Intensive Tolaki course at Kioloa

The Linguistic Field Methods course (LING2009) moved into intensive mode, spending a weekend at the Kioloa campus from April 9-12. The course is studying the Tolaki language spoken in south-east Sulawesi and is led by lecturer Mark Donohue and Tolaki speaker Omar Pidani. Many of the participants came from our new PhD cohort including Niko Kobepa, Christian Döhler and Siva Kalyan.

While at the coast we continued to investigate the grammar of Tolaki as well as decide on an orthography for the group to use. We also applied ourselves to learning some practical spoken Tolaki, culminating in students having use their best Tolaki to buy the leftover food supplies from Omar who played the role of Tolaki shopkeeper very convincingly. A good time, warm weather and kimangi'a momina was had by all.

1st edition of CAP Linguistics newsletter

From Nick Evans:

Fellow linguists, it is a pleasure to introduce this inaugural issue of the new SCHL Linguistics newsletter.

As most of you will know, the last few months have seen far-reaching changes in how academic units are organised within CAP. For the erstwhile Linguistics department in CAP (or in RSPAS if you go back further) this means that we now count among our colleagues people from Japanese and Indonesian, in addition to the traditional concentration of scholars working on languages of Melanesia and the Pacific.

To help us all stay in touch, and let others know what we are up to – particularly since many people within our grouping work in different buildings and do not necessarily know each other – we have launched this monthly newsletter.

I encourage you all to log any relevant information on the newly-created Alliance site, including planned conferences or fieldwork absences. Once a month, this information is converted into the newsletter you now hold in your hands. I would like to thank Greg Dickson for a great job getting this going and remind you that this is a newsletter for and by all of us, so please don't feel shy about putting in information each month.
ELDP Grant applications

April 1st was deadline day for funding applications to the Hans Rausing Fund’s ELDP program (Endangered Languages Documentation Program). Linguistics hosted five applications this year: applications for PhD fieldwork support by Greg Dickson (Marra, N.T., Australia), Maia Ponsonnet (Dalan, N.T., Australia), and Aung Si (Sholaga, Southern India), for PhD stipend extension and fieldwork by Tom Honeyman (Momu/Fas, PNG), and for a post-doctoral research by Sheena van Mark (PNG). Fingers crossed all round.

Visiting Fellows

March 30 - April 10. Professor Angelika Lutz (University of Erlangen) was a Visiting Fellow in Linguistics and gave a talk in the Centre for Research on Language Change Seminar Series on 7th April on “Types of language contact with Old Norse”.

March 30 - May 3. Professor Theo Vennemann (University of Munich) is a Visiting Fellow in Linguistics to work on a book project with Rob Mailhammer.

He gave a talk in the Centre for Research on Language Change Seminar Series on 14th April with the title “Vasconic features in West Indo-European: Structure and lexicicon”. He also participated in the 1st Etymological Symposium at Kieloa (17th-18th April) with a paper on “Lexical and structural etymology of Proto-Germanic: The Semitic component”.

Anneliese Kuhle is a visiting PhD student from the Freie Universität Berlin (from May 2009 until July 2010). Through the month of April she continued working on her research topic ‘reciprocity from a cross-linguistic perspective’, looking for interesting data in some Papuan languages (e.g. Yimas, Skou, Yagaria and Ku Waru). New discoveries were kept to a minimum, but at least Anneliese felt like she was trying hard - although there were rumours that she had gone off bushwalking through Australia.

In the field

Linguists currently in the field include PhD scholar Piers Kelly (Philippines). He is making recordings of the Eskayan language of Bohol in song, prayer and speechmaking but is spending most time on rough linearisations of early twentieth-century Eskayan texts. He is relieved to note that his Eskayan consultants also find these texts puzzling.

Also in April, Nick Evans worked with Japanese colleagues at Chikyukken (Research Institute for Humanity and Nature) in Kyoto to assist with a Japanese translation of his recent book Dying Words: Endangered languages and what they have to tell us

On May 5, Rob Mailhammer will at last travel to Darwin and Croker Island. He will work with Bruce Birch on Iwaidja and Amurdak. Thanks to Nick, Bruce and Sabine for making it happen! Rob returns on May 19.
1st Etymological Symposium held at Kioloa Campus

The 1st Etymological Symposium was held at ANU Coastal Campus, Kioloa on April 17 and 18. The symposium (apparently the first of its kind in Australia) featured eight talks on a range of issues connected to a broad view of etymology as investigations into the origin of linguistic items, regardless of whether they are words (lexical etymology) or structures (structural etymology).

Participants were local as well as international (U.S., Germany). A selection of papers will be published in a special issue of the new Journal of Historical Linguistics (John Benjamins).

For more information (e.g. handouts) email Robert.Mailhammer@web.de.

The group at Kioloa with etymology on their minds.

“Linguistic analysis reveals this ancient drug trade in the modern languages.”

