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Newsletter — February 2000

We've moved!

After spending its first three years in the Faculty of Arts at the ANU, on 1st January the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology relocated to La Trobe University in Melbourne where it has been accorded ideal working conditions in terms of facilities, support, accommodation, and a vibrant intellectual atmosphere. We are a foundation unit in La Trobe's newly established Institute for Advanced Study.

All of our linguistic friends, from home and away, are warmly invited to come and visit us in our new location.

Who'll be at RCLT in 2000

Besides **Professor R.M.W. (Bob) Dixon** (Director), **Professor Alexandra Y. (Sasha) Aikhenvald** (Associate Director), **Mrs Siew-Peng Condon** (Executive Officer) and **Ms Carol El-Chaar** (Publications Officer) we'll have the following scholars with us this year:

—**Dr Timothy Jowan (Tim) Curnow**, who worked for us in Canberra for the past two years took up in January a three-year ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship to work on 'A cross-linguistic typology of first/non-first person marking systems and related splits in evidentiality systems'.

—**Dr Ulrike Zeshan**, worked for us in Canberra since April 1999 and is now a Research Fellow at RCLT in La Trobe, continuing a comparative typological study of sign languages, with special attention to interrogatives and questions.

—**Dr Knut Olawsky**, who has his PhD from Dusseldorf for a grammatical study of Dagbani, a West African language, and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at UC Berkeley, will join us in July on a three-year Research Fellowship. He will undertake a comprehensive description of a previously undescribed language from Peru.

—**Eva Lindström**, who has been a Visiting Fellow with us since 1997, while working on a PhD for the University of Stockholm, will be returning in March from her second field trip to New Ireland where she has been working on Kuot. She will complete her dissertation on Kuot at RCLT.

—**Professor Robert Rankin** from the University of Kansas, prominent specialist on Siouan languages, will be a Visiting Fellow here from February until August.

—**Professor Fritz Serzisko**, from the University of Kiel and the University of Cologne, will spend April-October at RCLT on an IREX Fellowship (awarded by the ARC to Professor Aikhenvald), to work on 'The typology of tense and time'.

—**Professor Jane Hill** of the University of Arizona (past President of the American Anthropological Association and current editor of the journal *Language and Society*) will be a Visiting Fellow from July until December.

—**Dr Ken Hill**, of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology and the Department of Linguistics at the University of Arizona, will also be a Visiting Fellow from July through December

—**Dr John Hajek**, Head of the Department of French and Italian Studies at the University of Melbourne will be a Visiting Fellow at RCLT during his sabbatical, March - December.

—**Marilia Ferreira**, a PhD student from the State University of Campinas, Brazil, will spend a year with us from September 2000, on a scholarship funded by the Brazilian government. Her dissertation topic is 'Aspectos Morfosintáticos da Gramática Parkatêjê-Timbira' (this is a Macro-Jê language).

We expect to have further visitors (and at least one more PhD student) coming later in the year.

Everyone at RCLT has written (or is 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-orientated scholars (from Australia or from overseas) who would like to consider spending a sabbatical at RCLT. We can provide room and computer, plus an intellectual ambience of the highest order.

Celebratory Workshop in February

To celebrate our relocation we're holding a one-day workshop (open to all) at RCLT on Wednesday February 16th. Following this, Professor Michael Osborne, the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe, will officially open the Research Centre and launch two new books. The program is:

9.45 Professor Barry Blake (Linguistics, La Trobe): Problems for typology

10.30 coffee

11.00 Professor Alexandra Aikhenvald: Evidentiality in Tariana: a typological perspective

11.45 Professor Michael Clyne (Monash University): Convergence and switching facilitation: cross-linguistic comparisons

12.30 lunch (we will provide)

2.00 Dr John Hajek (University of Melbourne): Universals of nasalisation

2.45 Professor R M W Dixon (RCLT, La Trobe): Semantic roles and syntactic functions: the semantic basis for a typology

3.30 break

4.00 Professor Michael Osborne, Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University will officially open the Research Centre and also launch two new books:

—*Changing Valency: Case Studies in Transitivity*, edited by R M W Dixon and Alexandra Y Aikhenvald. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

—*Handbook of Australian Languages, Volume 5*, edited by R M W Dixon and Barry J Blake. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

