

Clarifications and Addenda for the RCLT Newsletter 2009

In putting together the list of members' accomplishments in the RCLT Newsletter 2009 (reporting achievements for 2008), certain items related to the activities of Professors R. M.W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald were incomplete, had incorrect details, were unintentionally left out, or were unknown at the time of writing. We apologise to Professors Aikhenvald and Dixon, and herewith correct those items:

Clarifications:

p. 1: Professors Dixon and Aikhenvald resigned as Director and Associate Director respectively on 1 May 2008. Professor Dixon left the university on 31 December 2008 and Professor Aikhenvald left on 2 January 2009.

p. 10: The first mention of Prof. Aikhenvald's grammar of Manambu here should also have included the formal title, *The Manambu Language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea*, as given later in the Newsletter, and the names of the indigenous scholarly associates should have been given as Jacklyn Yuamali Ala and Pauline Agnes Luma Laki. The published volume is xxvi plus 702 pages.

p. 11: The production of *Histórias Tariana* by Prof. Aikhenvald was in fact not in 2008, but in an earlier year.

p. 14: The item given under Prof. Aikhenvald's publications as "2008. Information source and evidentiality: what can we conclude? *Rivista di Linguistica* 19:1, Special issue on Evidentiality between lexicon and grammar, edited by Mario Squartini, 209–227." was actually published in 2007.

Addenda:

p. 8: We wish to include Professors R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald in the list of people we are grateful to for donating books and journal issues to the RCLT reading room collection.

p. 10: Prof. Aikhenvald was elected an Honorary Member of the Linguistic Society of America in 2008 (the number of Honorary Members is limited to 60 by the LSA constitution; they are spread over 25 countries). Prof. Aikhenvald is the youngest Honorary Member.

In late 2008, Professor Aikhenvald was awarded a prestigious Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California. Also in 2008, she was appointed to a prestigious First Professorship at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

p. 11: Professor Aikhenvald presented a number of lectures and plenary talks at universities in Australia, The Netherlands, Germany, and Russia in addition to being joint organiser (with Professor Dr Pieter Muyskin) of an international workshop 'Multi-verb constructions: a view from the Americas', held on 29 October 2009 at Radboud University/MPI Nijmegen in The Netherlands.

She continued her joint activities with the Tariana community and the Tariana Teaching Program in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. She also cooperated with the Manambu language community in Papua New Guinea, on literacy projects. In addition, she consulted with Aboriginal groups in North Queensland on issues in language reclamation and revival.

p. 11: Professor R. M. W. Dixon continued to consult with speakers and tribal representatives from North Queensland Aboriginal communities on questions of ethnic identity, language revitalisation, and cultural documentation. He also continued in a consultancy role for the Boumaa Vanua, Island of Taveuni, Fiji.

p. 14: Prof. Aikhenvald's publications should have included the following:
2008. Reciprocals in the making: multiple grammaticalization in Manambu, pp. 157-68 of *Studies on grammaticalization*, edited by Elisabeth Verhoeven, Stavros Skopeteas, Yong-Min Shin, Yoko Nishina and Johannes Helmbrecht. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.



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Newsletter — 2009

2008 was a year of transition for the RCLT. The most significant change was the departure of the founders of the Centre, **Professor R. M. W. Dixon** and **Professor Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald**. We are grateful to them for their contributions to the RCLT both as former directors of the Centre and as extraordinarily productive researchers in the areas of language description and linguistic typology. We are also grateful to **Professor Roger Wales** for keeping the RCLT going as Acting Director March-July 2008. At the request of the University and Professors Dixon and Aikhenvald, **Professor Randy J. LaPolla** took up the responsibilities of Director of the RCLT in July 2008, while also continuing in his role as Head of the Linguistics Program.

Throughout these changes, staff in the RCLT and in the Linguistics Program have pulled together to ensure that the activities in both areas continue to run smoothly. Our membership includes visiting scholars, postdoctoral fellows, and postgraduate students. The level of interaction and activity at the RCLT in 2009 is a testament to the commitment of staff in both areas to continuing to develop a supportive culture of collegial interaction. The result is a wide range of regular high quality academic and social activities centred round our interests in language documentation and linguistic typology.

