Kalam dictionary: 48 years in the making

On Saturday, December 3, the ALS Conference paused for a double book launch. First up was *A grammar of Goemai*, by Birgit Hellwig, published by de Gruyter Mouton, and launched by Larry Hyman. Goemai is a West Chadic language of Nigeria, whose grammatical structure has been much influenced by contact with unrelated languages. Birgit Hellwig is currently an ARC Future fellow at RCLT, La Trobe University, working on the semantics of the Baining languages of New Britain.

Alan Rumsey then launched *A dictionary of Kalam with ethnographic notes*, by Andrew Pawley and Ralph Bulmer, and published by Pacific Linguistics. Alan noted that this dictionary, 48 years in the making, is the most extensive yet to appear of a Papuan language. In his reply, Andy recalled that the French linguist Jean-Claude Rivierre said he knewledged that his wife had been married to the dictionary for the whole of her married life. He spoke of what a wonderful experience it was to live among the Kalam people of the Upper Kairok Valley in the 1960s at a period just after first contact, when steel axes had only just replaced stone, and their traditional institutions and worldview were intact, and he thanked his anthropologist co-author, the late Ralph Bulmer, for showing him how to make an ethnographic dictionary, drawing on the help of a wide range of specialists from different disciplines. Andy now plans to return to the job of completing three other dictionaries of Pacific Island languages that have been waiting in the wings.

Larry Hyman's Big Ideas on phonology

A new monthly seminar series kicked off in November called Big Ideas on Language. The seminar series will focus on philosophical and cross-disciplinary themes informing linguistic research. Mark Donohue launched the series, discussing the relation between linguistics and social history.

Larry Hyman is visiting from the University of California, Berkeley and presents "Big Ideas" on December 14. His seminar on Phonological universals vs. Phonological diversity discusses universal claims about syllables, presenting evidence that not all languages organize their sound systems around the syllable and whether all languages have CV syllables.

The seminar is sponsored by the NSF project Prosodic Systems in New Guinea and the ANU Tone Workshop. All are welcome to attend the talk in Seminar Room A, Coombs building from 4-6pm some drinks will be served afterwards.

We can thank Stef Spronck for the Big Ideas on Language seminar series initiative and we hope that it will grow into a lively and engaging monthly event for anyone working on language or communication around ANU. Enquiries and suggestions: Stef Spronck.
ANU Tone workshop

The ANU Tone Workshop is currently taking place around the halls of Coombs, running from December 4-16. The workshop includes a Master Class on Tonal investigation, using live elicitation from three tonal languages of New Guinea - Alekano, Iha, and Kirikiri, with small groups working with a speaker of each language to try and establish the tonal systems of each. Steven Bird (University of Melbourne) and Mark Donohue have organised this master-class styled two week learning opportunity. The workshop is sponsored by the National Science Foundation project Prosodic Systems in New Guinea. Larry Hyman (UC Berkeley), Keith Snider (SIL International) and Anthony Woodbury (UT Austin) are heading the groups that are examining the languages and the language consultants sharing their languages with the groups are Philip Tama (Alekano), Simon Bruno Hindom (Iha) and Alfius Polita (Kirikiri). More information is available at the website: www.toneworkshop.org.

Recent publications


Tim Hassall has just had a review article accepted for publication in Language Sciences. It is titled “Sociopragmatics is slower: A response to Chang.”

A revised version of Rachel Hendery’s dissertation, Relative clauses in time and space: a case study in the methods of diachronic typology, has been officially accepted for the John Benjamins series Typological Studies in Language and is expected to appear next year.

An electronic resource that Rachel Hendery and Andy Pawley have been involved in has been launched. The Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English (http://www.ewave-atlas.org/) allows you to see varieties of English on a world map, compare their morphological and morphosyntactic features, and access examples. It is envisaged as an open-access resource for teaching and research purposes, and is lots of fun to play with! Rachel contributed the Palmerston Island English data, and Andy provided Australian Vernacular English. A book from this project will appear soon.

