

The Chameleon

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Appeal for Updates

Claire Bowerman has kindly renewed her offer to undertake the task of updating our projects page—but in order to do so, she needs information from you about what projects are completed, which ones are still in progress, and any new projects. This is a great opportunity to inform historical linguists about what you are currently doing—anyone googling on ‘historical linguistics’ or ‘language change’ finds the CRLC very quickly. Please send your information to <mailto:clairebowern@yale.edu>. We’ll be reviewing the projects page and deleting any projects that seem obviously old to us and about which we have received no information. If you have a project that you would like to declare completed, let Claire know so she can move it to the ‘recently completed projects’ area. Otherwise it may be summarily deleted!

Maintaining your membership

Our Members page lists some associate members whose original term of membership has expired and who may not be interested in renewing their membership. If you are a former student, for example, we would have changed your status from full member to associate member upon graduation, and you may not be involved in historical linguistics anymore. As part of keeping our webpage up to date (and also to avoid sending you email that you have no interest in), we are undertaking a review of our list of members.

If you are an associate member whose original membership (whether full or associate) dates back for five years or more, please let Cynthia Allen (cynthia.allen@anu.edu.au) know if you still wish to be listed as an associate member of the CRLC. If you do wish to continue your membership, you’ll also need to supply a brief description of your current involvement in a project in some area of historical linguistics. There is no need to take this action, however, if you have communicated with us within the last year—we know you are still interested! No need for full members to do anything either, although an update on your current projects would be much appreciated.

If we don’t hear from inactive associate members by 15 March 2012, we’ll remove them from our members page and our mailing list.

New Website

A new website has recently been launched that will be of interest to CRLC members, and to which several of our members have contributed.

From the website itself: “eWave (<http://www.ewave-atlas.org/languages>) is an interactive database on morphosyntactic variation in spontaneous spoken English, mapping 235 features from about a dozen domains of grammar in 48 varieties of English (traditional dialects, high-contact mother-tongue Englishes, and indigenized second-language Englishes) and 26 English-based Pidgins and Creoles in eight Anglophone world regions. It was compiled from descriptive materials, naturalistic corpus data, and native speaker knowledge by a team of 80 contributors, all leading experts in their fields, directed by Bernd Kortmann and Kerstin Lunkenheimer. eWAVE is unique not only in its coverage and user-friendliness, but also in being an open access resource.”

eWave will no doubt be of interest to our members who are interested in the history of English, the relationship between variation and change, and the development of mixed languages. It allows interactive exploration of features, examples and mapping. [Thanks to Rachel Hendery for contributing this information]

New members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Professor Jane Simpson, Chair of Indigenous Languages, School of Language Studies, ANU (full member).

Professor Katherine Travis, Chair of European Languages, School of Language Studies, ANU (full member).

Dr Sarah Ogilvie, Director, Australian National Dictionary Centre, Australian National University.

CRLC Grant Success

An ARC Discovery Project ‘Skin and Kin in Aboriginal Australia: linguistic and historical perspectives on the dynamics of social categories’ has been successful with \$800,000 being awarded. The project is based at the School of Language Studies, College of Arts and Social Sciences, ANU with CI’s CRLC members Patrick McConvell, Harold Koch and Jane Simpson; and partner Laurent Dousset at EHESS in France. McConvell was awarded a DORA, a senior fellowship, to work on the project. Others associated with the project are Jeanie Bell (Batchelor Institute), Jaky Troy (AIATSIS), Jenny Green (University of Melbourne), Ian Keen (ANU), James Rose and Woodrow Denham. The project is due to start in July 2012 and continue for three years.

The summary description of the project is as follows:

‘Indigenous Australians are linked in family-like networks, underpinned by ways of talking about social relationships. Social category systems unique to Australia are central to this linking, enabling people to view others as family. The unparalleled database created for the Austkin project gives an empirical basis for investigating the language of social categories. Using methods from linguistics, history and anthropology, we will trace the history of ‘skin’ systems and their dynamic relationships with kinship, marriage patterns, and land connections. This project will give fresh insight into how Aboriginal people have organised social interaction and created enduring societies.’

The project is seeking expressions of interest in either of the following roles on

- (1) Project manager/research assistant \$63-66000 pa approx
- (2) Ph.D student with stipend \$27651 pa

We are seeking people with background in linguistics, anthropology or history, or some combination of these, and knowledge of Indigenous society in Australia, We would also be interested in expressions of interest from people with experience in statistical approaches to data analysis from other disciplines, and/or social network analysis.

Those interested please reply to Patrick.mcconvell@anu.edu.au by **6th February 2012**.

News of members

Manuel Delicado-Cantero's monograph *Prepositional clauses in Spanish: A diachronic and comparative syntactic study* has been accepted for publication in the [Studies in Language Change](#) series.

Alexandre François (from LACITO-CNRS, Paris) has been a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University, for the last three years; he will be returning to his position in Paris in July 2012. During his presence at the ANU, he has pursued his ongoing research on the 17 languages of northern Vanuatu. Along with descriptive studies of these languages, he has especially focused on the dynamics of language change in this part of Melanesia, and how these languages developed historically from a common ancestor. This has given him the occasion to develop a diffusional model of language change in linkages that focuses on convergence, as an alternative to the family tree model which exclusively represents divergence.

Harold Koch was successful with his ARC Discovery Project proposal: DP120100632 "Skin and kin in Aboriginal Australia: linguistic and historical perspectives on the dynamics of social categories", CIs Patrick McConvell, Harold Koch, and Jane Simpson; Partner Investigator Laurent Dousset; amount awarded \$8000,000 for years 2012-14. For a fuller description of this project, see [CRLC Grant Success](#). Harold continued to organise the CRLC seminars during 2011.

With CRLC Associate Member [Robert Mailhammer](#) Harold co-convended a workshop on "Etymology and Reconstruction in the languages of Australia and the Pacific", at ICHL 2011, 29 July 2011, Osaka, Japan.

Robert Mailhammer is now a Lecturer at the University of Western Sydney (School of Humanities and Communication Arts). Grants received: Small Grant from the Hans-Rausing Endangered Languages Programme (AUD 15,600) to document Amurdak).

Together with CRLC member [Harold Koch](#), Robert organised the workshop "Etymology and Reconstruction in the languages of Australia and the Pacific" at ICHL 20, Osaka, Japan, 25-30 July 2011. This workshop featured a structured presentation by various specialists on historical linguistics working on languages in Australia and the Pacific of priorities for further research in this area, which will be published in the near future.

With Andy Wedel, University of Arizona, Robert organised the 1st and 2nd Joint ASU/UofA Linguistic Symposium, March and October 2011.