Our academic activities include **weekly discussion meetings** (for keeping up with what we are all doing, deciding on RCLT activities, and for presenting and discussing problems of analysis), **seminars** and **local workshops** coordinated with the Linguistics Program, fortnightly **Linguistics Classics Reading Group** meetings, and monthly **Language Workshops** (day-long presentations on a particular language). Members have also organised special interest groups such as

Austronesian Languages in the Bismarck Islands (**ALIBI**), a special interest group for people working in the Bismarck Archipelago in Papua New Guinea. Members of the RCLT also plan and participate in annual conference activities; we are hosting the **Australian Linguistic Society** and co-hosting the **International Pragmatics Association** conferences in 2009. An **International Workshop** on “The Shaping of Language” is planned for 2010.

We have a number of regular social events with other linguists at La Trobe, such as the **Friday Linguists’ Lunch**, and occasional RCLT **dinner nights**. We also socialise with the linguistics community more broadly at events such as the **Melbourne Linguistics Picnic**, held 20 February 2009, and co-organised with linguists from Melbourne and Monash Universities.

The RCLT is a success because of the large number of dedicated, high-calibre scholars who are able to gather here. It is unusual for linguists with an interest in language description and documentation to be able work so closely with a large number of other scholars who have similar concerns. The training for the postgraduate students is certainly enhanced by this arrangement. In fact, all of the work produced by members of the RCLT is enhanced by the level of peer interaction available here. This allows for the fluid exchange of ideas and ongoing feedback on our work.

The RCLT was recently singled out for praise by the international **Association for Linguistic Typology** in its comments when granting the **Georg von der Gabelentz Award** for the best reference grammar written 2004–2008:

It is also worthy of mention that four out of the five finalists [for the Award] were written, at least partially, at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at La Trobe University (Australia). The Centre, and La Trobe University, deserves a special commendation for its support of grammar-writing as a core scientific endeavour in our field.

As the winner of the award, **Carol Genetti**, notes in the acknowledgements of her grammar (p. vi), “This book would never have been completed without the priceless opportunity to be in residence at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology in Melbourne, Australia, where the majority of the manuscript was written and revised. In the entire world, there is not a better place to write a grammar than in that centre, surrounded by others with the same pursuit.”



Who'll be at RCLT in 2009

Aside from **Professor Randy J. LaPolla** (Director), **Ms Siew-Peng Condon** (Executive Officer), and **Ms Jo Taylor** (Publications Assistant), we'll have the following scholars with us this year:

Research Fellows

— **Dr. Gerd Jendraschek** continues his three-year Charles La Trobe Research Fellowship. He will be continuing research on a comprehensive reference grammar of Iatmul (Gepma Kundi), a Ndu language from East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, and pursuing further fieldwork on Basque.

— **Dr. František Kratochvíl**, on a three-year La Trobe University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, is working on Papuan languages spoken on the islands of Alor and Pantar, with a particular focus on Sawila. He leaves us to take up a position at Hong Kong Baptist University later in the year and we wish him well.

— **Dr. Renée Lambert-Brétière**, on a three-year Research Fellowship, will be finishing her contract with us working on a comprehensive reference grammar of Kwoma (Washkuk), a language of the Kwoma-Nukuma family from East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea.

— **Dr. Stephen Morey**, on a three-year fellowship from the Volkswagen Stiftung (DoBeS program), is working on the multidisciplinary project entitled 'The Traditional Songs and Poetry of Upper Assam — a Multifaceted Linguistic and Ethnographic Documentation of the Tangsa, Tai and Singhpo Communities in Margherita, Northeast India.' He is also polishing his grammar of the Turung language for publication.

— **Dr. Simon Overall**, on a three-year La Trobe Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, is working on Jivaroan languages, with particular focus on Aguaruna and Huambisa. He will also continue co-supervision of Rebecca Hanson's PhD thesis.

