Comparative Australian linguistics workshop, 19 January 2015, ANU

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Discussion: led by Patrick McConvell

PROGRAM
Time: Monday afternoon, 19 January 2015, 1:30-5:30 pm
Place: Hedley Bull Building, Lecture Theatre 2

Presentations:
1:30 Luisa Miceli (UWA): The Pama-Nyungan family: history and issues
1:55 Mark Ellison (ANU): A Cognitive Model of Bilingual-Lead Differentiation and
        Convergence
2:40 Luisa Miceli(UWA): Looking for evidence of an anti-doppel bias in the Pilbara
3:15 Tea break
3:35 Harold Koch and Siva Kalyan (ANU): Advances in western Pama-Nyungan
        subgrouping based on shared innovations
4:30 Robert Mailhammer (UWS) and Mark Harvey UNewcastle): Reconstructing Proto-
        Australian bottom up: towards Proto-Iwaidjan and beyond
5:00 General discussion
5:30 Close

BACKGROUND
        The timing of this workshop is linked to (a) an inter-disciplinary workshop
KIMBERLEY POINTS: AN ARCHAEOLOGY-LINGUISTICS WORKSHOP 20-22
January 2015, Australian National University, organised by Patrick McConvell and Tim
Maloney, and (b) the presence in Canberra of Luisa Miceli in January.
        Two recent publications give an overview of the state of the art of Australian
comparative linguistics: Koch (2014) on Australian languages in general and Miceli (2015)
on the Pama-Nyungan family. A recent study by Bowern and Atkinson (2012) proposes for
the first time a higher-level subgrouping for the Pama-Nyungan languages. A newish
research project by Mark Harvey and Robert Mailhammer is further researching the
relationships between the Australian languages. Meanwhile, recent work by Ellison and
Miceli explores the implications of transmission that takes place among non-monolingual
speakers. Furthermore, François and Kalyan offers a model for representing genealogical
relations that don't fit into a neat family tree structure (see François 2015)
        In the light of these recent overviews, plus the research desiderata mentioned in Koch et
al. (2014), it is worth reflecting on what further progress can be made in reconstruction and
classification among the Australian languages.
        This half-day workshop discusses some of these issues, which we hope will serve to
advance knowledge of Australian comparative linguistics—focussing both on methods and
on the interpretation of data.

References
Bowern, Claire, and Quentin D. Atkinson. 2012. Computational phylogenetics and the
        internal structure of Pama-Nyungan. *Language* 88(4): 817-845.
François, Alexandre. 2014. Trees, waves and linkages: Models of language diversification. In
        Claire Bowern & Bethwyn Evans (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of historical
        linguistics*, 161–189. London: Routledge.

Koch, Harold. 2014. Historical relations among the Australian languages: genetic classification and contact-based diffusion. In Harold Koch, and Rachel Nordlinger, eds. *The Languages and Linguistics of Australia: A Comprehensive Guide*. (The World of Linguistics volume 3) Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton. Ch. 2, pp. 23-89.

Harold Koch, Robert Mailhammer, Robert Blust, Claire Bowern, Don Daniels, Alexandre François, Simon Greenhill, Brian Joseph, Lawrence Reid, Malcolm Ross, Paul Sidwell. 2014. Research priorities in historical-comparative linguistics: A view from Asia, Australia and the Pacific. *Diachronica* 31(2): 267-278.

Miceli, Luisa. 2015. Pama-Nyungan. In Claire Bowern and Bethwyn Evans (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics.* London: Routledge. Ch. 33, 704-25.

ABSTRACTS

Luisa Miceli 1
The Pama-Nyungan family: history and issues

This presentation is based on my recent chapter on Pama-Nyungan, published in the *Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. After a brief summary of scholars' views on Pama-Nyungan, I discuss why the low degree of phonological diversity and the low number of potential cognates make the task of establishing cognacy difficult: identical sound correspondences help us very little in weeding out the possibility of borrowing and few cognates mean little recurrence. I will argue that this comparative pattern suggests that other historical processes are clouding the genetic signal. Identifying what these may be, whilst not resolving the problem of paucity in the evidentiary data, would be valuable in explaining the overall picture. I suggest that the Australian pattern may be the result of normal transmission in a multilingual context and that research on the behaviour of individual bilingual speakers is highly relevant to understanding the history of Australian languages.

T. Mark Ellison
A Cognitive Model of Bilingual-Lead Differentiation and Convergence

Some parts of the world, such as arguably pre-contact Australia, exhibit long-term community-wide multilingualism that is stable at least over the lifetime of individuals. This has significant implications for understanding language transmission – whether we call it natural or not. For example, the standard confound of language- with speaker-internal change is no longer sustainable. In particular, knowledge of an L2 can affect a speaker's L1 or vice-versa. One way this can happen is by bilinguals avoiding doppels (words with similar forms and meanings in the two languages). We have shown experimentally that bilinguals in bilingual mode (a la Grosjean 1985) use doppels less frequently than monolinguals in the same semantic/pragmatic contexts.

