Fieldwork updates: Amurdak not forgotten

Rob Mailhammer has returned from his reconnaissance field trip to Croker Island, NT. He discovered that Amurdak is not as dead as it had been believed; there are still several people who can understand the language and translate it excellently into other languages. It didn’t take too much to trigger active language use and for the first time Rob was able to practice speaking Amurdak to someone other than himself! Further fieldwork is planned for next year.

Administration whiz Jo Bushby returned from a just-for-fun trip to Singapore, where she found it pretty but too humid, and didn’t go near Indian, Chinese or Malay food. We will work at introducing all of these cuisines to future morning teas for Jo’s tasting pleasure.

The coming months will see a virtual exodus of students and scholars to various fieldsites throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Chikako Senge led the way returning to Halls Creek, WA to resume fieldwork on Wanyjirra. Tom Honeyman is planning to head off to northern Papua New Guinea for a few months, continuing work on the Momu language. Sébastien Lacrampe is going to spend two months in the field in Lelepa, Central Vanuatu from June 10. Nick Evans heads to Mornington Island, from June 22-25 where he will conduct a Kayardild-language interview with artist Sally Gabori about a painting of hers which is being commissioned for reproduction in the Brisbane Supreme Court and District Court.

Others soon to leave for the field and avoid Canberra’s winter will be Greg Dickson (Top End, NT), Christian Döhrer (PNG), Stef Spronck (Kimberleys, WA), Maïa Ponsonnet (Top End, NT), Yusuf Sawaki (West Papua) and Aung Si (India).

Two PhD dissertations passed

Jacinta Smallhorn’s thesis, ‘A reconstruction and subgrouping of the Binanderean languages of Papua New Guinea’, was supervised by Malcolm Ross and Andy Pawley. Antoinette Schapper wrote her dissertation on ‘Bunaq: a Papuan language of central Timor’ and her supervisory panel included Wayan Arka, John Bowden and Nick Evans. Antoinette is now working on a project at Leiden University called Alor and Pantar Languages: Origins and Theoretical Impacts (www.alor-pantar.org) and will be going on fieldwork for four months in July.

Early May saw two new PhD dissertations accepted from Jacinta Smallhorn and Antoinette Schapper. Congratulations, Drs Smallhorn and Schapper!

Both dissertations focused on Papuanist topics, one historical and one descriptive.
Wayan Arka has been spotted around the globe during Semester 1, 2010. He travelled overseas, conducted fieldwork, worked on his ARC and NSF projects, and presented papers. He was in Indonesian Papua in January and February, conducting fieldwork on Marori and attending the 2nd workshop on the Papuan languages in Manokwari. He was invited as a keynote speaker at a two-day conference on indigenous languages in Bali (24-25 February). In March, Wayan and Meladel Mistica represented the Indonesian ParGram Research Group at the University of Konstanz, Germany. Wayan presented two papers at the workshop, reporting on the progress and new findings of the research development of computational grammar of Indonesian. While on leave, Wayan is also working on his papers and book drafts (from his earlier projects) for publications. In June, Wayan is again travelling overseas; first to London for the Endangered Languages Documentation Program (ELDP) panel meeting, then to Bali for the preparation of two international conferences he is organizing in 2012 (12ICAL and LFG12). He will also give a general lecture on syntax at Udayana University.

CHL grants and teaching news

Tim Hassall has been awarded a CHL small grant to help fund a trip by a team of 3-4 language teachers from the ANU School of Culture, History and Language to attend and present a paper at the 4th CLaSIC Conference at the National University of Singapore, in December 2010. This biennial conference is on foreign language teaching and learning. For further information about CLaSIC 2010 see http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/clasic/clasic2010/index.htm

Peter Hendriks also received a grant for approx. $2000 from the CHL small grant scheme to fund an administrator to start planning for the 2011 ALAA and ALANZ conference to be held at the ANU and UC.

