

▪ **Language and Culture Research Group**

Postdoctoral Research Fellows

[Employed on ARC Discovery Projects: Aikhenvald/Dixon 'The world through the prism of language: a cross-linguistic view of genders, noun classes and classifiers', and Dixon/Aikhenvald 'Are some languages better than others?']

Dr Anne Schwarz has a PhD from the Humboldt University, Berlin, on 'Aspects of morphosyntax and tonology in Buli', based on extensive fieldwork on this Gur language from northern Ghana. She is now on fieldwork in Ecuador, studying Siona/Secoya, a West Tucanoan language.

Dr Tianqiao (Mike) Lu obtained his PhD from the University of Melbourne, for 'A grammar of Maonan' (published in 2008 by Universal Publishers, Florida). He is undertaking a comparative study of classifiers in Kam-Tai languages, with reference to other languages in East Asia.

Dr Mark Post joins us in March. His PhD, from La Trobe University, was 'A grammar of Galo'. He will work on a grammar of Upper Belt Minyong (Adi), in the comparative context of other languages from the Tani branch of Tibeto-Burman, based on immersion fieldwork in Arunachal Pradesh, North-east India.

Cairns Institute Distinguished Visiting Fellows

Professor Ken Sumbuk (January – March), Professor of Linguistics and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea, is an expert on the indigenous languages and cultures of the Sepik region, an area of extreme diversity. He is currently revising for publication his PhD thesis (from Waikato University) 'The Sare language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea' (a language for which he is a native speaker).

Professor Lourens de Vries (May to September), of the Free University Amsterdam, is a leading expert on the languages and cultures of New Guinea. He is writing an account of the dozen languages belonging to the Awyu-Dumut family of Papua, their ethnic backgrounds, contact patterns and grammatical structures, paying particular attention to correlations between language, environment and cultural patterns.

Associate Professor Catherine Travis (May-August), of the University of New Mexico, is an expert in discourse analysis, with emphasis on corpus development and variation. She will work on interaction between Romance languages spoken by minority immigrant groups in English-speaking countries, and English as the major language, focussing specifically on syntactic features such as the omission or retention of first person subject.

Mission statement of LCRG

The Linguistics and Culture Research Group promotes interdisciplinary research involving immersion fieldwork, leading to comprehensive documentation of indigenous languages and cultures. This feeds into inductive generalisations concerning human language capacity, and the interaction between parameters of linguistic and cultural behaviour. Our core members are anthropologically-orientated linguists and we maintain a dialogue with anthropologists, sociologists, archeologists, educationalists and other scholars in the humanities, social sciences and relevant natural sciences. LCRG's primary focus is on the autochthonous peoples of New Guinea, Australia, Amazonia, East Asia and South Asia.

We work in terms of basic linguistic theory, the cumulative framework which is employed in most linguistic description, providing anthropologically informed grammars and analyses of languages and language areas. Our work has a sound empirical basis but also shows a firm theoretical orientation, seeking for explanation hand-in-hand with description.

Building on reliable descriptive studies, the LCRG also puts forward inductive generalizations about human languages, cultural practices and cognition. We enquire how a language reflects the environment in which people live, their system of social organization, food production techniques, and the ways in which a community views the world. For instance, groups living in mountainous terrain often have to specify, for any object, whether it is uphill, downhill or at the same level as the speaker. And if there is a chiefly system, a special term of address may be required for speaking to a high chief, and a different term for a minor chief. Why are languages the way they are? We seek scientific explanation and motivation, combining the expertise of linguists, anthropologists and social scientists from other domains.

Another focus of study concerns the ways in which languages influence each other. What kind of words, and meanings, are likely to be borrowed between two languages spoken next to each other, and under what social circumstances? Are some kinds of systems particularly open

Dr Henry Y. Chang (July-October), of Academia Sinica, Taiwan, is an expert on indigenous languages and cultures of Taiwan, with a particular focus on Tsou. He plans a monograph on grammatical properties of verbs and their arguments across Formosan languages, exploring the ways in which different classes of verbs can be understood in the light of their cognitive underpinnings, also looking at categorization of noun arguments, and the issue of case marking.

