A warm welcome to new PhD students

The new year has brought a bumper crop of new PhD students, our largest intake ever. For those who were here last year, you must already know Charlotte van Tongeren (left) who visited our Department for a month before heading to the Western Province of Papua New Guinea where she worked on Suki. Owen Edwards will commence his PhD, investigating phonological implications of discourse configurations in Amarasi, a language of West Timor. Katharine Gosling also starts her PhD, also working in west Timor. Katharine is planning to unravel the social and linguistic history of Rote, examining various lines of linguistic evidence and checking their correspondence to geography, historical districts, trade and marriage patterns. Chris Weedall (right) is currently working with Gwen Hyslop on two languages of Bhutan, Khengkha and Brokpa. For his thesis, he plans on working on a language in Arunachal Pradesh (India).

Yishan Huang (below) will look at the phonetics of Southern Min. Kwang-ju Cho will work on Bantawa dialects (Nepal) and Amos Teo plans to write a grammar of Sumi (NE India).

Aung Si, who became our first ‘Dr Dr’ when his thesis on Solgaa ethnobiology was passed late last year, has taken up a postdoc in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Melbourne, bringing together his linguistic and biological interests in a project that will investigate traditional knowledge of native bee species in northern Australia.

Piers Kelly submitted his ground-breaking multi-award-winning and paradigm-shifting thesis in December, with the grandiose title of The word made flesh: an ethnographic history of Eskayan, a utopian language and script in the southern Philippines.

It is with regret that we say goodbye to Yoko Otaki. In 2012 Yoko completed an MPhil thesis Sex Differences Manifested in Japanese Vowel Formants: A Likelihood Ratio Based Analysis. The thesis passed with an excellent grade and Yoko had applied for PhD for a project to look at where the individuating information in the acoustic signal is at its greatest for particular languages. This was an outstanding project and one that had great potential for commercial applications. Unfortunately Yoko was not able to find financial support and sadly decided to return home. She will be greatly missed.

We will for the first time be holding a special Postgraduate Induction Retreat at Kioloa on the weekend of March 22-24th. All new PhD students should come, and all current PhD students and staff are welcome. The idea - borrowed from our anthropology colleagues - is to provide a relaxed venue in which we can discuss a range of issues relating to the whole PhD experience, plus generally getting to know each other in a relaxed environment with time for some swimming and walking. If you’re coming please register as soon as possible on the Linguistics Hot alliance site.

And all the best to recent graduates
Meanwhile in colder climes...

Nick Evans has just returned after two and a half months in Leipzig and Cologne in Germany as the first instalment of his Anneliese Maier Research prize. While in Leipzig a subset of the Southern New Guinea project Nick Evans, Christian Döhler and Volker Gast presented papers at a half-day workshop in the Department of Linguistics there. While there Nick gave a number of talks, including one on Australian historical linguistics: An enigma under an enigma: tracing diversification and dispersal in a continent of hunter-gatherers at a conference organised by Peter Muysken at the KNAW in Amsterdam on Patterns of Dispersal and Diversification. Nick also presented a talk on Coordinating Minds: Engagement in Grammar in the Department of Cognitive Science, Central European University in Budapest. Returning via Seoul, Nick also gave a talk at Seoul National University on Reciprocals, Typology and Co-evolutionary Linguistics.

Maïa Ponsonnet came back to Canberra in early February after a 5-month Parisian retreat. While taking advantage of the peacefulness of the French capital to write her dissertation, she also gave a few talks in Musée du Quai Branly, and in the linguistics lab of Villejuif (LACITO/LLACAN) and...
Gwendolyn Hyslop and Karma Tshering returned to Bhutan for an action-packed research trip. They first traveled to a remote region in SW Bhutan to do preliminary work on the Lhop language, an unusual Tibeto-Burman language spoken by the only group of Bhutanese to have not been converted to Buddhism. They inter their dead in stone cairns above the ground. On preliminary inspection the language appeared to be more like Kuki-Chin languages further east, than anything in the “Bodic” zone. In addition to Lhop, Gwen and Karma met up with Bhutan Naturalist to continue the collection of scientific names for the ‘Olekha ethnobotany project. When they weren’t engaged in research on those languages, they were busy with their work in the Bhutan Oral Literature and Language Documentation Project, training several new teams to collect data in new regions.