International Workshop in August

Following our successful Workshops at the ANU in 1997 and 1998 we shall be holding a Workshop on 'The status of "word": its phonological, grammatical, cultural and cognitive basis' from Monday 7th until Saturday 12th August 2000. Auditors are welcome to attend (at no fee); but please note that we are unable to organise accommodation, etc for auditors. The provisional program is:

Monday 7 August 2000 - at La Trobe City Campus (215, Franklin Street)

- 9.00 Opening of Workshop by Professor Michael Osborne, Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University
- 9.10 Alexandra Aikhenvald (RCLT): A typology of clitics, with special reference to Tariana (Arawak family)
- 10.40 coffee
- 11.00 Michael Dunn (Max Planck Institute, Niemegeen): Chukchi
- 12.30 lunch
- 2.00 Larry Hyman (UC Berkeley) and Francis Katamba (University of Lancaster): Luganda (Bantu)
- 3.30 coffee
- 4.00 Knut Olawsky (RCLT): Dagbani (Western Gur, Niger-Congo)
- 5.30 finish

Tuesday 8 August 2000 - at La Trobe City Campus (215, Franklin Street)

- 9.00 Alice Harris (Vanderbilt University, Nashville): Georgian (Kartvelian)
- 10.30 coffee
- 11.00 Brian Joseph (Ohio State University): Modern Greek
- 12.30 lunch
- 2.00 John Henderson (University of Western Australia): Arrernte (Australian)
- 3.30 coffee
- 4.00 Nicholas Evans (U of Melbourne): Dalabon (Australian)
- 5.30 finish

Wednesday 9 August - free day

Thursday 10 August 2000 - at RCLT at La Trobe main campus in Bundoora

- 9.00 R.M.W. Dixon (RCLT): Jarawara (Arawá family, Brazil)
- 10.30 coffee
- 11.00 Karl Franklin (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Dallas): Kewa (Engan family, New Guinea)
- 12.30 lunch
- 2.00 Ulrike Zeshan (RCLT): Indo-Pakistani sign language
- 3.30 coffee
- 4.00 Hilary Chappell (Linguistics, La Trobe U): Chinese
- 5.30 finish

Friday 11 August 2000 - at La Trobe City Campus (215, Franklin Street)

- 9.00 Robert Rankin (University of Kansas and RCLT): A diachronic perspective on words, clitics and affixes in the Siouan language family
- 10.30 coffee

11.00 Anthony Woodbury (U of Texas, Austin): Eskimo
12.30 lunch
2.00 Larry Trask (U of Sussex): Basque
3.30 coffee
4.00 Group discussion
5.00 finish

Saturday 12 August 2000 - at La Trobe City Campus (215, Franklin Street)

9.30 P.H. Matthews (University of Cambridge): Some theoretical conclusions
11.00 coffee
11.30 Final discussion (including publication plans, etc.)
1.00 finish

Book Collection

We now have a useful and growing collection of monographs and journals, partly through donations from Mantaro Hashimoto (via Phil Rose) and Tom Dutton, to whom we are most grateful. Anyone is welcome to make use of our book collection (but note that books may not be taken out of the building).

We welcome further donations of relevant volumes (for example, from linguists taking retirement, or just from people short of shelf space).

Report on RCLT's activities in 1999

Professor Alexandra Aikhenvald was elected to a **Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Humanities** for her distinguished contribution to research in the humanities. Her 540 page monograph *Classifiers: A typology of noun categorisation devices* will be published by Oxford University Press in early 2000. She undertook an extensive field trip to the Vaupes River region of north-western Brazil in June and July, finalising her grammar of Tariana and gathering materials for a monograph on areal linguistics and language typology, the topic for her second 5-year term as an ARC Senior Research Fellow.

Aikhenvald's book *Tariana texts and cultural context* (149 pages) was published by Lincom Europa in March. June saw the printing of her preliminary *Dicionário Tariana-Português* (338 pages). In September the preliminary edition of her *Manual da língua Tariana* was issued. She also continued work on the Manambu language of the Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, in collaboration with Pauline Laki.

Aikhenvald received an IREX award (to bring Professor Fritz Serzisko to RCLT for 6 months), an ARC small grant and a grant of \$US18,000 (\$A28,600) from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research for a study of 'Areal diffusion in the Vaupes River basin of Brazil'.