— **Dr. Mark Post**, on a three-year Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, is working on languages from the Tani subgroup of Tibeto-Burman in north-east India.

— **Dr. Yvonne Treis**, on a three-year La Trobe University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, is continuing research on a comprehensive reference grammar of Baskeet (Basketo), a previously undocumented Omotic language spoken in South Ethiopia.

— **Dr. Katerina Zombolou**, on a three-year La Trobe University Postdoctoral Fellowship, continues her research on Greek spoken in Latin America. Greek in this area is a previously undocumented ethnodialect of the Greek language, and has been diminishing in vitality in recent years. The aim of the project is to document the linguistic changes occurring as compared to Greek spoken in Greece currently.

Visiting Fellows

— **Professor Masayoshi Shibatani**, of Rice University, a leading authority on voice systems, Austronesian languages, and languages of Japan, was an IAS Distinguished Fellow based at RCLT between 1 September 2008 and 28 February 2009. He worked on Austronesian voice systems, including passive and focus systems in eastern Indonesian languages.

— **Dr. Roberto Zavala**, from Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Unidad Sureste, will be a Visiting Fellow at RCLT from September 2009 – March 2010. He will be working on grammatical changes that took place in Cholan (Mayan) due to language contact with Zoquean (Mixe-Zoquean). He also plans to write a paper on complementation in Olutec and Zoque (both of them Mixe-Zoquean languages).

— **Professor Willem de Reuse**, from University of North Texas, Denton, will be a Visiting Fellow at RCLT from May – October 2009 and November – December 2009. He will be working on completing a scientific reference grammar of Western Apache. It is planned to be a manuscript in the 600–800 page range.

— **Dr. Pilar Valenzuela**, from Chapman University, Orange County, California, will be a Visiting Fellow at RCLT from June 2009 – July 2009. She will be organizing a panel on South American languages for the ALS conference.

— **Professor Yongmin Shin**, from Gyeongsang National University, Jinju, South-Korea, will be a Visiting Fellow at RCLT in July and August 2009. He will be working on a paper ‘Suffixal clause-linking in Korean on the subordination-coordination continuum’ (co-authored with Dr. Gerd Jendraschek). He also plans to organize a Language Workshop on Korean, and to present two public lectures during his stay at RCLT.

— **Dr. Alejandra Vidal**, Associate Professor at Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de Formosa, Argentina, will be with us from September – December 2009 working on the Pilagá (Guaykuruan) and Wichí (Mataco-Mataguayan) languages.

Honorary Visiting Fellows

— **Associate Professor John Hajek**, of French, Italian and Spanish Studies at the University of Melbourne, will continue as an Honorary Visiting Fellow, working on language typology and on the languages of East Timor.

— **Professor Roger Wales**, Emeritus Professor of the University, will continue as an Honorary Visiting Fellow.

— **Dr. David Bradley**, will continue to work on the documentation and description of the Lisu language.

— **Dr. Tonya Stebbins** is working on the typology and comparative studies of the non-Austronesian languages of the Gazelle Peninsula region of New Britain, Papua New Guinea. She is also working on the project *The Baining languages: a window on the history of Island Melanesia* with Dr. Sheena Van der Mark.

— **Dr. Alec Coupe** continues his work on the typology and description of Tibeto-Burman and Indic languages of north-east India. He will be leaving us soon to take up a position at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. We wish him all the best.

— **Dr. Sheena Van Der Mark** is working with Dr. Tonya Stebbins on her project *The Baining languages: a window on the history of Island Melanesia*. Sheena also organises ALIBI – one of the new initiatives at RCLT, and is co-supervisor of Friedel Frowein’s PhD thesis.

Honorary Research Fellows

— **Dr. David Fleck** has returned to Peru after four years as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at RCLT and has been appointed as an Honorary Research Fellow as he continues further work on Matses and other Panoan languages. He will also continue co-supervision of Roberto Zariquiey’s PhD thesis.