Professor Anvita Abbi (October–January 2011), Professor of Linguistics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is a leading expert on anthropological linguistics of South Asia, having worked on languages from five families. She plans to write a full account of the Great Andamanese language (and its cultural milieu), based on the copious (but uneven) early materials and her own fieldwork with the last eight semi-speakers.

PhD students

Chia-jung Pan relocated from La Trobe University to JCU in September 2009. His PhD is a grammatical study of Lha'alua (or Saaroa), a critically endangered Austronesian language of Taiwan.

Yankee Modi (from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) will start her PhD course in February 2010 working on 'The cultural and environmental shaping of Milang language'.

Gerda (Dineke) Schokkin (from the University of Amsterdam) will start her PhD course in May 2010 working on a previously undocumented language of the Manus province.

Sihong Zhang (from Anhui University of Traditional Chinese Medicine) will start his PhD course in July 2010 working on a previously undocumented language of Papua New Guinea.

Associate Members of LCRG

- **Professor Ton Otto**, Research Leader, People and Societies of the Tropics within the Cairns Institute, is working on design anthropology, social change, notions of temporality, and agency, with reference to Papua New Guinea and particularly the peoples of Manus Island.
- **Associate Professor Rosita Henry**, from the Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Sociology, and a Fellow of the Cairns Institute, is researching issues of gender politics in the Western Highlands of PNG, focusing on contradictions between customary land tenure and concepts of private property.
- **Dr Mike Wood**, Senior Lecturer in Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Sociology, is a Fellow of the Cairns Institute. He is currently working on how the Kamula people from the Western Province of PNG translate the new carbon economy into their language and culture.

Activities for 2010

To celebrate the fortieth anniversary of James Cook University's foundation:

Workshop: History in the Making

Friday 21st May 2010

Room B1.031, Library, Cairns Campus

- 1.00 Opening
Professor Hurriyet Babacan, Director, The Cairns Institute
- 1.15 Professor Alexandra Y. (Sasha) Aikhenvald, Cairns Institute, JCU
The white man cometh: Indigenous image of the invader
- 1.45 Professor R. M. W. (Bob) Dixon, Cairns Institute, JCU
Origin legends: Reality and re-interpretation
- 2.15 Professor Ton Otto, Cairns Institute, JCU
History for the Future: Indigenous history and social change in Manus, PNG
- 2.45 Dr Ernie Grant, Elder of the Jirrbal tribe, Echo Creek Cultural Centre
The history of survival
- 3.30 Afternoon tea
- 4.00 Professor John Molony, Australian National University
James Cook: In search of the discoverer
- 5.30 Close

Possession and Ownership

4.00 Tianqiao (Mike) Lu (CI, JCU) 'Possession in Maonan (Tai-Kadai)'

5.30 Finish

Wednesday 29 September — free day

Thursday 30 September in Library, Room B1.031

9.00 Lev Michael (University of California, Berkeley) 'Possession in Nanti (Arawak family)'

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Anne Schwarz (CI, JCU) 'Possession in Buli (Gur family)'

12.30 Lunch

2.00 Rosita Henry (JCU) 'Being and belonging: exchange relations and land ownership in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea'

3.30 Coffee

4.00 Michael Wood (JCU) 'Possessing the wind: Kamula property interests in the new carbon economy'

5.30 Finish

Friday 1 October in building E2, room 113/113a

9.00 Mark Post (CI, JCU) 'Possession in Galo (Tibeto-Burman)'

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Zygmunt Frajzyngier (University of Colorado at Boulder) 'Possession in Wandala (Chadic subgroup of Afro-asiatic)'