Professor R.M.W. Dixon made a field trip to the Purus River region of southern Amazonia to continue with his study of the Jarawara language, in collaboration with SIL missionary linguist Alan Vogel. He has a 650 page draft grammar which will be revised for publication in late 2000. Dixon also made good progress with his two volume work on Australian Languages. He has completed eleven of the fourteen chapters for *Australian languages, Volume 1: their nature and*

development and expects to send it to the publisher during 2000. The second volume (*A complete catalog*) will be completed during 2001.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies presented **The Stanner Award** for 'the best contribution to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies published in 1996/7' to R.M.W. Dixon and Grace Koch for their volume *Dyirbal Song Poetry: the oral literature of an Australian rainforest people* (published by the University of Queensland Press in 1996).

Dixon continued as editor for the series *Studies in Australian Languages* published by Lincom Europa in Munich. During 1999 he and Suzanne Kite prepared for publication in this series a classic of Australian grammars, Rev J.R.B. Love's 1932 MA thesis from the University of Adelaide, *The grammatical structure of the Wo'rorra language of north-western Australia*. This will appear in early 2000. Dixon also continued (jointly with Keren Rice of the University of Toronto) as editor of the monograph series *Cambridge Grammatical Descriptions*, published by Cambridge University Press. In addition, he continued on the editorial boards of the journals *Anthropological Linguistics*, *Studia Linguistica*, and *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, and of the *Typological Studies in Language* monograph series.

Dixon gained an ARC Large Grant (for 2000/1/2) and a Small Grant (for 2000).

Dixon and Aikhenvald both presented papers at the annual meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society in April, besides giving seminars to the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago. In November they took part in a Workshop on Endangered Languages at La Trobe University.

Their jointly edited volume *The Amazonian languages* (xxviii, 446 pages) was published by Cambridge University Press in October. The chapters are: Introduction by Dixon and Aikhenvald; Carib by Desmond Derbyshire; Arawak by Aikhenvald; Tupí by Aryon D. Rodrigues; Tupí-Guaraní by Cheryl Jensen; Macro-Jê also by Rodrigues; Tucano by Janet Barnes; Pano by Eugene E. Loos; Makú by Silvana and Valteir Martins; Nambiquara by Ivan Lowe; Arawá by Dixon; Small language families and isolates in Peru by Mary Ruth Wise; Other small families and isolates by Aikhenvald and Dixon; Areal diffusion and language contact in the Içana-Vaupés by Aikhenvald; and The Upper Xingu as an incipient linguistic area by Lucy Seki.

Dixon and Aikhenvald cooperated with Professor Masayuki Onishi on editing a volume entitled *Non-canonical marking of subjects and objects*. This has been accepted for publication by John Benjamins, Amsterdam. After an Introduction by Onishi, there are chapters on European Languages, by Martin Haspelmath; Icelandic, by Avery Andrews; Bengali, by Onishi; Imbabura Quechua, by Gabriella Hermon; Tariana, by Aikhenvald; Amele, by John Roberts; Japanese, by Masayoshi Shibatani; and Finnish, by Lyle Campbell and Kristina Sands.

Dixon has, since the mid-seventies, been editing volumes of the *Handbook of Australian Languages*, in collaboration with Professor Barry J. Blake. **Volume 5**, to be published in February 2000, includes grammars of Bunuba by Alan Rumsey, Ndjébbana by Graham McKay, and Kugu Nganhcara by Ian Smith and Steve Johnson, together with an introductory chapter 'Australian Aboriginal languages: their contemporary status and functions' by Mary Laughren.

Professor Masayoshi Shibatani from the University of Kobe was a Visiting Fellow in the Centre from December 1998 until March 1999. He wrote two papers, one on non-canonical subjects in Japanese and the other on the typology of non-canonical marking in cross-linguistic perspective.

Professor Paul Newman from Indiana University was a Visiting Fellow during March and April. He presented a short course on Chadic languages and revised our materials on Hausa.

Professor Marie-Lucie Tarpent from Mount St Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, spent a week with us in April, gave a presentation of the Penutian hypothesis, and participated in a discussion on Tsimishan evidentials.