Elisabeth Mayer (see [profile](#)) has completed a PhD thesis about syntactic variation of object arguments in Limeño Spanish contact varieties. Taking the evolution of DOM into account, the thesis explored the complex relationship between primary agreement through object marking or differential object marking, and secondary agreement through clitics in nonstandardized variation data from Limeño Spanish contact varieties. Elisabeth's new project with co-researchers Dr. Rodolfo Cerrón-Palomino and Luis F. Andrade Ciudad (Catholic University of Lima (PUCP), Peru) focuses on variation and stability in Andean Spanish, a continuum which has been serving as the mediating language between Quechua and Spanish and as the only communication language for almost 500 years. Another aim of the project is to compare conclusions reached in previous work in a migratory setting with data from contact in situ.

Paul Sidwell has submitted an application for ARC Future Fellowship.

Title: Unlocking the Missing Millennia of Mainland Southeast Asia: the Proto-Austroasiatic Lexicon Project

Description: The project uses linguistic analyses to address compelling questions around origins of the extraordinary cultural innovation and diversity that emerged in South and Southeast Asia during what archaeologists call the missing millennia 6000 to 3500 BP. A comprehensive reconstruction of the evolution of the Austroasiatic language family, and its interactions with Sino-Tibetan, Austronesian, Hmong-Mien, Tai, will add essential evidence to genetic, anthropological, and archeological studies that are revealing the prehistory of our region. Integrating traditional and innovative research methodologies, it will also deliver substantial open research infrastructure that will facilitate and enhance capacity and collaboration across the field.

Paul has been appointed as Director, Forensic Linguistics & Biometric Laboratory, ANU.

Ghil'ad Zuckermann was appointed (at the beginning of 2011) Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide. He is currently establishing a new field of study: Revival Linguistics.

New historical linguistics journal

Members are encouraged to send articles to the new *Journal of Historical Syntax*: <http://historicalsyntax.org>. From an email sent out to the Histling list by the editor, George Walkden:

The journal is a peer-reviewed open access publication hosted as part of the Linguistic Society of America's eLanguage platform. JHS is intended to present theoretically-informed papers dealing with any aspect of historical syntax, whether diachronic change or the synchronic description of historical language states. This subfield of linguistics has never in the past had its own journal, but the flourishing of work in the area since the 1970s, bringing with it advances in the understanding of typical pathways of change as well as in the understanding of the relationship between syntactic theory and diachrony and in the tools of the discipline (large annotated corpora), means that such a journal is long overdue.

The open access, online-only format of the journal makes it ideal for hosting articles that go beyond the limitations of print. For instance, in historical syntax, corpus queries and collections of data can be linked to from within the article, making high quality quantitative work replicable in a way that is impossible in traditional print journals, with no limit on length within reason.

The journal is now accepting submissions! Papers that combine philological expertise with insights from linguistic theory are particularly welcome, though no particular theory or framework will be given precedence. Alongside full-length articles, squibs of up to 3,000 words and book reviews are also welcome.

The speed of publication should be much greater than that found in traditional print journals or printed conference volumes: authors should hear back within twelve weeks, and articles will be published online as soon as they are accepted.

Historical publications and conference/seminar presentations by members

Bowern, Claire (with Jessica Hunter and Erich Round) 2011a. Language contact in the Torres Strait: A reappraisal. *Journal of Language Contact* 4/1: 106-140.

----(with Patrick McConvell) 2011. "The prehistory of Australian languages". *Language and Linguistics Compass*.

----(with Patience Epps, Russell Gray, Jane Hill, Keith Hunley, Patrick McConvell and Jason Zentz) 2011. Does lateral transmission obscure inheritance in hunter-gatherer languages? *PLoS One*.

----Out of Africa? The logic of phoneme inventories and phoneme effects. 2011. *Linguistic Typology*. 15/2-3.

François, Alexandre. 2011. "A diffusionist approach to language history in Vanuatu: Clearing off the trees, exploring the bush". First International Workshop on the Languages of Vanuatu, ANU, Australia, 20-23 Oct 2011.

---- and Siva Kalyan. 2011. "Language history in Vanuatu: The epic failure of the tree model". Seminars of the CRLC, ANU, Australia, 14 Dec 2011.

---- 2009. "Local words, shared ideas. Lexical divergence and structural homogeneity among north Vanuatu languages". Annual meeting of the Australian Linguistics Society (ALS), Melbourne, Australia. [Keynote presentation]

---- 2011. Social ecology and language history in the northern Vanuatu linkage: A tale of divergence and convergence. *Journal of Historical Linguistics* 1 (2): 175-246. http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_articles.cgi?bookid=JHL%201%3A2&artid=314157971

---- 2011. Where *R they all? The history and geography of *R-loss in Southern Oceanic languages. *Oceanic Linguistics* 50 (1): 142-199.

----2009. The languages of Vanikoro: Three lexicons and one grammar. In Bethwyn Evans (ed.), *Discovering history through language: Papers in honour of Malcolm Ross*. Pacific Linguistics 605. Canberra: Australian National University. 103-126.

----2009. Verbal aspect and personal pronouns: The history of aorist markers in north Vanuatu. In Andrew Pawley & Alexander Adelaar (eds). *Austronesian historical linguistics and culture history: A festschrift for Bob Blust*. Pacific Linguistics. Canberra: Australian National University. 179-195.

Koch, Harold. "The evolution of kinship terminology in W.A. Pama-Nyungan languages." Paper presented at the Australian Languages Workshop, Stradbroke Island, 12 March 2011.

---- "Kinterms and the classification of Pama-Nyungan languages." Paper presented at the 20th *International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, Osaka, Japan, 25-30 July 2011.

---- "Explaining the prehistory of personal pronouns in the Kuri languages". Poster presented at the Australian Linguistics Society meeting, Canberra, 1-4 December 2011.

