counted.

The results show that despite the small number of verbs (around 30), simple verbs as main predicates have a very high text frequency of almost 40%. Canonical complex verbs (including those with Kriol loans used as coverbs) have a frequency of around 50%, while constructions involving continuous-marked coverbs, unmarked coverbs as semi-independent predicates, and case-marked coverbs as predicates in a subordinate clause are much less frequent. These results are consistent with other text counts (see §5.10.3).

Table 3-2. Relative frequency of simple and complex predicates in five texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple verb</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical complex verb</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous-marked coverb (not progressive)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotemporal-marked secondary predicate</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-independent pred.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverb as predicate in case-marked subordinate clause</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the remainder of this study, simple verbs and canonical complex verbs will constitute the focus of investigation. They will be discussed from the angles of argument structure (Ch. 4), generic verb semantics (Ch. 5) and coverb semantics (Ch. 6).