



Semantic Shifts

Fréjus - Destremau
12-23 Sept. 2022

Semantic Shifts: From lexicon to grammar. Diachronic and typological perspectives

Areal Course 1

Australian languages: Semantics and contact

Maïa Ponsonnet (Dynamique Du Langage, CNRS; University of Western Australia)

This course provides an introduction to classic and current research on Australian languages, with special emphasis on a number of phenomena well-represented on the continent: nominal classification, body-based semantic extensions, and contact languages. After a general introduction in the first session, each module will focus on one linguistic phenomenon, the exploration of which will shed light upon a number of other Australian features. I will use data from the published literature, as well as first-hand data and analyses on languages from the Top End region (northern Australia), particularly Gunwinyguan languages (non-Pama-Nyungan). The course consists of four modules:

1. Introduction to Australian languages

This module provides an introduction to the study of Australian languages. I will present their distribution and ecology, typological profile(s), sociolinguistics and general ethnographic background, as well as genetic classification and the current debates around their history.

Suggested readings: Evans (1992), Gaby & Singer (2014), Miceli (2015), Evans (2020)

2. Grammatical semantics: nominal classification

This module presents the diverse ways in which Australian languages realize nominal classification. Some of them, like gender systems, are well known features of the continent. Others, such as extended systems of possession classes, have not yet been systematically described.

Suggested readings: Dixon (1982), Wilkins (2000), Singer (2010)

3. Lexical semantics: figurative representations of emotions

In this module I will present some of my own research on the lexical semantics of Australian Indigenous languages, specifically the role of body-part words in figurative representations of emotions.

Suggested readings: Evans & Wilkins (2000), Gaby (2008), Ponsonnet (2022)

4. Contact varieties: lexical semantics in Kriol

This module deals with Australian contact languages, with a focus on Kriol, the largest Australian creole. After presenting the main Australian contact varieties, I will discuss the Australian influence on Kriol lexical semantics.

Suggested readings: Ponsonnet (2010), Schultze-Berndt, Meakins & Angelo (2013), Meakins (2014)

References

- Dixon, Robert M W, and Joshua A Fishman. 1982. *Where Have All the Adjectives Gone?: And Other Essays in Semantics and Syntax*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.
- Evans, Nicholas. 1992. "Multiple Semiotic Systems, Hyperpolysemy, and the Reconstruction of Semantic Change in Australian Languages." In *Diachrony within Synchrony*, edited by Günter Kellerman and Michael D Morrissey, 475–508. Bern: Peter Lang Verlag.
- . 2020. "Time, Diversification, and Dispersal on the Australian Continent Three Enigmas of Linguistic Prehistory." In *Language Dispersal, Diversification, and Contact*, edited by Mily Crevels and Pieter Muysken, 116–40. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Nicholas, and David Wilkins. 2000. "In the Mind's Ear: The Semantic Extensions of Perception Verbs in Australian Languages." *Language* 76 (3): 546–92.
- Gaby, Alice R. 2008. "Guts Feelings: Locating Emotion, Life Force and Intellect in the Thaayorre Body." In *Body, Culture and Language: Conceptualizations of Internal Body Organs across Cultures and Languages.*, edited by Farzad Sharifian, René Dirven, Yu Ning, and Susanne Niemeier, 27–44. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Gaby, Alice, and Ruth Singer. 2014. "Semantics of Australian Languages." In *The Languages and Linguistics of Australia*, edited by Harold Koch and Rachel Nordlinger, 495–507. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Meakins, Felicity. 2014. "Language Contact Varieties." In *The Languages and Linguistics of Australia: A Comprehensive Guide*, edited by Harold Koch and Rachel Nordlinger, 361–411. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Miceli, Luisa. 2015. "Pama-Nyungan." In *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, edited by Claire Bowerman and Bethwyn Evans, 704–25. Routledge.
- Ponsonnet, Maïa. 2010. "'Brainwash from English'? Barunga Kriol Speakers' Views on Their Own Language." *Anthropological Linguistics* 52 (2): 160–83.
- . 2022. "The Linguistic Embodiment of Emotions. A Study of the Australian Continent." *Ethos* 50 (2): 153–83. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12338>.
- Schultze-Berndt, Eva, Felicity Meakins, and Denise Angelo. 2013. "Kriol." In *The Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS)*, edited by Susan M Michaelis, Matthew Maurer, Martin Haspelmath, and Magnus Huber, 241–51. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Singer, Ruth. 2010. "Creativity in the Use of Gender Agreement in Mawng How the Discourse Functions of a Gender System Can Approach Those of a Classifier System." *Studies in Language* 34 (2): 382–416.
- Wilkins, David. 2000. "Ants, Ancestors and Medicine: A Semantic and Pragmatic Account of Classifier Constructions in Arrernte (Central Australia)." In *Systems of Nominal Classification*, edited by Gunter Senft, 147–216. Cambridge University Press.