- Mailhammer, Robert.** 2011. The prehistory of European languages. In J. van der Auwera & B. Kortmann (eds.), *The Languages and linguistics of Europe*, World of Linguistics 1, Berlin/New York. Mouton de Gruyter. 671-682.
- 2011. From *ic nolde* to *I don't wanna*: the status of clitics in the history of English. In R. Bauer and U. Krischke (eds.), *More than words. English lexicography and lexicology past and present. Essays presented to Hans Sauer on the occasion of his 65th birthday. Part I*. Frankfurt a. M. Peter Lang. 415-425.
- (with Holman, Eric W., Cecil H. Brown, Søren Wichmann, André Müller, Viveka Velupillai, Harald Hammarström, Hagen Jung, Dik Bakker, Pamela Brown, Oleg Belyaev, Matthias Urban, Johann-Mattis List, and Dmitry Egorov). 2011. Automated dating of the world's language families based on lexical similarity, *Current Anthropology* 52: 1-36.
- "The role of patterns in human cognition: evidence from linguistics". Invited lecture at University of Calgary, 4 November 2011.
- "Regularity as a continuum: why *irregular* doesn't have to be the opposite of *regular*". Invited lecture at Cognitive Linguistics Colloquium, University of Arizona, 7 October 2011.
- "The meaning of *regular* is frequently irregular: remarks on the use of *regular* and *irregular* in morphology". Paper presented at the 2nd Joint ASU/UofA Linguistic Symposium, Arizona State University, 1 October 2011.
- "Foundation work in comparative Iwaidjan linguistics: sound correspondences and historical morphology", paper presented at the International Conference of Historical Linguistics, Osaka, Japan, 25-30 July 2011.
- "Post- or Pre-Neogrammarian etymology: are there alternatives to sound laws?", paper presented at the Germanic Linguistics Annual Conference, Austin, TX, 15-17 April 2011.
- "If that's not an explanation, then what is?" How to explain language change, Joint workshop ASU/UofA, University of Arizona, Tucson, 26 March.
- "The breakdown of phonological quantity in English: Implications for historical phonology". Paper presented at the Faculty Exchange Series, University of Arizona, 22 October 2011.
- "Sprung from a common source? The sources of passive constructions in English and German". Paper presented at the 16th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, Pécs, 23-27 August 2011.
- Nash, David.** [2010 imprint, appeared Nov 2011]. Dawes' Law generalised: cluster simplification in the coastal dialect of the Sydney Language. In Brett Baker, Ilana Mushin, Mark Harvey and Rod Gardner (eds.) *Language and social identity in Australian Indigenous communities: Papers in honour of Michael Walsh*. Pacific Linguistics 626.159-178. [CRLC members may be interested in other chapters in this volume, http://chl.anu.edu.au/pacling/catalogue/book_pages/600-plus/626.html].
- Pineda-Bernuy, Edith.** 2011. Derivación negativa en Quechua: el caso de la gramaticalización de *mana*. In Willem F. H. Adelaar, Pilar Valenzuela and Roberto Zariquiey (eds.) *Estudios sobre lenguas andinas y amazónicas, Homenaje a Rodolfo Cerrón-Palomino*. Lima: Fondo Editorial, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.
- "The Development of embracing negation in Quechua" Paper delivered at the XXnd International Conference of Historical Linguistics, Osaka, 25-30 July 2011.
- "The Jespersen cycle in Quechua negation". Paper presented at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, 30 November - 1 December 2011.
- Senft, Gunter.** 2011. *The Tuma underworld of love. Erotic and other narrative songs of the Trobriand Islanders and their spirits of the dead*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

[Abstract: Although Kilivila- the Austronesian language of the Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea- is not an endangered language, there are two metalinguistically labeled varieties or registers of this language which are moribund by now: These varieties are the “biga megwa” - the language of magic and the “biga baloma”- the language of the spirits of the dead. The latter language variety is an archaic variety of Kilivila. It is constituted by specific songs - the so-called “wosi milamala” - the harvest festivals songs which are not only sung during these festivals but also after the death of a Trobriander during the first mourning ceremonies. The majority of these songs describe in a highly poetic way the carefree ‘life’ of the spirits of the dead in their ‘underworld paradise’ on Tuma which is one of the Trobriand Islands. The songs codify the most important aspects of the Trobriand Islanders’ eschatological belief system which explains what happens when someone dies. Although the songs are still sung by the Trobriand Islanders because of their ritual impact, most of the singers no longer understand the lyrics they have learned by heart. This volume not only documents 20 song cycles and thus contributes to preserve the knowledge of the traditional belief system of the Trobriand Islanders, it also presents an anthropological linguistic analysis of their eschatological content and provides a critical review of Bronislaw Malinowski’s ethnography on the topic. Malinowski described essentials of the Trobriand Islanders’ complex belief system in his articles “Baloma: the Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands” and “Myth in Primitive Psychology”. He discussed the Trobrianders’ belief that a “baloma” can be reborn and claimed that Trobrianders are unaware of the father’s role as genitor. This volume reviews this claim and finally settles the so-called “virgin birth” controversy. The interested reader of this book has the opportunity to access the internet and listen to most of the original data presented in chapter three. Three of the songs are also video-documented. The films E 3129 and E 3130 by Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt (see Eibl-Eibesfeldt & Senft 1991) document wosi milamala and milamala dances. The data can be found under the following URL: <http://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/clu.5/main>]

Sidwell, Paul. 2011. Comparative Mon-Khmer linguistics in the 20th century: where from, where to?. In K.S. Nagaraja (ed.) *Austro-Asiatic linguistics: In memory of R. Elangaiyan* (Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Austroasiatic Languages). Mysore, Central Institute of Indian Languages.38-104.

----- (with Roger Blench). 2011. Is Shom Pen a distinct branch of Austroasiatic? In Sophana Srichampa, Paul Sidwell & Kenneth Gregerson (eds.) *Austroasiatic studies: Papers from the ICAAL4: Mon-Khmer Studies Journal special issue No. 3*. Dallas, SIL International; Canberra, Pacific Linguistics; Salaya, Mahidol University. 9-18.

----- 2011, Katuic-Bahnaric: Austroasiatic sub-family or convergence area? In Sophana Srichampa, Paul Sidwell & Kenneth Gregerson (eds.) *Austroasiatic studies: papers from the ICAAL4: Mon-Khmer Studies Journal Special Issue No. 3*. Dallas, SIL International; Canberra, Pacific Linguistics; Salaya, Mahidol University.100-111.

----- (with Jerold A. Edmondson, Kenneth Gregerson). 2011, The North Bahnaric Clade: A Computational Approach. In Sophana Srichampa, Paul Sidwell & Kenneth Gregerson (eds.) *Austroasiatic studies: papers from the ICAAL4: Mon- Khmer Studies Journal Special Issue No. 3*. Dallas, SIL International; Canberra, Pacific Linguistics; Salaya, Mahidol University. 33-47.

Smallhorn, Jacinta. 2011. *The Binanderean languages of Papua New Guinea: Reconstruction and subgrouping*. Studies in Language Change 9. Pacific Linguistics, Canberra.

Relatively little historical-comparative work has been done on the languages of the vast Trans New Guinea family, and this book breaks new ground with a study of the Binanderean languages of the Morobe and Oro Provinces of southeast mainland Papua New Guinea. The author investigates the phonological history of the group and reconstructs the sound system,

core lexicon, and some bound morphology of Proto Binandere. She postulates an inventory of Proto Binandere segmental phonemes, together with sequences of regular sound changes leading to the reflexes of these phonemes in the daughter languages. The shared innovations which these changes represent allow the construction of a family tree. The author also discusses the occurrence of parallel phonological changes among Binanderean languages. Some aspects of the phonological and lexical reconstructions and changes attributed to Proto Binandere and later interstages are then examined, including the neutralisation of voiced plosives and prenasalised plosives, the possible role of pitch and stress, and irregular sound changes (assimilation, metathesis, and loss). Innovations in verbal and nominal morphology are investigated as an additional source of evidence for subgrouping. Binanderean lexical and morphological data are then compared with those of Guhu-Samane, a language long considered to be the closest external relative of the Binanderean family. Evidence of this relationship is presented, along with grounds for excluding it, from the family. Finally, the author gives lexical comparisons between Binanderean and four other putative eastern New Guinea subgroups of the Trans New Guinea family, and shows that Binanderean is indeed a likely member of the family. Based on the location of the Trans New Guinea subgroup which appears to display the strongest lexical resemblances to Binanderean, as well as on the location of Guhu-Samane, she hypothesises a northerly dispersal centre and a southeastern migratory direction for the Binanderean-speaking peoples.