Documenting Bhutanese Languages

Grants, prizes and job announcements

In December 2012 Tim Hassall was awarded a $5000 research development grant by the Research School of Asia and the Pacific. His new project, titled “Sequential Organisation of L2 requests: an Indonesian case study”, is in the field of second language pragmatics.

Late last year, Simon Greenhill was awarded the Royal Society of New Zealand Hamilton Memorial Prize.

Piers Kelly is no longer at CAP following a solemn decision to ‘spend more time in paid employment’. He is now in the Baldessin building working for Patrick McConvell et al on the AustKin II project.

Kalam Dictionary launched in PNG

Andy Pawley recently launched the Kalam Dictionary at Divine Word University in Madang, PNG, together with the Majnep & Bulmer book Animals the Ancestors Hunted (2007).

About 200 people turned up including several truck and mini-bus loads of Kalam who live in and around Madang township, all painted and dressed in singing regalia, singing and dancing. The actual launches took nearly two hours. The President of the university began with a long and lively welcome in Pidgin. After talks from representatives of the family of each of the principal assistants who had worked with the linguistic team, Governor Kas closed proceedings with a long speech in which he declared that 1000 copies of this important work should be ordered for use in the schools of Madang, if he gets money and authorisations to process. The event went off with a bang.

You can find more details and pictures here.
Publications news

The proceedings of the 2010 Manokwari conference on Papuan languages have now appeared online under the title Melanesian Languages on the Edge of Asia: Challenges for the 21st Century. Language Documentation and Conservation Special Publication No. 5.

The volume includes three articles by ANU linguists: I Wayan Arka: Projecting morphology and agreement in Marori, an isolate of southern New Guinea; Nick Evans: Even more diverse than we thought: the multiplicity of Trans-Fly languages and Darja Hoenigman: From mountain talk to hidden talk: Continuity and change in Awiakay registers.

Nick Evans’ 2001 article The last speaker is dead - long live the last speaker! has recently appeared in Russian translation in a collection of articles bringing together classics in sociolinguistics and the sociology of language.


On the Asian scene

Shunichi Ishihara has just come back from his OSP leave which was undertaken at the National Research Institute of Police Science, Japan. During his stay in Japan, he gave a few talks on likelihood ratio-based forensic voice/text comparison. He was invited to write a paper on the current trend of forensic speaker recognition for a special volume of the journal of the Acoustical Society of Japan, which is due for publication in July, 2013. He was also invited to attend a panel discussion entitled “Current situations and issues of speaker recognition technologies” at the Speech Committee Conference of the Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers in February of 2013. His OSP was financially supported by the Australian Government Endeavour Research Fellowship.

Unable to keep away from linguistics even when on holidays, Paul Sidwell took part of his annual leave to deliver a short course (27 hours!) “A Panorama of Minority Languages of Mainland Southeast Asia” to second year students and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Hanoi. Not only did the course go well, but the Linguistics Faculty expressed a strong desire to welcome HDR students wishing to do field work or other data collection in Northern Vietnam, and extend them every professional courtesy. So if there are any students considering working on a language of northern Vietnam (there are plenty of interesting ones!) please see Paul about a referral or recommendation.

Siva Kalyan gave a presentation co-authored with Alexandre François, titled Limitations of the Tree Model: A case study from north Vanuatu, at the symposium Let’s Talk about Trees held at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan on February 9 and 10.

A moving meeting

During his trip to Europe, Nick Evans started to write his new book The Grammar of Others: Person, Society and Linguistic Diversity. While in Vienna over Christmas he also had the chance to meet up with Katharina Hobiger who introduced him to Anna Appel (see photo, right), 92 year old big sister of Stephen Wurm, ancestral founding figure of our Department, and hear many fascinating stories of their life as stateless children in 1920s and 1930s Vienna.
Fieldwork reports

Mark Donohue returned to Canberra from Nepal. In Kulmore (south-west Nepal), he was working with Bhojraj Gautam (who spent four months in Kulmore at the beginning of the year) and Prof. Madhav Pokharel (of Tribhuvan University, in Kathmandu) on Kusunda which is one of few inflecting languages to not mark tense, aspect, mood or negation on verbs, despite having eight inflectional categories possible for a verb. Read more at the Kusunda website. Mark has also been working with speakers of Kuki (aka Kuka, or Kutang Ghale). This language is spoken a couple of kilometres from the Tibetan border, and shows a (for its area) very odd lexical, phonological and morphosyntactic profile. Guess where Mark’s heading next (northern) summer.