Professor Hans-Jürgen Sasse from the University of Cologne was a Visiting Fellow from June until October. He taught an advanced class on Polysynthesis in the Department of Linguistics and completed a lengthy sketch of the Iroquoian language Cayuga for us.

Professor Mauro Tosco of the University of Naples was a Visiting fellow from April until November. He completed grammatical sketches of Dhaasanac and of Somali and wrote two papers, one on 'Ethiopia as a language area' (submitted to *Anthropological Linguistics*), the other on 'Clitics in Piedmontese'.

Dr Thomas Payne of the University of Oregon was a Visiting Fellow from September until December. He produced a long grammatical sketch of the Carib language Panare, and worked on a cross-linguistic typology of applicative constructions.

Professor Doris Payne of the University of Oregon spent a week with us in November and lectured on colour terms and human propensity adjectives in Maasai, from Kenya.

Professor Nikolai Vakhtin of the European University of Saint Petersburg was a Visiting Fellow from September to December. He presented a survey of the languages of the far north of Russia, wrote a paper on the Markovo variety of Chukchi, and completed a monograph on the linguistic situation in the Arctic region of Russia.

Professor Masayuki Onishi of Meio University, Japan, was a Visiting Fellow during August and September. He revised his introductory chapter to the volume *Non-canonical marking of subjects and objects*, and worked with Aikhenvald and Dixon on completing the editing of the volume.

Dr Timothy Jowan Curnow continued as Research Fellow. He produced grammatical sketches of Rumanian, Welsh, Hixkaryana and Yagua, made progress with a cross-linguistic study of copula constructions, and published three scholarly papers. He gave a seminar at the University of Kiel in July and presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Australian Linguistic Society at Perth in September. Curnow was successful in gaining an ARC Postdoctoral Fellowship which he has taken up in the Centre at La Trobe.

Dr Ulrike Zeshan joined us as Research Fellow in April (and moved with us to La Trobe at the end of the year). She produced a grammatical description of Indo-Pakistani sign language and presented a short lecture course on sign language linguistics. She embarked on a typological study of negation and interrogatives in sign languages across the world. In connection with this, she did useful fieldwork at the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Brisbane in July. She presented a paper at the International Cognitive Linguistics Conference at Stockholm, also in July.

Dr Lysbeth Ford was Visiting Fellow for the whole year (and Research Assistant for part of the year), working on languages of the Daly River Region, N.T. and investigating parameters that define the Daly region as a linguistic area.

Eva Lindström was a Visiting Fellow in the Centre while working on her PhD dissertation from the University of Stockholm, on a grammar of Kuot, a Papuan language from New Ireland, PNG. She went on a final field trip in August and will return to RCLT at La Trobe in March.

Suzanne Kite was in the final year of her MA on the Duungidjawan language from south-east Queensland, working with Professor Stephen Wurm on the field notes he collected forty years ago. She also worked as part-time publications assistant, assisting Dixon and Aikhenvald on their varied publishing projects.

Pauline Laki, journalist and native speaker of Manambu from PNG, worked with Aikhenvald on a grammar of that language, and also on a comprehensive dictionary.

Besides Kite (whose MA was supervised by Dixon) there were a number of other **graduate students** associated with the Centre (although registered with the Department of Linguistics). Aikhenvald supervised the PhD theses of Kazuko Obata (on Bilua, from the Solomon Islands), Michael Dunn (on Chukchi), and Kristina Sands (on complement clauses in Finnish), and the MA thesis of Yunseok Lee (on causatives in Korean).

Publications from past International Workshops

Volumes of papers from our first two workshops have been moving towards publication. The volume from 1997 is called *Changing valency: studies in transitivity*, edited by Dixon and Aikhenvald, and was published by Cambridge University Press in early 2000. Following the editors' Introduction and 'A typology of causatives: form, syntax and meaning' by Dixon, there are chapters by Central Alaskan Yup'ik by Marianne Mithun; on Motuna by Masayuki Onishi; on Tariana by Aikhenvald; on the Athapaskan family by Keren Rice; on K'iche' by Lyle Campbell; on Dulong/Rawang by Randy J. LaPolla; on Amharic by Mengistu Amberber; on Ngan'gityemerri by Nicholas Reid; on Tsez by Bernard Comrie; and on Creek by Jack Martin.