Profile: Elisabeth Mayer

My interest in diachronic and synchronic dialect syntax, language variation and change goes back a long way. Growing up as a dialect speaker in the Alemannic part of Austria created an acute awareness of the existence of fragile and regionally restricted syntactic constructions, such as the genitive case, for example (*Der Dativ ist dem Genitiv sein Tod*). This was the beginning of my fascination with the dichotomy of formalizable grammar and (actual) variant use. My first university studies in English and Romance Philology at the University of Innsbruck (Southern Austro-Bavarian dialect zone!) provided me with a degree in Translation studies and an advanced but unfinished PhD draft in Textlinguistics (Dressler, early 1980s). The next 15 years I got first-hand experience of the mentioned dichotomy in northern German, Peruvian and Colombian contact situations.



When we moved to Australia, just before the end of the last millennium, it was time to revisit my linguistic interests. I embarked on a MALing, which I finished a year later with a subthesis on *Clitic Doubling in Limeño*, with Avery Andrews as my supervisor. This led seamlessly into a PhD thesis entitled ‘*Syntactic variation of object arguments in Limeño Spanish contact varieties*’, which I conducted mainly as an external student living in Freiburg im Breisgau (empowered by Skype and the very well stocked library of the Albert Ludwigs University Freiburg!), and finished it while teaching Spanish at ANU.

The extensive inter- and intraspeaker variation as well as the apparent ungrammatical constructions in my fieldwork data raised many interesting questions. Why and what for this in-depth study of a specific non-standard phenomenon of one language variety? How representative and ‘generalisable’, if at all, can this be? Can the innovations be placed into a wider typological and diachronic picture and not only (mis)interpreted as non-perfect learning outcomes, reinforced by language contact? The solution consisted in turning to the historical development of clitics, which showed that diachronic knowledge is indispensable for a deeper understanding of synchronic variation. After all, individual variation reflects

dialectal variation, and both represent samples of possible grammars within the same typological space. Moreover, similar variation can also be found for example in Peninsular rural Spanish in contact with Basque (analyzed as mass neuter agreement in the *Corpus Oral y Sonoro del Español Rural* (www.uam.es/coser)) and it can also be placed into a broader typological context in comparing it with the Hindi/Urdu postposition *-ko*, for example.

The last two years have been very productive for me. In January 2010 I started my position as lecturer in the Spanish program at ANU, submitted my PhD thesis in June which was accepted in December of the same year. In July 2011 I presented my research at ICLAVE and became a research associate with *Español de los Andes* (www.espanoldelosandes.org), an international network hosted by the University of Freiburg. Research relating to changes and continuity in Spanish prepositional DOM has been presented by my colleague Manuel Delicado Cantero, with whom I co-authored the paper, at ICHL, and co-convened a workshop in the ALS conference. The year ended on a high note—with my graduation, finally!

Currently I am very busy preparing the first hispanic linguistic course to be taught at ANU in semester 1, and, in collaboration with Manuel Delicado Cantero, a special volume of AJL with the papers from our *Romance Linguistics in the Pacific* workshop. I am very much looking forward to my first OSP in the second half of this year where I will meet with colleagues from the Andian Spanish network for the Americanistas conference in Vienna in July. Later in October I meet other colleagues at the PUCP (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú) in Lima, Peru for an ongoing collaboration on *strange lo*, a particular aspect of non-standard object marking.

Editorial: 10 years of CRLC **by Harold Koch, Australian National University**

2011 marks the end of 10 years of ANU's Centre for Research on Language Change. The centre grew out of a desire to foster greater cooperation among the historical linguists (and scholars in other disciplines who were concerned with matters of language change), who were scattered across different sections of the university. The first initiative was "an occasional seminar series on historical linguistics, where people engaged in any kind of historical linguistic research (broadly understood) can present their work in progress, with a view to (a) familiarising ourselves with one another's work, (b) receiving feedback and methodological and bibliographical leads from one another, (c) heightening the profile of historical linguistics at the ANU, and (perhaps) (d) luring more students into this interesting field" (email to colleagues from Harold Koch 3.3.1999). After two years of discussion, the CRLC was established, within the university's Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies, as a virtual university centre (i.e. without its own staff, offices, and recurrent funding) "for the promotion, coordination and sponsorship of research on all aspects of language change and on the history of particular languages and language families". The centre was officially launched by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Chubb, on 20th August 2001, with a guest lecture by Professor Alice Harris, then of Vanderbilt University, who had just attended the 15th International Conference on Historical Linguistics in Melbourne.

Membership in the centre is offered to staff, visiting fellows, and students of the ANU with relevant research interests; other interested scholars from outside the ANU may be accepted as associate members. Activities have been overseen by a director and an Advisory and Management Committee. Directors have been: Malcolm Ross, Cynthia Allen, and Peter Hendriks. The centre maintains a website (<http://crlc.anu.edu.au/>) and produces an annual newsletter, *The Chameleon*. Local activities consist of a seminar series and an occasional reading group. Members are involved in the teaching curriculum, which regularly offers

courses on Language Change, Languages in Contact, Study of a Language Family, as well as the history of particular languages such as English, Japanese, and Chinese. A small but steady stream of research students have completed theses on topics involving language change; some of these have been profiled in the annual newsletters. Beyond the ANU, the CRLC has sponsored workshops on historical linguistics at Australian Linguistic Society conferences in Sydney 2004 and Brisbane 2006—the last one leading the volume *Grammatical change: theory and description*, edited by Rachel Hendery and Jennifer Hendriks (SLC 6). In general, our members have been active in conferences relating to language change.

The centre has provided a focus for research on historical topics at the ANU, and has attracted visitors to the campus. Some of the foundation members of the CRLC have retired in recent years, but remain active in research; three recently retired staff members have been honoured with *Festschriften*: Harold Koch in 2008, Malcolm Ross in 2009, and Andrew Pawley in 2010. In spite of retirements, the number of staff with research interests in language change has actually increased in recent years. By mid-2012 there will be four ANU staff holding Australian Research Council fellowships: Mark Donohue (Future Fellowship), Rachel Hendery (Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship), Patrick McConvell (DORA), and Simon Greenhill (DECRA). Over 20 ANU-based members are currently pursuing research involving the following languages: Australian, Papuan, Austronesian, Austroasiatic, Sinitic, Japonic, English, Dutch, Spanish, and Quechua. Topics involve issues of classification, reconstruction, change, contact, and prehistoric relations between language and culture. The last decade has seen increasing attention to contact-based studies, the use of computational techniques, and the employment of philological methods in the interpretation of early documentation of New World languages (alongside the results of field-based research). The CRLC's research strength has continued to grow as our numbers increase, and as our members and associate members have been successful in obtaining grants for research projects (as reported in the annual newsletters).