— **Dr. Birgit Hellwig** has taken up her position as a Junior Professor at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Erfurt, Germany. She is continuing her research on Katla, a previously undocumented Kordofanian language of the Sudan, and is at the moment focusing on the documentation and analysis of its verbal system. She is also cooperating with Roger Wales (at RCLT) and Anna Margetts (at Monash) in developing a methodology aimed at investigating verb semantics from a cross-linguistic perspective. Dr. Hellwig is also involved in co-supervision of Roberto Zariquiey’s PhD thesis.

PhD students

— **Rebecca Hanson** is in the final stages of her comprehensive reference grammar of Piro (Yine), an Arawak language of Peru.

— **Seino van Breugel** has submitted his PhD dissertation, a comprehensive reference grammar of Atong, a Tibeto-Burman language of India.

— **Rik De Busser** has submitted his PhD dissertation, a comprehensive reference grammar of Takivatan Bunun, a poorly known Austronesian language of Taiwan.

— **Du Jingyi** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Barok, a previously undescribed Oceanic language of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea.

— **Friedel Frowein** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Siar, a poorly documented Oceanic language of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea.

— **Roberto Zariquiey Biondi** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Kashibo-Kakataibo, a poorly documented Panoan language of Peru.

— **Chia-jung Pan** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Lha’ahua, an Austronesian language of Taiwan.

— **Dionysios Mertyris** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Kara, an Austronesian language of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea.

— **David Sangdong** is working on a comprehensive grammar of Kanan, a Tibeto-Burman language of western Myanmar.

Forthcoming events

Australian Linguistic Society Conference

RCLT, together with the Linguistics Program at La Trobe University, will be hosting the ALS2009 Conference from 9th July – 11th July, at the Hotel Ibis, Therry St, Melbourne and the La Trobe City Campus. Three plenary speakers have been scheduled to present at the conference: **Professor Anne Cutler** from Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, **Professor Alan Dench** from University of Western Australia and **Dr. Alex François** from LACITO, CNRS. For more information on the conference please see <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rclt/ALS2009.htm>.

Local Typology Workshop

A local Workshop on **Transitivity** meets fortnightly, on Thursdays from 3.30 – 5.00 pm. At the first meeting (21 August 2008), Randy LaPolla presented a paper ‘Questions on transitivity’. At subsequent meetings, speakers will each give a presentation on transitivity in a language on which they have specialised knowledge. At the end, we will attempt to put forward appropriate inductive generalisations. So far, we have discussed Basque, Greek, Quechua, Tagalog, and Dutch. All linguists from the Melbourne area (or from elsewhere) are warmly invited to take part in this and all other workshops and seminars at RCLT. See <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rclt/localworkshop.htm> for the schedule.

International Workshop in 2010

A Workshop is being planned for July 2010 on the topic *The Shaping of Language: Relationships between the Structures of Languages and their Social, Cultural, Historical, and Natural Environments*. More information will be posted on our website as details are confirmed.

New initiatives at RCLT

Language Workshops

We are pleased to announce the RCLT Language Workshops and invite all interested to attend. These are one-day workshops on one language each time. Every workshop covers the sociolinguistic situation (speakers, regional and diachronic variation, multilingualism and language contact, etc.), the typological profile (outstanding features in the phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.), and basic conversational practice (what to say when meeting someone for the first time). Every workshop lasts one day from 10am to 4:30pm. The workshops take place roughly every fourth Friday (commenced 13 February with “Basque”, presented by Dr. Gerd Jendraschek). For more details and a full list of the Workshops held or planned please see <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rclt/languageworkshops.htm>.

Austronesian Languages in the Bismarck Islands (ALIBI)

We are also pleased to announce the formation of ALIBI - a special interest group for those working on languages of the Bismarck Archipelago (New Britain and New Ireland) in Papua New Guinea. All of the members are doing work on a language from the Meso-Melanesian Cluster. We meet fortnightly on Monday afternoons at 2:00 pm in the RCLT Reading Room (commenced 9th February). Meetings generally consist of short, informal presentations by each participant on an agreed upon topic, followed by snacks and a general discussion about what we are currently working on. Anyone interested in attending is welcome. For further information, or to inquire about our scheduled topics, please email Sheena Van Der Mark at s.vandermark@latrobe.edu.au.