This result contrasts with the so-called *cognate advantage* which might be expected to result in more frequent use of doppels by bilinguals. We argue that the difference in finding results from a difference in bilingual proficiency - learners struggle to find any words, and doppels are easier to find. Proficient L2 speakers, however, no longer struggle to find just any word, but rather must select between alternatives in their L2, and in this situation, we argue, doppels are at a disadvantage. The difference results from the use of a language-monitoring component in speech production akin to monitoring for taboo words. We show that a probabilistic model combining associative recall with language-monitoring can account for the results found in the experiment.

The long-term implications of an anti-doppel bias are explored via an agent-based simulation, where each agent embodies the model of language perception and production.

The simulation shows that languages with a high proportion of bilinguals lose doppels much faster than might be expected if the languages were isolated from each other.

Combined with the convergent effects of contact on structure, this result suggests a diagnostic for high rates of bilingualism in the history of a group of languages: much shared structure and little shared vocabulary. This is a pattern found widely in Australia, but reported in other parts of the world, such as northern Vanuatu, places where metatypy has taken hold such as Kupwar, and may even account for languages like Media Lengua.

While this non-independence of form loss does not impact on the use of the comparative method per se, it does mean that its evidential basis will be reduced. However, because the rate of loss of vocabulary depends on whether a form has doppels in the other language, applying modern phylogenetic methods to languages engaged in this sort of contact may not be valid. While these methods can cope with some level of variation in change of character values, the linguistic situation may result in dependencies between rates of change which invalidate trees and subgrouping built on the assumption of a locally consistent rate of change.

Luisa Miceli 2
Looking for evidence of an anti-doppel bias in the Pilbara
As will be discussed in Ellison's presentation, we have identified an anti-doppel bias in the lexical production of bilingual speakers. This bias leads to the prediction that doppels will be lost at a faster rate than non-doppels when a language has a high percentage of bilingual speakers and an ongoing history of multilingualism. I will present some work in progress, that aims to implement a methodology for identifying historical instances of differentiation via the anti-doppel bias, using lexical data from languages of the Pilbara.

Harold Koch and Siva Kalyan
Advances in western Pama-Nyungan classification based on shared innovations
The classification of the languages of the western part of the Pama-Nyungan has been relatively stable since the O'Grady, Wurm and Hale lexicostatistical classification in the 1960s—although some adjustments have since been made by Austin, Dench, Simpson and Hercus, Blevins, McConvell and Laughren. Meanwhile advances have been made in the reconstruction of Proto-Pama-Nyungan. It is possible to draw more inferences regarding subgrouping on the basis innovations from Proto-Pama-Nyungan as currently understood. I will attempt this with data from phonological, moprhological (especially pronominal), plus a few lexical innovations. The implications for classification will be compared to the results of the most recent phylogenetic classification by Bowern and Atkinson (2012), which proposes more genealogical structure among the westen languages plus higher-level grouping of these with the (north-central) Warluwarric and Yolngu subgroups. Where, as expected, this leads to apparently contradictory groupings, we will show how these can be accommodated within a variant of the wave model, as suggested by Kalyan and Francois (forthcoming).

Rob Mailhammer (UWS) & Mark Harvey (Newcastle)
Reconstructing Proto-Australian bottom up: towards Proto-Iwaidjan and beyond
This talk presents initial steps at evaluating the working hypothesis of most Australianists that all Australian languages are related, i.e. that they descend from one common node, called Proto-Australian, using the standard criteria of historical linguistics, in particular the Comparative Method. We take one language family from the Top End, Iwaidjan, and establish sound correspondences working towards a reconstruction of Proto-Iwaidja and also towards connecting this family with others in the area, most notably the Gunwinyguan languages. We show that there is a body of shared lexical correspondence sets which

establish regular sound correspondences. We demonstrate that the lexical correspondence sets satisfy the standard requirements for reliability and transparency of etymological comparison (Campbell & Poser 2008:162-223, Mailhammer 2014:430-432). We show further that this higher level comparison can elucidate lower level reconstruction. For example, there is an apparently unusual correspondence within Iwaidjan. A palatal approximant /j/ in Amurdak corresponds to alveolar laterals - Iwaidja /l̪/, Mawng /l/. The corresponding forms in Gunwinyguan have initial laminal stops. If a laminal stop is reconstructed in Iwaidjan (as opposed to a flapped lateral, see Evans 2009:162), then the reflexes are consistent with attested sound change patterns: (i) lenition of a stop to the corresponding approximant in Amurdak; (ii) a palatal > alveolar place shift in Iwaidja and Mawng (Harvey 2003:215-217), followed by lateral lenitions. A number of these correspondence sets have potential reflexes beyond Gunwinyguan and Iwaidjan in both PN and NPN languages, arguing that further evaluation of the PA hypothesis is warranted. We consider the distribution of these potential reflexes, and the implications of their distribution for fuller evaluation of the PA hypothesis.

References
Campbell, L. & W. Poser. 2008. *Language classification: history and method.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Evans, Nicholas. 2009. Doubled up all over again: borrowing, sound change and reduplication in Iwaidjan. *Morphology* 19, 159-176
Harvey, M. 2003. An initial reconstruction of Proto-Gunwinyguan phonology. In N. Evans (ed.) *The Non-Pama-Nyungan languages of northern Australia: comparative studies in the continent's most linguistically complex region*, 205-268. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
Mailhammer, R. 2014. Etymology. In C. Bowern & B. Evans (eds), *The Routledge handbook of historical linguistics*, 423-441. London: Routledge.