A major outreach activity of the centre has been publication series, *Studies in Language Change*, which is sponsored by the CRLC; the first nine volumes have been published by Pacific Linguistics, but future volumes will be published by de Gruyter Mouton (http://crlc.anu.edu.au/crlc.anu.edu.au-slc_series.html). We expect the pace of publications to be increased, and their topics will no longer be confined to the Pacific region (see the article in this newsletter on the [SLC](#) series).

As the disciplines concerned with language change continue to evolve, it is our hope that the CRLC will continue to play a strong role in fostering training, collaboration, and communication within this interesting area of research.

Events

The International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHLXX) took place on 25-30 July 2011 in Osaka, Japan. A feature of this conference was the workshop "Etymology and Reconstruction in the languages of Australia and the Pacific" organised by CRLC member [Harold Koch](#) and associate member [Robert Mailhammer](#). This workshop featured a structured presentation by various specialists on historical linguistics working on languages in Australia and the Pacific of priorities for further research in this area, which will be published in the near future. A number of CRLC members and associate members presented papers at this conference, as detailed in the list of [publications and conference presentations](#) above.

ANU was the venue for the 2011 meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society, which was part of Langfest 2011, a series of several language-related events (for details see <http://law.anu.edu.au/coast/events/langfest/conference.htm>). While there was no dedicated

historical workshop at this conference, a number of historical papers were presented, most notably in the Workshop on Romance Languages in the Pacific, convened by CRLC members [Elisabeth Mayer](#) and Manuel Delicado Cantero. The ALS conference was followed by two master classes at Koloa. Of the most obvious relevance to historical linguists was the class presented by Fiona Jordan on ‘Cultural Phylogenetics’. Joan Bresnan’s course ‘Probabilistic Syntax’ introduced participants to tools with which to study the variation that can lead to syntactic change.

CRLC Events

4 April 2011 saw the launch of Rachel Hendery and Jennifer Hendriks (eds), *Grammatical change: theory and description* (Studies in Language Change 6) Canberra: Pacific Linguistics. The book was launched by CRLC member Manuel Delicado Cantero.

24 August 2011. Post-ICHL show and tell.

Upcoming Conferences and Activities

So, what is it then, this Grammaticalization? – Approaches to Refining the Notion

Workshop at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, 24/25 February 2012

Organizers: Ferdinand von Mengden (FU Berlin) and Horst Simon (FU Berlin)

Invited speakers: Ulrich Detges (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich)

Brian D. Joseph (Ohio State University)

Conference website: http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/en/v/Refining_Grammaticalization/index.html

The Third International Seminar on Vedic Sanskrit will be held 26-30 March, 2012 at the University of Pavia. For further information email Prof. Silvia Luraghi, luraghi@unipv.it

The Ninth Creolistics Workshop will take place at Aarhus University (Aarhus, Denmark) April 11 - 13, 2012. This is an international conference on contact languages, including, but not limited to pidgins, creoles, mixed languages, converted languages, and multi-ethnolects.

The Second Aarhus University Symposium on Connections between Second Language Acquisition and Contact Language Development will be held in conjunction with CW9. The deadline for submitting abstracts is past, but persons interested in this conference can visit the website at <http://www.creolistics9.dk/> and can get further information by emailing creolistics9@gmail.com

The 19th International Congress of Linguists will be held in Geneva, Switzerland in July 2013. CRLC associate member Claire Bowern will be running the historical session. Please see the call for papers here: <http://www.cil19.org/en/calls-for-papers/> and further information about the historical session here: <http://www.cil19.org/en/sessions/session-3/>.

CRLC Seminar Series 2011

Seminar co-ordinator Harold Koch <harold.koch@anu.edu.au>. Send Harold an email if you would like to present a seminar!

29 June 2011

Edith Pineda-Bernuy: The development of embracing negation in Quechua

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to discuss the likely grammatical origin of embracing negation consisting of pre-posed *mana* and pos-posed suffix *-chu* in Quechua. This pattern is typical in most dialects of this Amerindian family, but not the only one. My hypothesis is that the suffix constitutes an addition to a previous basic negative pattern made with *mana*. I provide evidence in support of my proposal.

In the literature, Quechua is commonly treated as essentially being uniform in its method of embracing negation. This diverges with our data collected in fieldwork and in unsystematic records of the examined bibliography. Accordingly, the Quechua family exhibits three main negative patterns across its dialects: embracing negation, pre-posed negation and post-posed negation. Each of these patterns varies with the other types to different degrees. Besides this, the similarities in the negative-interrogative pattern found between Quechua and Aymara (another Amerindian family) require an explanation. This paper will provide the link of those parallels and integrate coherently disparate data related with Quechua negation. Based on Van Coetsem's framework (1995), my work will focus in the origin of the suffix *-chu* and its restructuring effects as a case of grammatical imposition of a negative pattern in contact. My proposal challenges the traditional view about negation in Quechua.

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Will Steed: Issues for Reconstructing Tone Sandhi Using Data from Lishui Wu Chinese

ABSTRACT

Reconstructing tone sandhi with the comparative method is not commonly attempted. I demonstrate why it is difficult to reconstruct tone sandhi information in Wu Chinese, based on data from Lishui Wu presented in my PhD thesis. I will show the differences in disyllabic tone sandhi data from three speakers from the same location, with no more than twenty years between the speakers.

The data shows that reconstructing only isolation tones will not provide enough information about previous states of the language. Furthermore, it shows that one cannot reconstruct only the sandhi tones and the isolation tones of the language, or even the realisation of tone in a particular category. Reconstructing only the (for example, eight) sandhi tones without the context of the word environment cannot describe the forms of words in the proto-language; instead, each of the 64 disyllabic combinations of tones should be reconstructed. The variation between the speakers questions whether reconstructing a single proto-language is appropriate.

6 July 2011

Paul Sidwell: Sub-Branching or Convergence? Monophyletic Versus Paraphyletic Groupings in Austroasiatic

ABSTRACT

Comparative Reconstruction is crucially dependent on the assumption that identified sub-groupings are monophyletic. Yet in the real world we run into serious difficulties when it comes to distinguishing shared innovations that would define a subgrouping versus innovations acquired by contact and borrowing. This has recently been highlighted in respect to Western Numic (Uto-Aztecan) languages by Babel *et al.* (in press), but examples also abound among the Austroasiatic languages, for example:

Cua and Katua (Central Vietnam) share a conditioned hardening of nasals, implying a sub-branch within Bahnaric, yet detailed phonological reconstruction demonstrates that this innovation must have been acquired by each language after a period of otherwise independent phonological development.

West Bahnaric (Southern Laos) relexified significantly with loans from neighboring Katuic languages, including words that are otherwise held to be diagnostic of the Katuic branch.

In principle the same problems apply at deeper levels of the Austroasiatic phylum, such that it is possible to mount serious challenges to otherwise well accepted large branch level groupings, such as Bahnaric or Aslian. Only a very few, somewhat questionable innovations can be shown to correlate with each of these branches, yet they are readily defined by geographical and typological considerations, and retained archaisms.