Linguistics Classics Reading Group

This newly formed reading group is open to all RCLT members and meets every fortnight (commenced 6 February) to discuss assigned readings from the linguistics literature.

RCLT Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee met on Thursday 6th February 2009. The membership was as follows:

- Professor Tim Brown, DVC (Research), *Chair*
- Professor Randy J. LaPolla, *Director*
- Professor David de Vaus, *Dean, FHUSS (Apology)*
- Professor Roger Wales, *University representative*
- Professor Malcolm Rimmer, *University representative, non FHUSS*
- Professor Kate Burridge, *external representative*
- Professor John Hajek, *external representative*
- Dr. Simon Overall, *research staff representative*
- Roberto Zariquiey, *student representative*

At the meeting, the Committee recorded its thanks to **Professor R.M.W. Dixon** and **Professor Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald** for their pioneering work in setting up such an inspirational and intellectual unit as RCLT.

RCLT Executive Committee

As stipulated in the RCLT constitution, an Executive Committee was formed which meets fortnightly. The role of the Executive Committee is to assist the Director in managing the day-to-day functioning and administration of RCLT; administering the funds available to the RCLT and preparing the annual report of RCLT and other relevant reports.

In 2008–9, we would like to acknowledge the following for their service on the Executive Committee and thank them for their contributions:

Dr. Gerd Jendraschek

Dr. Stephen Morey

Dr. Simon Overall

Dr. Cindy Schneider

Rik de Busser

Seino van Breugel

Roberto Zariquiey

Book Collection

We have a useful and growing collection of monographs — predominantly grammars of languages and good-quality works on typology, language contact, etc. In all, we now have about 1,790 volumes.

We are grateful to scholars who donated books recently: **Nitish Kumar Rai, Robert Mailhammer, Birgit Hellwig, Guy Deutscher, Gerd Jendraschek, Renée Lambert-Brétière, Barry Blake, Yvonne Treis, Seino van Breugel, Frantisek Kratochvil, Virginia Yip and Stephen Matthews, Jackson T.S. Sun, Kazuyuki Kiryu, Stephen Morey, Mark Post, Roberto Zariquiey, Stephen Morey, Elizabeth Zeitoun, John Hajek, Anna Margetts, I Gede Marsaja, David Holm and the LIAMES publishing house.** We welcome further donations of relevant volumes. All are welcome to make use of this collection, but note that volumes may not be taken out of the building.

Thinking of visiting RCLT?

Everyone at RCLT has written (or is writing) a grammar of a language, and many of us are working on linguistic typology. We welcome enquiries from similarly oriented scholars (from Australia or from overseas) who would like to consider spending a sabbatical at RCLT. We can provide a room and a computer, plus an intellectual ambience of the highest order.

Report on RCLT activities during 2008

Following is a list of contract staff, students and visitors who were at RCLT in 2008 and the language(s) they worked on:

PhD students

Rik de Busser – *Takivatan Bunun*, Taiwan
 Jingyi Du – *Barok*, New Ireland Province, PNG
 Friedel Frowein – *Siar*, New Ireland Province, PNG
 Rebecca Hanson – *Yine*, Peru
 Dionysios Mertyris – *Kara*, New Ireland Province, PNG
 Chia-jung Pan – *Lha'alua* (Saarua), Taiwan
 Seino Van Breugel – *Atong*, Meghalaya, India – Submitted December 2008
 Roberto Zariquiey – *Kashibo-Kakataibo*, Peru

