

ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGES

Full Presentation

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Abstract:

The focus of this There have been many classifications of languages in Victoria and surrounding areas, including those by Schmidt (1919), O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966), Blake and Reid (1998), Dixon (2002), Horgern (2004), Wafer and Lissarrague (2008). Different kinds of criteria have been applied (including shared structure, lexicostatistics, and geographical proximity) and no classification has been based completely and rigorously on the comparative method approach of using only common innovations for subgrouping (as in paper in Bower and Koch 2004). This will be attempted in this paper—which will investigate the yield of phonological changes (including treatment of initial apicals consonants and word-final *l*), morphological innovations (especially in free and enclitic personal pronouns, case markers, nominal derivational suffixes, verb forms where available) and introduction of unique vocabulary in selected semantic domains (kinship, body parts, etc.) for defining subgroups of a presumed wider Pama-Nyungan language family. Special attention will be devoted to the languages of western Victoria and the lower Murray. Diagnostic innovations will be discussed that can be used to define possible subgroups such as Kulin, Bunganditj-Warrnambool, Lower Murray, Yota-Yota plus Yabula-Yabula, and perhaps larger groups such as “Victorian”. A further question is whether the diagnostics help in assigning particular languages, such as Colac, to a defined subgroup.

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