Are we being fooled, in Austroasiatic and elsewhere, by paraphyletic or even polyphyletic groups conveniently treated as monophyletic?

References

Babel, Molly, Andrew Garratt, Michael Houser and Maziar Toosarvandani. In press. Descent and diffusion in language diversification: A study of Western Numic dialectology. *International Journal of American Linguistics* (draft available online at <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~garrett/IJAL-Numic.pdf>)

13 July 2011

Patrick McConvell: Language spread by hunter-gathers in prehistory: Detecting language shift

ABSTRACT

Language spread by farmers and pastoralists has attracted most attention, especially as part of an effort to explain widespread language families as resulting from ‘demic diffusion’ generated by rapid population growth underpinned by agriculture. This paper focuses on the fact that hunter-gatherer languages have also spread widely, to form large language families. The list of such widespread hunter-gatherer language families still observable today is quite long (e.g Pama-Nyungan in Australia).

All language spread has a migration component, either migration pure and simple into empty or sparsely populated zones, or by language shifts to the language of migrants, known as language replacement. (‘upstream’ vs. ‘downstream spread’, respectively: McConvell 2001, 2010).

Language shift is more characteristic of downstream spread. The issue to be examined: is: how can language shift be detected in prehistory – what kind of evidence from linguistics in particular can establish that a shift has taken place? :

1. Some place names are adopted from the substrate when language shift takes place.

2. The hypothesis of Thomason and Kaufman (1988) that phonology and syntax are the prime areas which are subject to substratal interference.
3. According to Thomason and Kaufman there is no particular association between adoption of substratal vocabulary and language shift. However in some cases of language shift there is such lexical interference from the substrate. It is unclear whether particular kinds of vocabulary are involved. It might be expected for instance that environmental vocabulary is derived from substrate languages particularly where the new language is moving into a new environmental zone.

I examine a case of probable hunter-gatherer language shift in prehistory, the spread of the Eastern Ngumpin languages into the Victoria River District in the Northern Territory of Australia. This shift and expansion has been at the expense of Jarragan, a family of Non-Pama-Nyungan languages to the west of Eastern Ngumpin. Evidence of place names and phonological and grammatical interference from a Jarragan substratum is adduced to model this expansion of Eastern Ngumpin speaking territory.

Eastern Ngumpin languages have very high rates of lexical borrowing – close to 50% mainly from Non-Pama-Nyungna languages including Jarragan. Jarragn itself in contrast has low rates of borrowing, less than 10%, closer to the average in Australian languages generally.

I have claimed that one of the reasons why the lexical borrowing rate is so high in Eastern Ngumpin is that both substratal and adstratal borrowing has occurred. This claim is subjected to scrutiny.

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15 July 2001

Claire Bown, Yale University: Computational Phylogenetics and Australian Languages

ABSTRACT

I present the first detailed proposal for the internal subgrouping and higher order structure within the Pama-Nyungan family of Australian languages. Previous work has identified more than 25 primary subgroups in the family, with little indication of how these groups might fit together. Some work has assumed that reconstruction of higher nodes in the tree would be impossible, either because extensive internal borrowing has obscured more remote relations, or because relevant languages are not sufficiently well attested. Here I show that the Pama-Nyungan tree has considerable internal structure, and that language contact and missing data do not impede reconstruction unduly. This work shows the power of combining historical reconstruction with computational approaches to phylogenetic inference and provides an illustration of the way in which language can give us new insights into unsolved problems in prehistory.

20 July 2011

Rachel Hendery: The construction of a new dialect: a case study in usage-based language change

ABSTRACT

Palmerston Island is an isolated 54-person community in the Pacific, about the size of five football fields. It was settled in the mid 19th century by an English sailor, William Marsters, and his Polynesian wives, from whom the current residents are descended. The islanders are monolingual in a unique dialect of English, and have been so for over 100 years.

The original settlers were faced with the task of constructing a new society from scratch, based on only their various cultural expectations, and the few resources they brought with them. In the same way, they jointly constructed their new dialect, using the resources available to them from Marsters' dialect of English and his wives' Penrhynese.

In this paper I will show how a usage-based approach to language change can be fruitfully applied in cases such as Palmerston Island English where more traditional approaches would focus on the influence of substrate, the process of L2 learning, or even creolization. In particular, a usage-based approach can account for the large degree of linguistic variation found on the island, both between speakers and within the speech patterns of a single speaker. For example, I will discuss the pronominal system, which has been expanded to include duals (*yami*, *himshe*, *themtwo*) and an inclusive-exclusive distinction. A usage-based account, unlike a simpler explanation in terms of category transfer from L1 of the original female settlers, can encompass the ongoing change, variation and reorganisation of this system.

Elisabeth Mayer & Manuel Delicado Cantero: Changes and continuity in Spanish prepositional differential object marking

ABSTRACT

Differential object marking (DOM) is used in many languages to code object relations via morphological marking. Cross-linguistically, such differentiation is commonly expressed with a functional preposition (p) also used to mark dative, as in Spanish, Hindi, Guaraní and Aymara (Bossong 1991, Aissen 2003).

In this paper we analyse the evolution of the inherent locative meaning of the syncretic case/DOM marker *a* on primary object marking in Spanish in particular the cases of extended DOM, that is, the extension of the prepositional accusative to topical inanimate objects.

We argue that this change is regulated by pragmatic rather than semantic strategies and has led to a diachronically attested struggle between the dative and accusative for primary object status in monotransitive clauses (Company 2003). This constitutes continuity as well as innovation of DOM marking topical, individuated objects according to semantic roles and information structure role. It may give rise to a new accusative case marker as argued by Givón (1997), or lead to a monocasual [DATIVE ±] case system (Alsina 1996). An example for the evolution into a monocasual system is *extensive leísmo* in Ecuador.

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Harold Koch: Kinterms and the classification of Pama-Nyungan languages

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the evidence that kinterm etymologies contribute to issues in the classification of the Pama-Nyungan (PN) language family. The evidence will be taken from the Austkin database (<http://austkin.pacific-credo.fr/>). Are there terms whose geographical distribution justifies reconstruction to Proto-Pama-Nyungan? What kinterms are diagnostic of (low-level) subgroups that are widely accepted? Do any reconstructible kinterms lend support to higher-level subgroups proposed in the earlier literature (e.g. Nyungic, Pama-Maric) or those suggested recently on the basis of computational phylogenetics by Bowern 2011 (e.g. Western PN, Eastern PN with Northern, New South Wales, and Victoria branches)? Can any areal patterns be discerned, in which kin terminology have been diffused through language contact? If so, are certain kin meanings (e.g. affinal terms) more likely to be involved in borrowing?

Where widespread kinterm etymologies are discussed, attention will be paid to the principal patterns of phonological, morphological, and semantic change that they manifest. The recurrent nature of these changes is part of the evidence that the particular reflexes of the proposed etyma are indeed cognate. While the phonological changes are common to all kinds of vocabulary, certain kinds of morphological change—reduplication, absorption of person-markers, addition of increments (McConvell 2008)—and semantic change (extensions of the kind described by Scheffler 1978)—are restricted to or especially characteristic of kinship vocabulary.