Postdoctoral Research Fellows

Dr. Rosemary Beam de Azcona – *Southern Zapotec*, Mexico
 Dr. David Fleck – Panoan languages, Peru
 Dr. Birgit Hellwig – *Katla*, Sudan
 Dr. Gerd Jendraschek – *Iatmul*, East Sepik Province, PNG
 Dr. Frantisek Kratochvil – *Sawila*, Eastern Indonesia
 Dr. Renee Lambert-Bretiere – *Kwoma*, East Sepik Province, PNG
 Dr. Stephen Morey – *Singpho, Tai & Tangsa*, India. Kulin languages; Australia
 Dr. Simon Overall – Jivaroan language family, Peru
 Dr. Mark Post – Tani languages, Arunachal Pradesh, India
 Dr. Cindy Schneider – *Kairak*, East New Britain Province, PNG
 Dr. Yvonne Treis – *Baskeeto*, Ethiopia
 Dr. Georgios Tserdanelis – *Greek* in Australia
 Dr. Katerina Zombolou – *Greek* in Latin America

Visiting Fellows

Prof. Willem Adelaar; April – July
 Dr. Anna Bugaeva; Dec 07 – March 08
 Prof. Yaron Matras; June 07 – Jan 08
 Prof. Peter Trudgill; Feb – March
 Prof. Masayoshi Shibatani; Sep 08 – Feb 09
 Prof. Jackson Sun; March – May

Honorary Fellows

Prof. John Hajek
 Dr. David Bradley
 Dr. Alec Coupe
 Dr. Tonya Stebbins
 Dr. Sheena Van Der Mark

A fine warm sunny Friday afternoon in February 2009 saw a gathering of linguists from all over Melbourne at the Carlton Gardens, just behind the museum, for the **Inaugural Linguistics Picnic**. Lots of nice food was brought and shared, and it was a chance to launch a new year of profitable contacts among us all. Students, post-docs and staff from each of Melbourne, Monash and La Trobe University were all there, including a good contingent of RCLT members.

The **Third International Conference of the North East Indian Linguistics Society** (NEILS) — organised by **Mark Post** and **Stephen Morey**, both from RCLT, and Jyotiprakash Tamuli, Head of the Department of Linguistics at Guahati University — was held between 18 and 22 January 2008. This was a resounding success, the conference being attended by more than 100 participants from across India and abroad. The proceedings of the previous NEILS conferences held in 2006 and 2007 have been published by Cambridge University Press (India). The proceedings of the Third conference (co-edited by Mark Post, Stephen Morey and Gwendolyn Lowes of the University of Oregon) will be submitted for publication shortly.

On 19th December 2008, **Professor Masayoshi (Matt) Shibatani** organised a one-day workshop, *Compound verbs in the Indo-Turanian linguistic area*, with **Prashant Pardeshi** and **Peter Hook**, **Kazuyuki Kiryu**, **Miki Nishioka**, **Sung-Yeo Chung**. It was an interesting and full day with six papers presented.

A major achievement this year for **Professor Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald** was the publication by Oxford University Press of a comprehensive grammar of Manambu, a language from the Ndu family in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea. The 1200 page typescript is based on immersion fieldwork in the village of Avatip, and was written with the assistance of language speakers Pauline Laki and Yuamali Jacklyn Benji Ala.

Two books published in hardcover in 2006 were reissued in paperback in 2008: *Complementation: a cross-linguistic typology*, Dixon and Aikhenvald (eds) *Grammars in Contact: a cross-linguistic typology*, Aikhenvald and Dixon (eds).

During the year, other than our own members and visitors, we also had the honour of having external speakers present at our weekly seminars and workshops. Among them were: **Dr. Ruth Singer** (University of Melbourne) and **Dr. Rachael Nordlinger** (University of Melbourne).

Members' Achievements and Interaction with the Wider Linguistics Community

In addition to the usual weekly local seminar presentations and fieldwork trips that our members undertake each year, this section highlights some of the individual achievements and international collaboration that took place in 2008.

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald

- Published and distributed *Historias Tariana*, a mimeographed collection of Tariana stories for the community use. Iauarete: Amazonas.

Gerd Jendraschek

- Was a Visiting Fellow at Gyeongsang National University: Department of German Language and Literature; South Korea. April–May 2008. (Teaching assistant for courses 'Introduction to German' and 'German phonology').
- Published and distributed the first edition of *Iatmul stories. Gepmakudiba bucheliya wapuchapuk* : a collection of 38 transcribed Iatmul stories and songs, with translation into English, 125 pages.

