



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

**Semantic
Shifts**

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Australian languages: Semantics and contact

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This course provides an introduction to classic and current research on Australian languages, with special emphasis on lexical and grammatical semantics and their interface, and on contact phenomena. I use published data from the literature, as well as fieldwork data from Paman (Pama-Nyungan) languages of Cape York Peninsula, in northeastern Australia. The course consists of four modules (see pages 2-9 for more details and references):

1. Introduction to Australian languages

This module is a basic introduction to the study of Australian languages, specifically genetic classification, basic morphosyntax, sociolinguistics and general ethnographic background. This selection of topics is meant to pave the way for modules on lexical semantics (culture and ethnography), grammatical semantics (morphosyntax) and language contact (sociolinguistics).

2. Lexical semantics

This module deals with research on lexical semantics in Australian languages. I will cover classic domains like kinship and placenames, as well as recent work on emotion terminology. The focus will be on lexical semantic analysis, but I will also discuss interactions with morphosyntax (emotions), gesture (kinship) and historical linguistics (kinship, placenames).

3. Grammatical semantics

This module deals with research on grammatical semantics in Australian languages, specifically aspects of clause grammar and transitivity. I will discuss the semantics of grammatical phenomena like case, experiencer constructions and complex verb structures, with special attention to their interfaces with pragmatics (optional case marking) and the lexicon (experiencer constructions, complex verb constructions).

4. Language contact

This module deals with contact phenomena in Australian languages. I will present a number of case studies of contact effects in morphosyntax and the lexicon, and I will examine the basis of contact in the sociolinguistics of multilingualism. I will also discuss implications for historical linguistics and semantics.

Module 1. Introduction to Australian languages

1. Basics

- Languages: numbers, genetic status, sociolinguistic status
- People: prehistory, ethnography, current issues
- Sources: basic references & databases

2. Structure

- Phonology: phoneme inventories, phonotactics, suprasegmentals
- Morphosyntax:
 - Nominal: word classes, classification, NP structure
 - Clausal: alignment, incorporation, verb classification
- Discourse: genres & data types

3. Ethnography

- General issues: unity vs diversity, classical vs post-classical structures
- Specific topics:
 - Subsistence & material culture
 - Kinship & local organization
 - Post-classical transformations

4. Sociolinguistics

- Language and local organization
- Multilingualism
- Vitality & revitalisation

5. Some basic references

- Linguistics:
 - General: Dixon (1980, 2002), Blake (1987), Walsh & Yallop (1993), McGregor (2004), Koch & Nordlinger (2014), Bowern (forthc)
 - Historical-comparative: Evans (2003), Bowern & Koch (2004)
 - Popular: Dixon (1984), Evans (2009)
- Ethnography: Hiatt (1996), Keen (2004); contact history Reynolds (1981), Mulvaney (1989)
- Archaeology: Mulvaney & Kamminga (1999), Hiscock (2008)

Module 2. Lexical semantics

1. General issues

- Overview of lexical semantic work
- Lexical variation: registers, dialects & linguistic ideology
- Lexical change: patterns of semantic change and lexical replacement

Reference: Gaby & Singer (2014)

2. Kinterms

- Data: kinterms in Umpithamu and other Paman languages
- Synchronic analysis:
 - Meaning: features, generality, relation to social structure
 - Use: kinterms & other person reference, relation to gesture
- Diachronic analysis: semantic & morphological change, relation to social change

References: Scheffler (1978), Dousset et al. (2010), Dousset (2011), Gaby (2016), Green et al. (2018), Hill (2018), Verstraete (2020)

3. Placenames

- Data: placenames in Umpithamu and Lamalamic languages
- Synchronic analysis:
 - Meaning: reference, coverage & relation to landscape features
 - Use: placenames & other spatial reference
- Diachronic analysis: degrees of transparency, relevance to land-language relations

References: Hercus, Hodges & Simpson (2002), Koch & Hercus (2009), Sutton (2010), Hill & Ashmore (forthc)

4. Emotion terms

- Data: emotion terms in Middle Paman and Southwest Paman languages
- Synchronic analysis: coverage, morphosyntax
- Diachronic analysis: body part metaphors

References: Hiatt (1978), Gaby (2008a), Ponsonnet (2014, 2016), Verstraete (2020)

Module 3. Grammatical semantics

1. General issues

- Patterns of case marking
- Types of complex verb structures

References: McGregor (2002), Bowerman (2014), Nordlinger (2014)

2. Optional case marking

- Data: optional ergative marking in Paman languages
- Synchronic analysis: interface with referential status & pragmatics
- Diachronic analysis: origins of (optional) ergative markers

References: Gaby (2008b, 2010), McGregor (2010, 2017), Verstraete (2010), Chappell & Verstraete (2019)

3. Experiencer constructions

- Data: experiencer constructions in Umpithamu and Lamalamic languages
- Synchronic analysis: relative weight of case marking and verbal semantics
- Diachronic analysis: extensions towards general intransitivizing strategies

References: Evans (2004), Verstraete (2011a, b)

4. Complex verbs

- Data: complex verb structures in Gooniyandi (McGregor 2002)
- Synchronic analysis: relation to Aktionsart categories, classificatory functions
- Diachronic analysis: ideophonic origins, relations to verb conjugations

References: Schultze-Berndt (2000, 2001), McGregor (2001, 2002), Bowerman (2014)

Module 4. Language contact

1. General issues

- Classic work on contact & linguistic areas
- Nature of contact: matter versus pattern?
- Sociolinguistic basis

References: Heath (1978), Alpher & Nash (1999), Dixon (2002)

2. Diagnostics of contact

- Data: contact phenomena between Middle Paman and Lamalamic languages
- Lexicon:
 - Patterns of borrowing & calquing
 - Historical layering in multilingual placename sets
- Morphosyntax: pattern transfer
 - Changes in typological profile
 - Related constructional changes

References: Rigsby (1997), Verstraete (2011b, 2012, 2018)

3. Sociolinguistic basis

- Patterns of multilingualism & their ethnographic basis
- Nature & directionality of contact
- Comparison with other regions

References: Sutton (1978), Sutton & Rigsby (1979), Singer & Harris (2016), Singer & Vaughan (2018)

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