The volume from our 1998 Workshop, *Areal Diffusion And Genetic Inheritance: Problems in Comparative Linguistics* edited by Aikhenvald and Dixon, has been accepted for publication by Oxford University Press. Following the editors' Introduction there are the following chapters: Peter Bellwood, 'Archaeology and the historical determinants of punctuation in language family origins'; Calvert Watkins, 'An Indo-European linguistic area and its characteristics: ancient Anatolia — areal diffusion as a challenge to the comparative method?'; Dixon, 'The Australian linguistic area'; Alan Dench, 'Descent and diffusion: the complexity of the Pilbara situation, Western Australia'; Malcolm Ross, 'Contact-induced change in Oceanic languages in northwest Melanesia'; Aikhenvald, 'Areal diffusion, genetic inheritance and problems of subgrouping: a North Arawak case study'; Geoffrey Haig, 'Linguistic diffusion in present-day East Anatolia: from top to bottom'; Randy LaPolla, 'The role of migration and language contact in the development of the Sino-Tibetan language family'; Nicholas J. Enfield, 'On Genetic and Areal Linguistics in mainland Southeast Asia: parallel grammaticalisations of "get"'; James A. Matisoff, 'Prosodic diffusibility in Southeast Asian languages'; Hilary Chappell, 'Language contact and areal diffusion in Sinitic languages: problems for typology and genetic affiliation'; Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, 'Areal diffusion versus genetic inheritance: an African perspective'; Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva, 'Convergence and divergence in the development

of African languages: some general observations'; and Timothy J. Curnow, 'What language features can be "borrowed"?'.

The Rise and Fall of Languages

Dixon's short monograph *The Rise and Fall of Languages* (published by Cambridge University Press in December 1997) was reprinted during 1999 (with radical revision of the footnote on pages 36-7). A translation into Japanese will be shortly be published by Iwanami Shoten in Tokyo (with a first print run of 30,000 copies). It was nominated for the Leonard Bloomfield Book Award of the Linguistic Society of America (this award went in the end to *American Indian Languages: The Historical Linguistics of North America* by Lyle Campbell, a Visiting Fellow at RCLT in 1997 and someone who we hope to invite back before long).

The Rise and Fall of Languages has engendered much debate. Most people seem to appreciate it; just a few take the opposite stance. Of the reviews so far one was decidedly negative (that by Terry Crowley in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, Vol 19, April 1999) but all the rest have been extremely positive. We close with a few extracts:

—**Review by Martin Haspelmath in *Linguistics* 36.1001-6, 1998**

In this short book, Dixon pursues two separate goals. First, the book can serve as an excellent introduction to the general principles and some current issues concerning genetic and areal relationships between languages ... The second goal is the more interesting one for comparative linguists ... Dixon challenges the widely-held belief that the family-tree model ... should be applied in the same way everywhere in the world I want to emphasise that I regard this aspect of Dixon's work as very successful.

—**Review by Colin Renfrew in *Cambridge Archaeology*, Vol 8 No 2 (Oct 1998)**

It is certainly the most refreshing and stimulating work in the field of historical linguistics which I (as an admitted outsider to the discipline) have had the pleasure of reading.

—**Review article by Robert Orr, in *Diachronica* 16.123-57, 1999**

Dixon's new book is ground-breaking work in the true sense of the term ... In sum *The Rise and Fall of Languages* is an extremely valuable work, which will probably be extensively read and debated over the next few years (it might even be suggested that a conference should be devoted to it).

—**Book notice by Alan S. Kaye in *Language* 75.400-1, 1999**

This book contains many new and provocative ideas... This is a stimulating work — thought-provoking and likely to stir up emotions and provoke debate ... I recommend this publication be read by all linguists no matter what their fields of interest or specialisation are. D's style is witty and to the point, but more relevantly, his previous achievements qualify him to serve as the ideal spokesman on these most significant and sensitive issues, as linguistics enters the new millennium.

—**Review by Robert L. Miller, *International Journal of American Linguistics* 65:373-5**

In this short book, touching on every major principle of historical linguistics and with examples drawn from every continent and islands in the Pacific, Dixon has written a highly readable and persuasive account of how the punctuated equilibrium model may be applied to the study of historical linguistics. It would be a splendid choice as a supplementary text for a course devoted to that subject as well as for the general reader interested in language.