Malcolm Ross returned from four months in Leipzig at the beginning of September. Among other things he started a database which he hopes might lead to further progress in Trans New Guinea historical linguistics (but then it might not...), gave a couple of presentations in Leipzig and a keynote talk at a conference on contact linguistics in Leiden. He and Ingrid also took advantage of being retired and visited a few places they hadn’t been to before – Helsinki, St Petersburg, Tallinn and Bratislava – and couple they had – Prague and Vienna.

Chuck Grimes gave a 2-hour public lecture on Monday 14 Nov at PGRI Kupang (Teacher’s Training Institute) to an audience of around 500.

The lecture, “Learn to read; read to learn (Belajar membaca; membaca untuk belajar)” discussed the connection between the reading skills of children in grades 1-3 and the quality of the education system; linking the quality of the education system to economic development; and showing how getting reading materials into the classrooms and into the homes, and committing time to reading in the language they know best gives the best chance for a child to become a successful reader who can read for meaning.

International travels and presentations

"A revised version of Rachel Hendery’s dissertation has been accepted for the John Benjamins series"
The last few weeks has seen perhaps the most intensive series of linguistic events ever staged at ANU, under the banner of Canberra Langfest, jointly organised by the Linguistics and Applied Linguistics communities of ANU and U Canberra. Highlights were the signing of a new agreement between Oxford University Press and the Australian National Dictionary Centre (attended by outgoing director Bruce Moore and incoming director Sarah Ogilvie) a workshop on Indigenous language revitalisation, a joint day on Language and the Law including a plenary by Diana Eades (UNE) on ‘Applying Linguistics to questions about Aboriginal participation in the legal process’ and a forum chaired by Damien Carrick (ABC Radio National) on the topic of whether one can receive justice in a language or dialect other than one’s own, a joint workshop with ALTA, a packed ALS conference (over 220 registrants) with plenaries by Katherine Demuth (Macquarie), Janet Fletcher (Melbourne), Birgit Hellwig (LaTrobe) and Larry Hyman (UC Berkeley), a one-day Learn Gami-laraay workshop, followed by a Masterclass at Kioloa (c. 30 participants) running week-long intensive courses on Cultural Phylogenetics (Fiona Jordan, MPI Nijmegen) and Probabilistic Syntax (Joan Bresnan, Stanford) and a two-week workshop on Tone and Papuan languages for which Mark Donohue is the local organiser.

Many members of the department presented at Langfest including Fanny Cottet, Dan Devitt, Nick Evans, Alex François, Peter Hendriks, Rachel Hendery, Tom Honeyman, Shun Ishihara, Sebastien Lacrampe, Meladel Mistica, Naomi Ogi, Maïa Ponsonnet, Carol Priestley, Chikako Senge and Stef Spronck.

We would like to thank all in the Department who made Langfest such a resounding success, especially Alex Muir for her incredible administrative contribution (and Elizabeth Mullan for the early part of the administrative run), Rachel Hendery as Program Co-coordinator, Meladel Mistica for arranging the liaison with ALTA and the very successful poster session, plus the various members of the organising committee and student volunteers – Wayan Arka, Dan Devitt, Peter Hendriks, Rebecca Hetherington, Shun Ishihara, Sebastien Lacrampe, Duck-Young Lee, Julia Miller, Maïa Ponsonnet, Chikako Senge, Aung Si, Stef Spronck and Christian Döhler. This is in addition to our many linguist colleagues across campus – co-convener Jane Simpson, program coordinator Cindy Allen, and organising committee members Avery Andrews, Helen Bromhead, Loan Dao, Manuel Delicado, Susan Ford, John Giacon, Harold Koch, Doug Marmion, Elisabeth Mayer, Pat McConvell, David Nash and Zhengdao Ye, and Helen Moore for her huge efforts in bringing together the Language and the Law day. We’d also like to thank the School of Culture, History and Language for financial assistance in organising the conference, and COAST from the law faculty for their support.