Presentations:

'Lexical innovation in Iatmul: From bitter water in a coconut shell to a glass of beer'. University of Queensland, Brisbane (Australia), 30 September 2008. (Invited public lecture).

'The vowel system of Iatmul: Emerging phonemes and unexpected contrasts'. 2nd Sydney Papuanists' Workshop 2008. University of Sydney, Sydney (Australia), 29 June 2008.

Renée Lambert-Brétière

- Was awarded \$5000 in May 2008 from the La Trobe Publications Committee for the publication of her thesis with Peeters Publishers.

Presentations:

The Grammaticalization of the Verb WO 'to say' in Kwoma, 2nd Sydney Papuanists' Workshop, University of Sydney, June 28–29, 2008.

Was invited by Prof. Claire Lefebvre of the Department of Linguistics at University of Quebec in Montreal from 29 May to 12 June 2008:

- a. to work on a project "The status of 'sentence' in language typology";
- b. to give two conference presentations:
 - 'Les propositions récapitulatives en kwoma', 2 June 2008
 - 'La grammaticalisation du verbe wo 'dire' en kwoma', 9 June 2008

Stephen Morey

- Acted as co-supervisor to Seino Van Breugel on the final stages of his PhD dissertation.
- Produced and distributed to the community the first draft of *Tai Ahom Dictionary, based on manuscripts*.
- Was joint Editor with Tonya Stebbins and Myfany Turpin (University of Queensland) of a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* on Language in Song for publication in late 2009.
- Worked with Luise Hercus, Barry Blake and Ted Ryan on a grammar of the Mathi Mathi group of languages of North West Victoria and South West NSW (for submission to publisher in late 2009).
- *Turung – a variety of the Singpho language spoken in Assam* accepted for publication by Pacific Linguistics.

Presentations:

Workshop presentations at Gauhati University (on linguistic analysis) and at Melbourne University (on traditional music in Upper Assam).

Mark Post

- Convened an invited workshop series entitled *Fieldwork methodology: The Tani languages of North-East India*. Jawahar Lal Nehru University, Delhi, India.
- Together with Dr. Stephen Morey, applied for and was awarded an ARC South Asia Node Project Grant on behalf of NEILS.
- Worked together with the Galo community of Arunachal Pradesh to achieve state-level recognition of Galo language and its introduction in schools. Materials will include three textbooks, an orthography primer and a 487-page dictionary, which have been distributed to district schools free of charge.
- Wrote front-page articles in NE India local newspaper to promote awareness of issues related to endangered languages: “Many Arunachali languages may indeed die within our lifetimes.” *Arunachal Times*, 26 November, 2008: 1, 3; “The study, teaching and preservation of languages in Arunachal Pradesh.” *Arunachal Times*, 1 August, 2008: 1, 3.

Presentations:

‘Fieldwork-based description of North-East Indian languages.’ Seminar presentation, Tezpur University, Tezpur, Assam, IN, November 28, 2008.

‘North East Indian linguistics: Present state and future prospects.’ Seminar presentation, Lakhimpur College, Lakhimpur, Assam, IN, September 8, 2008.

‘Adjectives in Mainland South-East Asian languages: What do they teach us about the nature, identification and universality of word classes?’ Seminar presentation, Department of Linguistics, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, TH, June 24, 2008.

‘The language, culture, environment and origins of Proto-Tani speakers: What is knowable, and what is not (yet).’ Paper presented at the International Conference on Origins and Migrations among Tibeto-Burman Speakers of the Extended Eastern Himalaya, Humboldt University, Berlin, DE, May 23–25, 2008.

‘Nominalization-based constructions in Tibeto-Burman: Synchronic and diachronic perspectives.’ Seminar presentation, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, NL, May 16, 2008.

‘Tyranny of the trochee: The phonology and grammar of Galo ‘words’.’ Seminar presentation, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, LACITO, Paris, May 13, 2008.