12.30 Lunch

2.00 Alan Dench (University of Western Australia) 'Possession and ownership in Martuthunira (Australian)'

3.30 Coffee

4.00 Group discussion

5.30 Finish

Saturday 2 October in building E2, room 113/113a **NOTE: 9.30 start**

9.30 R. M. W. Dixon (CI, JCU) 'What can we conclude?'

11.00 Coffee

11.30 Group discussion and publication plans

1.00 Finish

Honorary Doctorate for Ernie Grant

At the JCU Degree Ceremony
in the Convention Centre, Cairns at **10.30 a.m.** on **Saturday 17 April**
an **Honorary Doctor of Letters** degree will be bestowed on
Ernie Grant, Jirrbal Elder
and founder of the Echo

What took place at LCRG in 2009

The Language and Culture Research Group was established in January 2010 with the arrival at JCU of Professors Aikhenvald and Dixon. They were joined later in the year by the first two Postdoctoral Research Fellows (Dr Anne Schwarz and Dr Tianqiao (Mike) Lu) and the first PhD student (Chia-jung Pan). Cairns abounds with scholars interested in matters linguistic, so that we have fruitful collaboration with anthropologists, archaeologists, educationalists, and members of several local indigenous tribal groups.

- In February, **Professor Masayoshi Shibatani**, of Rice University (Houston Texas) and The University of Kobe (Japan), spent some days at LCRG.
- In March, **Professor Oscar E. Aguilera**, Researcher with Foundation FIDE XII, Punta Arenas, Chile, and his colleague **Dr José Tonko**, one of the seven remaining speakers of Kaweskar, spent a week at LCRG. They presented a joint talk 'Cultures and languages of Tierra del Fuego: salvaging what we can'.
- On 16-17 April LCRG held its **Inaugural Workshop**, entitled

Not to lose you, my language

After a hearty welcome by George Skeene, a Yirrkanyji elder representing traditional owners of the land, the workshop featured plenary presentations by

Ernie Grant, a Jirrbal Elder (Echo Creek Cultural Centre) jointly with Bob Dixon (JCU) 'Guygun ngaygu guwal: Poor fellow my language'

Rosita Henry (JCU) 'Language and performance: A case study on the Djabugay renaissance'

Mike Wood (JCU) 'Initiating God's Word into the Kamula's recent past'

Nicholas Evans (ANU) 'What we bury when last speakers die: the languages of the Wellesley Islands and what they can tell us'

Yongxian Luo (University of Melbourne) 'Government policies towards minority groups and their languages in China: views from within'

Yvonne Cadet-James and Valda Wallace (JCU) 'The Gugu-Badhun project'

Kate Burrridge (Monash University) 'Horses and buggies in the age of broadband - the survival of Pennsylvania German in the 21st century'

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald 'The Magic of names: name ownership in Papua New Guinea'

The workshop was very well received by JCU and by the local community.

- On 24 April, and 1, 8 and 15 May, a series of four 2-hour language workshops
Nganyji nyanggaajina Yidiny Gunggay

- On 15 October, as a part of the **Celebrating Research Month at JCU series of events**, LCRG conducted a Day of Linguistics. This consisted of
 - Public lecture by Professor Alexandra (Sasha) Aikhenvald '*The Joy of language*'
 - Interactive talk-back session '*Language we live by*' conducted by the Panel consisting of Aikhenvald (chair), Dixon, Dr Anne Schwarz, and Dr Tianquiao Lu.

- On 3 November, three of the members of LCRG took part in the conference **Tropics of the Imagination**, organized by Dr Stephen Torre of the School of Arts and Social Sciences:
 - R. M. W. Dixon. 'The metrical patterns of Dyirbal song poetry'
 - Anne Schwarz. 'The thetic-categorical dichotomy: insights into discourse principles and grammatical features'
 - Mike Tianqiao Lu. 'Little Red Cap in South China — the linguistic cause of folktale variation'

- On 30 November, at the JCU Townsville Campus, Professor Nola Alloway, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences, organised that new publications by members of the Faculty should be officially launched by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sandra Harding, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Chris Cocklin. These included
 - The Semantics of clause-linking: a cross-linguistic typology**, edited by R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald. Oxford: Oxford University Press. xviii, 410 pp.
 - Basic Linguistic Theory** by R. M. W. Dixon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Vol 1: Methodology xvi, 381 pp. Vol 2: Grammatical topics xvii, 489 pp.
 - Modern Hebrew (Sovremennyj Ivrut)** by Alexandra Aikhenvald (2nd edition) published by the URSS Publishing House (Moscow). [20,000 copies.] 146 pp.
 It was also noted that Dixon's classic monograph, **The Dyirbal language of North Queensland** had just been reissued in paperback, 37 years after its first publication in 1972.