Bethwyn Evans and Katie Jepson (BA Honours student in the School of Language Studies) were in Bougainville (PNG) for a month in December. They spent most of their time in Rovovana working with speakers of Torau, the Oceanic language on which Katie is writing her thesis, but also recorded some of the first data on Eivo, a neighbouring Papuan language. In the coming months, Chris Weedall will travel to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh for a one-month scoping trip to network with researchers in the area and determine an appropriate research base.

Ginny Dawson went off to the Berkeley Linguistic Society meeting, talking about the complexities of differential object marking and noun incorporation in Tiwa (India).

Supawan Pingjai’s paper Likelihood ratio-based forensic voice comparison using formant trajectories of Thai diphthongs was accepted at the 21st International Congress on Acoustics which will be held on June 2-7 2013 in Montreal, Canada. Congratulations, Supawan!

In January, Beth Evans and Claire Bowern (Yale University) ran a workshop at the Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting in Boston. Presentations were on all aspects of historical linguistics, including the Comparative Method, syntactic and semantic change, language acquisition, change in sign languages and computational phylogenetic, as well as connections between historical linguistics and population genetics, archaeology and social anthropology. The presentations are all chapters in the forthcoming Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics, edited by Claire and Beth.

I Wayan Arka is away from February to July 2013, mainly based in Germany for his Georg Forster Fellowship funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He first travelled to Indonesia, via Jakarta, giving a talk at Atmajaya University on the 9th of February 2013. Then he will spend two weeks in Bali in February, giving a series of talks at Udayana University (a linguistic computational seminar at the Computer Science with Prof. Mary Dalrymple and a keynote talk at a national conference on indigenous languages). While in Bali, Wayan and Mary will work on their project on grammar and plurality in Indonesian languages. He will be in Germany from 1st of March 2013 to June 2013 and will attend the Austronesian and Papuan language and Linguistic (APLL6) conference in London in April. After spending two weeks at Oxford University in early July 2013, Wayan will go to Debrecen (Hungary) to attend LFG2013 conference and the ParGram meeting.

More news from the Northern Hemisphere

Susanne Koike, Grace Tibo and Dougals Koran working with Katie.
New departmental “wall of fame”

Thanks to Owen Edwards, the Department has a new and colour-ful poster with everyone’s picture, now in display in the Coombs building hallway.

The poster will be regularly revised and updated so please contact Own with and desired changes for the next edition.

More Publications

Katharina Hobiger, who many will remember from her visit to the department last year, recently submitted her Diplomarbeit in the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Vienna on the topic Stefan Wurm Das Leben des Wiener Linguisten aus ethnohistorischer, biographisch- schichtlicher Sichtweise und seine Bedeutung für die Kultur und Sozialanthropologie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Forschungen in Australien und Ozeanien. This is a fascinating read for anyone interested in the history of the founding figure of our department, with vivid pictures of doing fieldwork in PNG in the 1960s.


Piers Kelly’s article based on his thesis is now published in the current issue of The Australian Journal of Anthropology as Your word against mine: How a rebel language and script of the Philippines was created, suppressed, recovered and contested. If boring old grammar is more your style, you may prefer ‘The morphosyntax of a created language of the Philippines: Folk linguistic effects and the limits of relexification’ out now in 2011 ALS conference proceedings.

Thank you Greg!