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12 September 2011

Tony Jefferies, University of Queensland: Guwar the language of Moreton Island and its relationship to the Bandjalang and Yagara subgroups: a case for phylogenetic migratory expansion?

ABSTRACT

Guwar, the language spoken by the Ngugi people of Moreton Island, has always represented an anomaly among the languages that surround it. The first Europeans to take note of the language of the Ngugi expressed amazement at its seeming lack of congruence with the languages on both the mainland opposite and adjacent islands, a feeling exacerbated by the very isolation of the place itself.

Evidence to be adduced in the thesis will show that Guwar is in fact a detached or non-contiguous member of the Bandjalang sub-group, whose nearest other members were located

some sixty kilometres south, on the other side of the Logan River (Crowley 1976, Sharpe 1997). Separating Guwar from its Bandjatang relatives is another, completely unrelated language sub-group, Yagara, which occupied the intervening North Stradbroke Island and the adjacent coastal reaches of Moreton Bay.

The thesis will offer an historical explanation for Guwar's isolation based on the application of a theoretical premise incorporating three essential conditions: that language distribution in Australia is pre-eminently a phylogenetic evolution; that language spread accounts for language distribution (Nichols 1992, 1997); and that language spread accompanied, and was driven, by the migration of discrete ethno-linguistic societies. This theoretical basis, it is claimed, pertains to the languages of this region generally, and possibly to Australian languages as a whole.

The aim of the thesis is anthropological, not linguistic. It seeks to establish through this case study a generality of classical Australian Aboriginal societies: that the migratory expansion of ethnicities, typified by common language, and a corresponding defensive response by extra-linguistic communities identified by Sutton (1992), following early writers such as Roth, Mathew and Howitt, as 'messmates' or 'confederacies', constitutes the primary dynamic of these societies.

16 November 2011

Malcolm Ross: Diagnosing contact processes from their outcomes: How far can we go?

ABSTRACT

This talk addresses one of the questions in the call for papers, namely 'Is there a difference in the output of contact-induced change in language maintenance situations and in language shift situations?' If there are differences, these will assist us in reconstructing the prehistoric past. My interest is in reconstructing the linguistic prehistory of the (smallscale neolithic) societies of Melanesia.

A key to better interpreting differences in output is to understand how contact-induced change in smallscale societies actually occurs. I argue that it is important to know the generational loci of change. I suggest that language shift has two generational loci, one in early childhood, where it may leave no detectable evidence of shift, and one in adulthood. Adult language shift appears to have been rare in Melanesia. I also suggest that bilingually induced change, which entails the grammatical restructuring of one's heritage language on the model of a second language, takes place among preadolescent children--a claim which is supported by various kinds of evidence.

This understanding helps us in turn to interpret the outcomes of contact-induced change, since adult second-language learning typically leads to simplification, whilst childhood language learning may lead to an increase in complexity.

23 November 2011

Andrew Pawley: How reconstructable is Proto Trans New Guinea? Problems, progress, prospects

ABSTRACT

This paper asks how far it is possible to make reliable reconstructions of Proto Trans New Guinea (pTNG), the putative ancestor of more than 400 Papuan languages of New Guinea. In order to make such an assessment we need to answer a number of more specific questions, including the following:

- (1) Is TNG a valid family? Are there trustworthy criteria for determining whether or not a particular language belongs to the family?
- (2) Are the available cognate sets sufficient in number and quality to arrive at reliable reconstructions of pTNG phonology, lexicon and morphology? Or have the lexical and

morphological resemblances shared by distantly related TNG languages been so greatly reduced by the passage of time, and so pervaded by undetectable borrowing, as to render reliable reconstruction impossible?

(3) Is the high order subgrouping of TNG well established, i.e. can we determine whether a feature reflected in a subset of TNG languages should be attributed to pTNG or to a later stage?

I will argue that TNG is a valid family because there is a set of languages, call them ‘Core TNG’, that share features clearly diagnostic of common origin. However, the most distantly related subgroups of Core TNG probably diverged between 7,000 and 10,000 years ago, and the residues of common origin to which the comparative method can be applied are sparse. The highest-order branchings within TNG have not been established and quite likely will never be. This means that any cognate set with a limited distribution across the 50 or so established low-order subgroups cannot safely be attributed to pTNG but only to an early stage of TNG (eTNG). Furthermore, New Guinea is an area where there has been a great deal of linguistic diffusion.

Consideration of such factors led several commentators in the 1970s and 80s to conclude that trustworthy reconstructions of pTNG are unattainable using top-down methods, i.e. by searching for systematic agreements between languages belonging to distantly related subgroups. The only hope is to first aim for detailed reconstructions of lower-order proto-languages, far removed from pTNG, then compare these in order to reconstruct one step higher, and so on.

Contrary to this view, I believe that using a top-down strategy has been essential to achieving initial breakthroughs in reconstructing pTNG. I will show that such an approach has enabled modest but significant progress to be made in the reconstruction of elements of phonology, lexicon and morphology and in understanding the family tree structure of TNG. However, gaining a more complete and finer-grained understanding of the history of the family will require the integration of top-down with bottom-up reconstructive work.

30 November 2011

Marie Elaine Van Egmond, PhD candidate, University of Sydney: The genetic status of Enindhilyakwa

ABSTRACT

Enindhilyakwa is classified as family-level language isolate in the O’Grady et al. (1966) classification, based primarily on lexico-statistics. However, other researchers have observed that Enindhilyakwa “forms a unit structurally” with Wubuy (Capell 1942: 376), and that the two languages are “similar in grammar” (Yallop 1982: 40). Based on these structural similarities, Heath has claimed for decades that Enindhilyakwa constitutes a subgroup with Wubuy and Ngandi (1978b, 1984: 638, 1990, 1997, n.d.), though without providing much formal evidence to support this claim. Hence the currently accepted view is that the relationship of Enindhilyakwa to any other language has not “been demonstrated conclusively at this point with any significant body of cognate lexical items or grammatical morphology” (Alpher, Evans & Harvey 2003: 308; Evans 2003b; Baker 2004; Evans 2005; but see Dixon 2002).

In this paper I will argue that Heath was right: Enindhilyakwa is not a language isolate, but is related to Wubuy and Ngandi, and consequently other Gunwinyguan languages. Focussing on Wubuy, I will demonstrate their genetic relatedness by examining: 1) shared vocabulary (an inspection of a list of core vocabulary yields at least 32% lexical cognacy); 2) systematic sound correspondences between the shared forms; 3) shared verbal suffixal paradigms. Ngandi will be brought into the discussion of the latter only, and the paradigms of an immediate ancestor can be reconstructed.