During the year:

Kazuhiro Imanishi assisted Chia-jung Pan with translating early materials on Saaroa from Japanese.

Stefan Dienst undertook a salvage expedition to collect information on Kaishana, a moribund North Arawak language, within the framework of the ARC project 'The world through the prism of language: a cross-linguistic study of genders, noun classes and classifiers'.

New book series launched

In February, Dr Liesbeth Kanis, Commissioning Editor for Brill, one of the oldest and most prestigious publishing houses in Europe, travelled to Cairns to meet with Professors Aikhenvald and Dixon in order to discuss future publishing projects. Out of that meeting evolved the plan for a new book series.

Brill's Studies in Language, Cognition and Culture **edited by Alexandra Aikhenvald, R. M. W. Dixon and N. J. Enfield**

This peer-reviewed book series offers an international forum for high-quality original studies in languages and cultures. It focusses on the interaction between linguistic categories (and their conceptualization), cultural values, and human cognition. The publications in this series will include interdisciplinary studies on language, its meanings and forms, and possible interactions with cognitive and communicational patterns. The series spans cultural and social anthropology, cognitive science and linguistics. The emphasis is on inductive based cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies, with special attention to poorly known areas, such as Lowland Amazonia and the Pacific. The series is international in its scope. Authors are encouraged to write in English, to maximize readership. We envisage producing 3-4 new volumes per annum.

Members of the editorial board are:

WILLEM F. ADELAAR, Professor of South American studies at the University of Leiden, a leading expert in linguistics, anthropology and cultural studies in South America.

CAROL GENETTI, University of California at Santa Barbara, a leading expert on Tibeto-Burman languages and cultures, and patterns of cognition as reflected in human interaction.

BERND HEINE, Emeritus Professor, University of Cologne, one of the world's leading experts in African languages, general and cognitive linguistics, language contact and grammaticalization.

ROSITA HENRY, James Cook University, a leading expert in cultural anthropology, performing arts and social development with a focus on the Australian area and the Pacific in general.

LEV MICHAEL, University of California (Berkeley), a leading expert in the languages and cultures of Peru, language and communication, ethnolinguistics, and cognitive patterns in human interaction.

JOHN LUCY, University of Chicago, a leading expert on cognitive linguistics, and language and cognition, with a focus on Mayan languages.

TON OTTO, Aarhus University and James Cook University, a leading expert in cultural and social anthropology with a special focus on the Pacific, and the interaction between language and culture.

BAMBI B. SCHIEFFELIN, Professor of Anthropology, New York University, a leading expert on ethnolinguistics, cultural anthropology and interactions between language, culture and cognition, with a specific focus on the Pacific area.

MASAYOSHI SHIBATANI, Professor, Rice University and Kobe University, a leading expert in the languages of Japan, Austronesian languages and general linguistics, and in a wide variety of issues of ethnolinguistics and cognitive linguistics, with a focus on Asia and the Pacific.

ANNE STORCH, Professor of Africanistics at the University of Cologne, a leading expert in African languages and cultures, with a broad view of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues world-wide, and a focus on cognitive issues.

PETER TRUDGILL, Université de Fribourg (Switzerland) and the University of East Anglia, one of the world's major experts on language contact, areal diffusion and varieties of English.

ANTHONY WOODBURY, University of Texas (Austin), a leading expert on Yupik Eskimo, and languages and cultures of North America, with a particular focus on the cognitive aspects of language and culture interaction.