‘Language and the cultural history of central Arunachal Pradesh.’ Paper presented at the Asian Borderlands Research Network Conference, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Assam, IN, January 16–18, 2008.

Katerina Zombolou

Presentations:

‘The Greek Verb Lexicon’, for the 9th Biennial Conference, Multidisciplinary Approaches to Greek Studies, La Trobe University, Melbourne, December 2008.

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands,
that goes to his head.*

*If you talk to him in his language,
that goes to his heart.*

Nelson Mandela

Publications

This is a selected list of books, book chapters and journal articles (members of the Research Centre also put out a number of scholarly reviews). We list items published in 2008 and also items accepted for publication which are 'in press'. The list covers publications by present and past members of RCLT, based on work done while they were at the Research Centre.

ALEXANDRA Y. AIKHENVALD

2008. *The Manambu language from East Sepik, Papua New Guinea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2008. Multilingual imperatives: elaboration of a category in north-west Amazonia. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 74.2: 189–225.
2008. Versatile cases. *Journal of Linguistics* 44.3: 565–603.
2008. Semi-direct speech: Manambu and beyond. *Language Sciences* 30: 383–442.
2008. Information source and evidentiality: what can we conclude? *Rivista di Linguistica* 19:1, Special issue on Evidentiality between lexicon and grammar, edited by Mario Squartini, 209–227.
- In Press. *Imperatives and commands*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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*If I forget my native speech,
And the songs that my people sing
What use are my eyes and ears?
What use is my mouth?*

*If I forget the smell of the earth
And do not serve it well
What use are my hands?
Why am I living in the world?*

*How can I believe the foolish idea
That my language is weak and poor
If my mother's last words
Were in Evenki?*

**Alitet Nemtushkin,
Evenki poet**

Dr. David Watters

We are sad to note the passing of an old friend and frequent visitor to the RCLT, **Dr. David Watters**. With many years' experience living in Nepal and working on Kham and other languages there, he had much to offer to the RCLT discussions, Tibeto-Burman linguistics, and the field generally.

His work will be of lasting influence, and personally, we will all miss him greatly.

The Research Centre for Linguistic Typology

The Research Centre for Linguistic Typology (RCLT) is committed to comprehensively analysing the linguistic structures of endangered and previously undescribed languages. This commitment is part of a worldwide enterprise to document and preserve for posterity as much of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity and heritage as possible. Analyses are based on primary linguistic data collected through extensive immersion fieldwork in speech communities across the world, and, wherever possible, data are archived in international digital archives. Research at the RCLT covers many areas of the world, though we have particular strengths in the languages of the Tibeto-Burman family and the languages of the Amazon and Papua New Guinea. All research is cast within the larger framework of typological linguistics, thus drawing on and contributing to our theoretical understanding of human language, culture and cognition. The RCLT undertakes typological investigations, following an inductive methodology, putting forward generalisations concerning the nature and mechanism of the human language ability and associated cognitive capacities, and investigates relationships between languages, both in terms of historical development and genetic links, and the influence of contact phenomena between geographically contiguous languages within a linguistic area. For instance, we document what sorts of categories are found grammaticalised in language, and investigate the interrelation between different grammatical categories — if gender choice depends upon number is it always the case that there are more genders in singular than plural? And we look at how languages change — in what circumstances and from what sources do languages develop tones? And why and how do languages lose tones? Relative to the question of the ways in which languages influence each other, we ask what kinds of words, or grammatical categories, or construction types, are likely to be borrowed between two contiguous languages, and under what social circumstances? Are some kinds of grammatical system particularly open to diffusion, so that they are likely to spread over all the languages in a geographical area, and are other kinds of system less likely to be diffused? This research enables us to lay the foundation for scientific understanding concerning the reasons for and mechanisms of language development.

We welcome enquiries from linguistic scholars who are involved in the sort of work carried out at the RCLT and would like to spend a sabbatical at the RCLT. We can provide a room, a computer, and an intellectual ambience of the highest order. We also welcome enquiries from students interested in applying for a PhD scholarship, to write a grammar of an endangered language.

More information is available on our website: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rclt>