There are several reasons for why the significant amount of vocabulary shared between Enindhilyakwa and Wubuy has not been recognised before: 1) Enindhilyakwa has undergone dramatic phonological and phonotactic changes, which may obscure corresponding forms; 2) the two different orthographies developed in the previous work are conflicting and non-phonemic, which can also obscure cognates; 3) in some instances only Enindhilyakwa *incorporated* forms correspond to Wubuy (and Ngandi, and proto-Gunwinyguan) free forms. The reason why the similar grammatical paradigms had not been noted before may simply be that no-one had so far taken on the task of systematically comparing Enindhilyakwa with Wubuy.

12 December 2011

Professor Fred Weerman, University of Amsterdam: Early versus late acquisition as a motor of language change

ABSTRACT

There is a long linguistic tradition in which language change is explained by first language acquisition. In this tradition children are considered to be the agents of language change, or at least the agents of changes in the underlying grammar. Other linguists suggest that contact and L2 acquisition are crucial to understand change. Still others argue that change, and in particular grammaticalization, results from language use rather than from acquisition. For obvious reasons the argumentation is usually based on theoretical rather than empirical work on language acquisition. There are no children acquiring Old English, Middle Dutch et cetera, and, in fact, the field of acquisition research was until recently much less developed and very often not directed to the type of facts that happened to play a role in discussions on language change.

Perhaps the most remarkable development in linguistics since the eighties is the growth of the field of acquisition research. So, what was not possible then, makes much more sense now, namely, to confront ideas on change with ‘real’ evidence from acquisition. In this talk I will try to do this, focusing on acquisition (and change) of functional elements. I will argue that the different views mentioned above can be united, and that the motor of change is to be found in the opposition between early and late acquisition (cf. Weerman 2011).

Reference

Weerman, Fred (2011), 'Diachronic change: Early versus late acquisition', *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 14(2), 149-151.

14 December 2011

Alex François & Siva Kalyan: Language history in Vanuatu: The epic failure of the tree model

ABSTRACT

Ever since the development of the Comparative Method by the Neo-grammarians, the family tree has been the most widely accepted model for representing historical relations between languages. It is even being reinvigorated by the current development of computer approaches to phylogenetic studies (e.g. Gray *et al.* 2009). Admittedly, its application provides an easily interpretable storyline involving subgroups, protolanguages and population splits, and is amenable to an appealingly simple visual representation. This phylogenetic model, however, rests on a number of problematic assumptions (Bossong 2009): (1) that languages essentially evolve in isolation from their neighbours; (2) that the history of languages can be traced back by looking exclusively at divergence, to the exclusion of convergence and diffusion; (3) that each modern language belongs to a single subgroup, which is itself nested in another discrete subgroup, and so on and so forth.

The tree model suits just one ideal case: when a population went through successive migration pulses with systematic loss of contact. For all other scenarios, it fails to provide any accurate representation of language history, as has been widely observed already (cf. Durie & Ross 1996; Pawley 1999; Heggarty *et al.* 2010). In particular, it is unable to deal with cases of diffusion across dialect continuums. Ross (1988) has proposed the term *linkage* to refer to “a group of communalects which have arisen by dialect differentiation”, i.e. the modern descendants of an earlier dialect continuum. Just like dialect chains, linkages are not compatible with family trees, because they do not involve discrete subgroups, but constantly intersecting isoglosses. Ross’ important observations, initially made about languages of Western Melanesia, deserve to be extrapolated to other parts of the world. We need to develop an accurate representation of language history in dialect continuums and linkages, that would combine the scientific power of the comparative method with a diffusionist, non-cladistic approach.

Our talk will present a method for unravelling and representing the linguistic history of a specific linkage: Vanuatu. Even though modern Vanuatu languages have long lost any mutual intelligibility, their history is best represented using a wave-model approach (Tryon 1996, François 2011a): each post-dispersal innovation diffused across a social network of small communities in constant interaction speaking mutually intelligible dialects, *à la* Fiji (Gergahy 1983). Focusing on the 17 languages of the Banks & Torres Islands (François 2011b), we identify 441 linguistic innovations reflected in the area – whether phonological, morphological, lexical or otherwise. Using the tools of dialectometry developed by European dialectologists (Goebel 2006, Nerbonne 2010, Szmrecsanyi 2011), notably *Multi Dimensional Scaling*, we track the geographic patterns of linguistic diffusion. We identify historically significant clusters of languages, albeit intersecting ones, and show what they tell us about the social history of the area. Our purpose is to show it is possible to achieve an accurate and elegant representation of linkages, by taking advantage of the strengths of the Comparative Method, yet steering clear of the phylogenetic model and its unfortunate delusions.

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Education: Historical Linguistics Courses taught in 2011 at ANU

2011 1st semester

- History of the English Language. Taught by Cynthia Allen
- Language in Asia. Taught by Peter Hendriks

2011 2nd semester

- Study of a Language Family (Oceanic). Taught by Alexandre François

Recently completed theses

PhDs awarded

Mayer, Elisabeth

Syntactic variation of object arguments in Limeño Spanish contact varieties (Supervisor Avery Andrews)

This thesis is about syntactic variation of object arguments in Limeño Spanish contact varieties. Taking the evolution of DOM (Differential Object Marking) into account, the thesis explored the complex relationship between primary agreement through object marking or differential object marking, and secondary agreement through clitics in non-standardized variation data from Limeño Spanish contact varieties.

Steed, William

Lishui Tone and Tone Sandhi – An Acoustically-Based Analysis (Supervisor Phil Rose)

This thesis describes tone and tone sandhi in the 丽水 Lishui variety of 吴 Wu Chinese from the Chuqu subgroup in southern Zhejiang, using data from three speakers. The description is both auditory and (normalised-) acoustic, and includes also a derivational account of the tonology, and a description of Lishui segmental phonology and common lexicon. Descriptions are given for citation tones and disyllabic lexical tone sandhi.

The results show that, according to Chao's (1928) synchronic typology of Wu, Lishui does not have a typically Wu phonology. Segmentally, Lishui lacks the diagnostic three-way distinction between syllable-initial stops and affricates, distinguishing only +/- aspirated ob-

struents (with the –aspirated obstruents showing free variation in voicing). Like the Northern Min dialects to its south, its tone sandhi is right-focussed: word-final tones are realised mostly the same as in isolation (although there are some changes), but non-word-final tones have different realisations determined by their input tone and the following tone.

Lishui has seven citation tones: mid dipping [33], high and low falling-level [433], [211], high falling [52], low convex [342], and high [5] and low [23] stopped tones. The normalised tonal acoustics show that citation realisations are consistent between speakers. Although the realisation of tones on non-word-final syllables is also shown by normalisation to be mostly consistent between speakers, considerable between-speaker variation is demonstrated in the incidence of these realisations. One of the interesting findings is that the number of realisations on non-word-final syllables, although representing neutralisation of citation contrasts, is often greater than found in citation tones. Moreover, there are very few instances of phonetically motivated sandhi changes, and the changes are usually better expressed in terms of abstract categories which relate to Middle Chinese tonal categories. It is shown that, as a result, a derivational account of the non-word-final tonal realisations is messy. The between-speaker variation in tone sandhi suggests that Lishui tone sandhi is changing quickly.

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