From Nick Evans, on behalf of the Department:

This issue marks a change of editorship for the newsletter, as Greg Dickson hunkers down for the final stretch of thesis-writing and hands over the reins to Fanny Cottet (see picture, left). Since our first newsletter in April 2010 Greg has done an inspired job in keeping these coming out at regular intervals, creating a sense of community, and helping our far-flung department stay in touch across oceans, swamps, deserts and rice paddies and on the behalf of the Department I’d like to thank you for your inspired mix of visual flair, organization, and a newshound’s scent for a good story. Greg will be handing over to Fanny Cottet and we welcome her into this new role.
In brief

**Tom Honeyman** wrapped up an enjoyable and stimulating 6 months working on the 3 year ARC funded AUSTKIN 2 project with **Patrick McConvell, Jane Simpson, Harold Koch, Laurent Dousse, and Stephanie Jenkins**, looking at socio-centric kinship terminologies across Australia. During that time he helped code the database that holds the terminologies, finally learned how to speak in kin strings, and boggled at the awesome mathematical properties of these systems. Along the way, many hundreds of sheets of paper were used trying to perfect the perfect diagramming format for these systems. The results of typologising the different social category systems was presented at the annual ALS Conference in December. Post-AUSTKIN, Tom’s nose is firmly to the grindstone, finishing his thesis.

**Simon Greenhill** was busy building a website for a Trans-New Guinea language database: [http://transnewguinea.org](http://transnewguinea.org). You won’t find any data there yet, but it’ll be growing soon.

Abstracts to present at the Workshop on the Languages of Melanesia are due on the 25th February. Send your abstract to **Christian Döhler**. The Workshop will be held in the Coombs Building and ANU Kioloa Costal Camp on the 24-26 May 2013. More details on the website of the Workshop on the Languages of Melanesia.

**Australian Summer circuit of coastal conferences**

**Supawan Pingjai, Phil Rose and Shunichi Ishihara** presented their papers at the 14th Australasian International Conference on Speech Science and Technology (SST) in Sydney, 3-6, December 2012. Supawan made her debut at this international conference, and successfully presented her paper *Forensic voice comparison in Standard Thai using vowel formants* at a satellite event (UNSW Forensic Speech Science Conference 2012). Phil made a new record at the conference in that he appeared in as many as nine different papers as an author.

Quite a number of Oceanic linguists from the ANU took part in COOL9, the international Conference on Oceanic Languages, on February 4-8, held at the University of Newcastle. **Andrew Pawley** talked about *The linguistic footprints of the Lapita dispersal*; **Bethwyn Evans** presented her work on the intonation in Nasiol (PNG); **Sébastien Lacrampe** analyzed the enclitic -is in Lelepa (Vanuatu); **Alexandre François** discussed the personal pronouns of the three languages of Vanikoro (Solomons), and their impersonal uses. Right after the COOL conference, Alexandre took the occasion of his international trip to come visit the ANU for a few days, before returning to snowy Paris, where he now works at CNRS.

**Tom Honeyman** gave a paper on the problems of identifying Australian languages for the AUSTKIN 2 project at a language identifiers workshop which was part of the COOL Conference at Newcastle.

**Piers Kelly** presented on writing-system innovation at the Centre for Research on Language Diversity at La Trobe University in Melbourne. You can hear this and other presentations via iTunes-U. Simply go to the iTunes store and search for ‘Linguistic diversity in a globalized world’.
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.

**Linguistics**
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To be added to the CAP Linguistics newsletter mailing list or for newsletter enquiries and contributions, email: fanny.cottet@anu.edu.au


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**Coming up…**

**Morning Coffee**  
- Linguistics Department  
February 20  
10:15am  
Corner near Nick’s office  
HC Coombs Building

**Seminar:** White Hmong Aspect:  
*From beginning to end and somewhere in between* ([link](#))  
- Elisabeth Ginsburg (Thesis Proposal Review)

February 22  
11:00am - 12:30pm  
Seminar Room B (Arndt Room)  
HC Coombs Building

**Seminar:** Generic terms for ‘skins’ (subsections and sections) in Australia: sources and semantic networks ([link](#))  
- Patrick McConvell  
& Maia Ponsonnet

March 22  
11:00am - 12:30pm

**Seminar Room B (Arndt Room)**  
HC Coombs Building

**Movie:** Fieldwork group: *Election Fever*, from Darja Hoenigman.

March 25  
12:00pm - 1:30pm  
Seminar Room A  
HC Coombs Building

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A traditional storage shelter in Sataka, Bhutan, where Lhop is spoken.  
*Photo: Gwen Hyslop.*