We welcome two new PhD students who will be starting in the Department next year: Elisabeth Ginsburg, who has just obtained her Master’s from SOAS and before that took a degree in linguistics at the University of Rochester in the US, will be working on demonstratives in Hmong, and Matt Carroll, who has just obtained his Honours degree in Linguistics from the University of Sydney, will be working on the Languages of Southern New Guinea project, focussing on one of the languages on the Indonesian side of the border (Kanum or Yey). Philip Tama, who lectures in linguistics at the University of Goroka, will also be beginning doctoral work on the Southern New Guinea project, and although enrolled at UNE will be a frequent visitor to the department here throughout his PhD. All three will be arriving in early February in time for the Field Methods course.
Welcome to the world, Roland, and other visitors

The fecund record of the Social Cognition project continues: this time we welcome young Roland into the world, recently born to Lila San Roque and her husband Chris in Nijmegen.

Henrik Bergqvist (Stockholm University), who visited the Department earlier this year courtesy of the Language and Social Cognition project, has just been awarded a substantial postdoctoral project by Vetenskapsrådet, the Swedish Research Council, on Complex perspective in epistemic assessment: exploring intersubjectivity in language. Besides supporting Henrik’s continued fieldwork on complex-perspective phenomena in several languages of Colombia (especially Kogi) and further fieldwork on Duna by Lila San Roque, it includes provision for a workshop on complex perspective to be held at ANU in 2013, and an intensive field-methods course on a Papuan language manifesting the phenomenon, to be held at the University of Goroka, also in 2013.

Meanwhile, Nikolaus Himmelmann (Cologne), twin guru of Documentary Linguistics and Western Austronesian, will be visiting the Department from December 12 for just under a month, working on a range of write-up projects and also to work on various collaborations with Yusuf Sawaki, Wayan Arka, Nick Evans and others.

Larry Hyman (UC Berkeley), Stephen Bird (U. Melbourne) and Tony Woodbury (U. Texas, Austin) are all visiting the Department for the 2-week workshop on Tone in Papuan Languages, supported by an NSF Grant, on which Mark Donohue is an external investigator.

More images from recent events

Andy Pawley and Malcolm Ross at the launch of Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic v.4
Larry Hyman spots a lexicography legend walking among us
The highs and lows of the ANU Tone Workshop

Simon Greenhill (U. Auckland) received a DECRA in the latest round for his project ‘Discovering Trans-New Guinea: Revealing the prehistory of New Guinea’ and will be starting in the department from May next year. Simon has been at the forefront of new developments applying computational phylogenetic methods to historical linguistics and his project will apply these to the knotty problem of investigating the historical linguistics of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, in the process digitising and analysing the copious materials recorded over the years by Andy Pawley, Malcolm Ross and other members of the department for a wide range of TNG languages.

Nick Evans has just heard that he has been awarded an Anneliese-Maier Forschungspreis by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung. This prize, which runs over 5 years, is to support collaborative research between the awardee’s home department and colleagues in Germany, as well as 6-12 months of time based in Germany spread out over the next 5 years, with a particular emphasis on supporting the development of young researchers. Nick will be using it support a range of workshops and collaborative research in Germany and Australia, plus visitors in both directions, focussing on three projects: (i) a continuation of work on grammar and social cognition, (ii) research on Papuan languages (iii) general advancement and planning of research on documenting language diversity in the next decades.

"Nikolaus Himmelmann will be visiting from December 12..."
Christian Döhler recently returned from a fascinating fieldtrip to the Morehead District. He stayed for 5 months in the village of Rouku catching up with friends and adopted family. During the fieldtrip Christian collected comparative material from previously undescribed dialect/languages in the area. This exercise involved long trips to far away villages by foot, on bicycles without brakes or pretty rugged 4WDs.

In addition to filling notebooks, DV tapes and hard drives with data, Christian participated in daily life in Rouku. This included hunting for wallabies (without success), harvesting and planting yams, cutting the grass with a bushknife, fishing for barramundi and prawn in the Morehead river, dancing, singing and beating the Kundu drum from dusk until dawn, and testing various types of coconut wine.