International conference presentations

April 23-May 6. Mark Donohue travelled to a conference at the University of California, Santa Barbara, to deliver a paper on typological variation in language families and linguistic areas, and to co-present a paper discussing the linguistic evidence for intense contact between the Tiwanaku polity (around lake Titicaca) and the Gran Chaco region of northern Argentina. Archaeologists had previously posited trade, with hallucinogenic snuff travelling into the highlands and salt moving into the lowlands. Linguistic analysis reveals this ancient drug trade in the modern languages. The linguistic work, conducted in collaboration with Lev Michael (University of California) and Pattie Epps (University of Texas), demonstrates that the level of contact must have been more intense than simple trade.

Mark also visited colleagues at the University of California, Santa Cruz and University of California, Berkeley. At Berkeley he delivered a talk entitled “Interpreting the results of typological analysis: geography and phylogeny”.

Meanwhile, Stef Spronck participated in a workshop organised by the Dutch and Belgian organisations for applied linguistics, held in Utrecht, The Netherlands on April 12. He presented a paper on multilingualism and social groups in Aboriginal Australia and its implications for dictionary writing and language standardisation.

New Japanese textbook launched

April 23: Nihongo ga ippai, a new Japanese textbook, written by Duck Young Lee, Naomi Ogi, Masahiro Toma and Yoko Yonezawa, was launched at the McDonald Seminar Room in the Menzies Library. Congratulations to the authors on this major new book, the fruit of many years of teaching Japanese at ANU by Duck and his team.


The launch was followed by a seminar by Anthony Liddicoat (University of South Australia), “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose...Language policy and language education in Australian schooling” as part of the Linguistics, Languages & Cultures Seminar Series.

The cover of Nihongo ga ippai and Naomi Ogi, Tony Liddicoat, Duck Lee at the launch
Linguistics
School of Culture, History & Language
College of Asia & the Pacific
ANU

HC Coombs building #9
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Australia
Website: http://chl.anu.edu.au/linguistics/

To be added to the CAP Linguistics newsletter mailing list or for newsletter inquiries and contributions, email:
greg.dickson@anu.edu.au

The Asia-Pacific is the most complex and varied linguistic landscape in the world, with three thousand of the world's 7,000 languages. Many are endangered and in coming decades the region is confronting an epochal narrowing of the human knowledge base through language loss. Linguistics in the College of Asia and the Pacific promotes the study of this linguistic diversity in its fullest sense, including documentation and description – producing grammars, dictionaries and collections of textual materials, usually from on-site fieldwork – work that is equally important for small speech communities themselves. Minority languages researched in the department cover sites ranging from Vanuatu, New Caledonia, PNG, Australia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, the Philippines, Taiwan, India and Japan. Other research focuses on national languages of the region, such as Japanese and Indonesian. Our postgraduate training aims to produce descriptive linguists of the highest quality. We teach into all levels, including undergraduate courses in Japanese, Indonesian, Linguistics and Pacific Studies, Master's Courses in Linguistics and Applied Japanese Linguistics, and advanced doctoral training. We co-host Paradisec, a digital archive dedicated to recordings of languages and cultures of the Pacific. We also publish the monograph series Pacific Linguistics, which has produced over 600 publications.

Coming up...

The series of seminars from CAP Linguistics continues throughout May and beyond. All held in Seminar Room C, Coombs building, ANU, they include:

May 7 (3:15-5:15pm): "Indexing vs marking – extending Johanna Nichols' head-marking vs dependent-marking typology" – Nick Evans and Eva Fenwick

May 14 (11:00am-1:00pm): “The belly and the brain in the conceptions of feelings: questioning variations in a multilingual context” – Maïa Ponsonnet

May 14 (3:15-5:15pm): “Describing Oceanic languages” – Frank Lichtenberg

May 21 (3:15-5:15pm): "Other people's minds and the clause hierarchy: Deixis shared references and clause back-grounding strategies in northern Vanuatu languages" – Alex François

June 4 (11:00am-1:00pm): "Portmanteau morphemes in the Iwaidjan languages: a destabilising factor?" – Rob Mailhammer

June 18 (3:15-5:15pm): “Agreement in lha: alignment and composition” – Mark Donohue

July 23 (11:00am-1:00pm): "Object verbs in Huon Peninsula languages" – Edgar Sutter

For more details on our seminars visit: http://chl.anu.edu.au/events/

Upcoming conferences and workshops include:
The 2010 Social Cognition Workshop which will be held at the Kioloa Campus from May 28-30. The workshop is organised by Nick Evans and Alan Rumsey as part of their ARC-funded ‘Language and Social Cognition’ project.

And add this date to your diaries:
On July 23rd, (12:30-2:00pm) there will be a CAP Linguistics lunch (venue tba). This is a chance for our new group to join in a meal together. More details later but please note the date and time.