Bao Thai will be back from leave in Semester 2 to take over teaching of the Vietnamese courses. Peter Hendriks will be teaching LING3008 Study of a Language Family about the Japonic language family. (See poster on the left).
Language and Social Cognition workshop

The third annual meeting of the ARC funded Language and Social Cognition project was held from May 28-30 at the ANU Kioloa coastal campus. The workshop was well attended with visitors Alan Jones and Frank Lichtenberg joining the regular project members from the ANU, Melbourne University and Griffith University. Nick Evans opened the meeting with a paper on how Dalabon grammar reflects aspects of other minds and social organisation and the workshop was concluded on Sunday with a presentation by Alan Rumsey who presented a paper on the relation between social cognition and language acquisition in Ku Waru. The remaining papers highlighted a range of topics relating to the connection between language and the social universe of speakers. Anneliese Kuhle presented on reciprocity in Ku Waru and Tatsuya Yanagida on possessive constructions in Ata. The project’s PhD students Lauren Gawne (Melbourne University), Tom Honeyman and Stef Spronck (ANU) reported on their work in progress and Alex Borkowski (Griffith University) presented on the project’s archiving software tool. Despite wild weather almost blowing the workshop into the South Pacific, the project will produce an exiting perspective on the many manifestations of social cognition in language structure.

Conference presentations and seminars

Nick Evans will be travelling to Europe from May 2-13, hoping that he has more luck with reaching his destination this time if Iceland’s answer to Krakatoa can settle down for a while. The conference on Periphraxis, at the University of Surrey, which he was to attend in April has been rescheduled for 7-8 June.

Tim Hassall will be taking part in a colloquium on second language pragmatics at the 35th Annual Congress of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, held from 4-7 July at the University of Queensland, in Brisbane. He will present a paper on acquisition of address terms in Indonesian. For further information about this conference see http://alaa2010congress.webs.com/

On May 21, Rob Mailhammer gave a lecture at the University of Sydney on “The influence of Indigenous languages on Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal English”.

Also travelling to the University of Sydney was Maïa Ponsonnet who gave a seminar on May 20 as part of the Anthropology department’s seminar series. She presented on her research on Dalabon in a talk entitled “The belly and the brain in the conceptions of feelings: questioning variations in a multilingual context”.

Students launch “fully sick” popular linguistics blog

April 20th: Australian independent news website, Crikey, launched a language blog called "Fully (sic)", developed by a group of post-grad linguistics students from the College of Asia & the Pacific and the College of Arts and Social Sciences with additional contributors from further afield. A purely extra-curricular activity, "Fully (sic)" is a popular linguistics blog aimed to promote public awareness of language issues in Australia in an informed and fun way. Contributors from CAP include Piers Kelly, Aung Si and Greg Dickson. The name of the blog plays on a recently developed Australianism which Piers explains in an early blogpost: "It's associated with Mediterranean and/or Middle Eastern Australian English and speakers of these varieties certainly became early adopters, as represented in the popular SBS program Fat Pizza."

Being a multi-authored blog, contributions are welcome from anyone wishing to write about topics within the general theme of language in Australia. "Fully (sic)" can be found at http://blogs.crikey.com.au/fullysic/

Email piers.kelly@anu.edu.au for info and suggestions.

The "Fully (sic)" blog, featured by Crikey
For more details on our seminars visit: http://chl.anu.edu.au/events/

Coming up...

The series of seminars from CAP Linguistics continues throughout June and beyond, including:

**June 11** (11:00am-1:00pm): "Current issues in language documentation" - Peter Austin (School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London) - Coombs bldg, Seminar Rm C

**June 18** (11:00am-1:00pm):
"Portmanteau morphemes in the Iwaidjan languages: a destabilising factor?" - Rob Mailhammer - Coombs bldg, Seminar Rm C

**June 18** (3:15-5:15pm): "Agreement in Iha: alignment and composition" - Mark Donohue - Coombs bldg, Seminar Rm C

**July 23** (11:00am-1:00pm): "Object verbs in Huon Peninsula languages" - Edgar Suter - Coombs bldg, Seminar Rm C

**July 30** (12:30-1:30pm): TBA - Duck Young Lee - Baldessin Precinct bldg

Please 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.

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

Montagskaffeerunde
(Monday coffee round)
Photo by Christian Döhler

Some future conferences and workshops:

Wayan Arka and Antonio Guerreiro (CNRS, Université de Provence, Marseille) invite presentations for an interdisciplinary workshop on Borneo & the Austronesian World to be held in the Coombs building on August 23. Contact Antonio (antonio7065@yahoo.fr) or Wayan (wayan.arka@anu.edu.au). More details in the June newsletter.

A call for papers is out for the 34th Annual Pacific Islands Studies conference at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa to be held from November 4–6. This year’s conference is "Celebrating Connections: 60 Years of Pacific Studies". Contact Terence Wesley-Smith (twssmith@hawaii.edu) – abstracts due by July 1.

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.