Any scholar with a proposal for the series (or just an idea which might be pursued) is invited to contact any of the editors – Aikhenvald, Dixon or Enfield.

Announcement

Most members of the Language and Culture Research Group have written (or are writing) a grammar of a language, and many of us are working on typological universals, by inductive generalisations from a well-chosen sample of grammars. We welcome enquiries from similarly oriented scholars (from Australia or from overseas) who would like to consider spending a sabbatical with us. We can provide basic facilities, plus an intellectual ambience of the highest order.

Comments on recent publications

The first two volumes of R. M. W. Dixon's *Basic Linguistic theory* were published by Oxford University Press on 1st October 2009 (although dated '2010' as a sales ploy). The publisher's description of these volumes concludes with:

Basic Linguistic Theory is the triumphant outcome of a lifetime's thinking about every manifestation of language and immersion in linguistic fieldwork. It is a one-stop text for undergraduate and graduate students of linguistics, as well as for those in neighbouring disciplines such as psychology and anthropology.

Publishers' reviewers opined:

- 'Destined to be a modern classic.' **N. J. Enfield**, Max Plank Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen.
- 'A monumental achievement. Virtually without precedent in the field of linguistics'. **Martin Haspelmath**, Max Plank Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig.
- 'A refreshingly common-sense approach to linguistic analysis.' **Lise M. Dobrin**, University of Virginia.

Volumes from our International Workshops continue to receive the most laudatory reviews

Concerning Serial verb constructions: a cross-linguistic typology [papers from 2003 International Workshop, published Jan 2006, paperback reissue 2007]:stic theory

Publications by members of LCRG — 2009 and forthcoming

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald

- 2009. *Modern Hebrew* (in Russian). Moscow, 150 pp. (2nd revised edition of 1990 book).
- 2009. 'Eating, drinking and smoking: a generic verb and its semantics in Manambu', pp. 92-108 of *The linguistics of eating and drinking*, edited by John Newman. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- 2009. 'Syntactic ergativity in Paumarí', pp. 111-27 of *Topics in descriptive and African linguistics. Essays in Honor of Distinguished Professor Paul Newman*, edited by Samuel Dyasi Obeng. Munich: Lincom Studies in African Linguistics.
- 2009. 'Semantics of clause linking in Manambu', pp. 118-144 of Dixon and Aikhenvald 2009.
- 2009. 'Semantics and grammar in clause linking', pp. 380-402 of Dixon and Aikhenvald 2009.
- 2009. 'Language contact along the Sepik River'. *Anthropological Linguistics* 50: 1-66 (dated 2008, published 2009).
- 2010a. *Imperatives and commands*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2010b. *Language contact in Amazonia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (paperback edition with revision of 2002 version).
- 2010c. *The Manambu language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (paperback edition with revision of 2010 version).
- Forthcoming. (2011). *Languages of the Amazon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- * Forthcoming. A. Y. Aikhenvald and Pieter Muysken, eds. *Multiverb constructions: a view from the Americas*. Leiden: Brill.
- * Forthcoming. (2010). 'Le tariana', in *Dictionnaire des langues du monde*, edited by F. Queixalos.
- * Forthcoming. 'Gender and noun class in Paumarí in a typological perspective'. In press in a Festschrift for Keep-it-secret, edited by Eithne B. Carlin and Simon van de Kerke. Leiden: Brill.
- * Forthcoming. 'Mood', in *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language Sciences*, edited by Patrick Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- * Forthcoming. 'Evidentiality', in *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language Sciences*, edited by Patrick Hogan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- * Forthcoming. 'Multilingual fieldwork, and emergent grammars', to appear in *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual Meeting of Berkeley Linguistics Society*.
- * Forthcoming. 'Typological plausibility and historical reconstruction: a puzzle from New Guinea', to appear in a Festschrift for Not-allowed-to-tell, edited by T. M. Nikolaeva

* Forthcoming. 'The grammaticalization of evidentiality', to appear in

Tianqiao (Mike) Lu