

Jawun Research Centre

# SEMINAR SERIES

Communication, Health, and Social  
and Cultural Well-Being



## Special Seminar 27: Linguistic divergence and form vs order

This multidisciplinary seminar series aims to create a forum centered in Jawun. It is for researchers at CQUniversity, across Queensland and all over the world, as a forum to share their research findings and establish potential synergies, leading to joint grant applications, and partnerships that endeavour to advance knowledge in various disciplines.

### Location

Room **3.06**, CQUniversity Cairns Campus  
Corner Abbott Street and Shields Street  
Or via [Zoom](#) Passcode: **864381**

### Date and Time

**Wednesday 19 April 2023**

3:00pm – 5:00pm **Qld time**

Light refreshments provided

### RSVP

JRC Administration via email: [jrc@cqu.edu.au](mailto:jrc@cqu.edu.au)  
or phone: 07 4923 2672

Further seminars upcoming in 2023 – [watch this space!](#)



### Speaker

John Mansfield, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at the University of Melbourne

### Abstract

Typological and historical research shows that languages in close contact with one another often

develop similar grammatical structures, while maintaining sharp distinctions in their lexical forms. Social contact between groups seems to promote grammatical convergence, sometimes accompanied by lexical divergence. However, the lexical/grammatical dividing line in language is not always easy to draw, and the nuanced effects of social contact on linguistic divergence therefore require further exploration. In this talk I begin with some examples from the Daly region of northern Australia, suggesting that the divergence/convergence dynamic may be better formulated as a matter of form vs order, or form vs semantics, rather than lexicon vs grammar. I then present a global survey of dialect differentiation that offers some support for this proposal.