Greg Dickson has been on fieldwork working with Kriol and Marra speakers in the Northern Territory. He and Marra elder, Betty Roberts, were interviewed for the local ABC Rural report. The story and audio can be found here. Greg, Betty and other Marra speakers contributed to a project called Song Peoples Sessions, documenting non-ceremonial songs in several endangered languages of the region. This work involved transcribing and translating 17 short songs which will soon be distributed to community as a CD package.

Greg also composed an 18-page submission to the Commonwealth Government’s inquiry into “Language Learning in Indigenous Communities” which is a promising development for Indigenous language policy in Australia. 137 public submissions have been received and public hearings have commenced. He assures his supervisors that he has also done plenty of research and data gathering for his PhD.

Tim Hassall presented some initial findings from recent fieldwork at the ALAA-ALANZ conference in Canberra. His paper was titled “Pragmatic development during a short stay abroad: An Indonesian case study”.

Chuck Grimes presented on “Revisiting Austronesian subgrouping: what does it look like in 2011?” at the Top End Linguistic Circle meeting held at Charles Darwin University, October 5, and “Rethinking Austronesia—again: conflicts and convergences between assumptions, methodologies, and the data.” which was an invited paper presented at international conference celebrating 60 Years of Anthropology at ANU: Contesting Anthropology’s futures held on 26-28 September.

Shunichi Ishihara was invited to join the Forensic Speech Science Committee of the Australasian Speech Science and Technology Association (website). His work continues on his latest project Acquiring Pragmatics of Indonesian during Study Abroad, and he will presented the first findings at the recent ALAA-ALANZ conference.

Inaugural Talkley Award awarded at ALS Conference

The inaugural Talkley Award was won by Kate Burridge and presented at the ALS Annual General Meeting on December 2. Nominations for the Talkley Award were reviewed by a postgraduate committee whose decision was unanimous. The award acknowledges the contributions of Australian linguists who promote language awareness in the public arena. As well as her appearances on ABC radio and television, Kate was recognised for her part in getting linguistics into Victorian high schools and for her contributions to the development of the national curriculum.

“I’m completely gobsmacked,” she said upon receiving the award (pictured right). “People care deeply about language and I love doing this sort of work. And in fact a lot of my research has been inspired by the general public – many wonderful comments and questions that have taken me down linguistic paths I would never have imagined.”

CAP’s Piers Kelly played a key role in initiating the Talkley Award and said, “There’s a great enthusiasm for language in Australia. People like Kate remind us that language is infinitely fascinating and that linguistics can be a tool for solving real-world language problems”.

The name of the prize is a play on the better-known Walkley Awards which recognise achievements in journalism.
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.

Upcoming events and seminars include:

**December 4-16**: ANU Tone Workshop: Workshop on Studying Tone Languages in New Guinea: elicitation, analysis and archiving (Coombs bldg)

**December 12** (11:15am–12:30pm): Affixes of all slots, unite! - verbal morphology in Kmntso - Christian Döhler (Seminar Room E, Coombs bldg)

**December 12** (4:00–5:30pm): Early versus late acquisition as a motor of language change - Fred Weerman (Uni. Of Amsterdam) (BPB W3.03)

**December 14** (2:00–3:30pm): Language history in Vanuatu: The epic failure of the tree model - Alex François and Siva Kalyan (BPB W3.03)

**December 14** (2:00–3:30pm): Big ideas on language: Phonological Universals vs. phonological diversity - Larry Hyman (UC Berkeley) (Seminar Rm A, Coombs bldg)

**December 19** (4:00–5:30pm): The calibration of social change chronology by the archaeolinguistic stratigraphy of technology diffusion - Patrick McConville (BPB W3.03)


Enquiries: jsgss2012@anu.edu.au

**February 24** (3:30–5:00pm): TBA - Shunichi Ishihara (Seminar Room B, Coombs bldg)

**March 16-18**: Workshop on the Languages of Melanesia (Kioloa ANU Coastal Campus). Abstracts due January 15.

Enquiries: Fanny Cottet

Yusuf Sawaki at ALS conference: Pacific Linguistics' #1 sales assistant