

Mirima Linguistic Forum

Thursday, 20 March 2014

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) would like to announce its 8th Linguistic Forum to take place on Thursday, 20 March, starting at 12:30pm. The forum will be held at Mirima Language Centre, Kununurra.

The following presentations are scheduled:

Presentation 1: 12:30-14:00

Frances Kofod, MDWg:

An introduction to Miriwoong speech verbs

Presentation 2: 14:00-15:00

Amy Cruickshanks, University of Melbourne:

Multiple coverb constructions in Miriwoong: a preliminary investigation

Presentation 3: 15:00-16:00

Stephanie Woerde, MDWg:

Setting up a Language Nest program on Miriwoong country

Please have a look at the presenters' biography on the following page.

The Mirima Linguistic Forum is an initiative by MDWg to bring together people with an academic interest in Indigenous studies. While our focus is on language and culture, ideally with a reference to local Indigenous matters, we welcome contributions on related topics. Presentations occur in an informal and relaxed atmosphere and we leave plenty of time for discussion and exchange. The forum is open to all; if you happen to be in the Kununurra area and would like to present on a topic of interest - please let us know: info@mirima.org.au.

Our presenters

FRANCES KOFOD has been involved in many projects to do with language and culture in the East Kimberley during the past forty years, including extensive work with all Jarragan languages (Miriwoong, Gajirrabeng, and Gija). She came to Kununurra in the 1970s to record Miriwoong language for the University of New England and completed a description of Miriwoong grammar as an MA Honours thesis in 1978. She also recorded Gajirrabeng at the request of senior speakers. In 1989 she assisted the Mirima Council in setting up the *Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre* (MDWg) which keeps functioning as a hub for Miriwoong language and cultural maintenance. Frances still works part-time for MDWg, assisting with the Miriwoong Master-Apprentice program and working on grammar, dictionary and traditional ecological knowledge projects. Since 2009, after completion of a community dictionary with Miriwoong people she has been working on the Miriwoong Grammar project with a focus on the vastly complex system of Miriwoong verbs. Her presentation will address the topic of Miriwoong speech verbs based on a preliminary analysis.

AMY CRUICKSHANKS is about to complete a 10 week long internship at MDWg. During her time here she has worked on a variety of language revitalisation tasks with Indigenous language workers, and has also had the opportunity of conducting a preliminary investigation of multiple coverb constructions in Miriwoong - a topic of particular relevance since it has not been studied in detail so far. With a BA (Hons) in Linguistics from the University of Sydney in hand as well as a passion for language, Amy has spent the past 5 years teaching undergraduate linguistics subjects and also working as a linguist for two different language technology companies in Sydney. On leaving MDWg, Amy will embark on her PhD study at the University of Melbourne.

STEPHANIE WOERDE has a BA in Development Studies and Culture Change, with first class Honours in Anthropology from Macquarie University. Her Honours thesis, *'What's in a name?': Miriwoong naming systems and non-Miriwoong processes of identification documentation*, investigated the intricacies and importance of the many Miriwoong forms of person reference, and explored their sometimes problematic relationship with more 'official,' 'Western' forms of constructing and documenting identity. Enthused to continue working with the Miriwoong community, Stephanie joined MDWg in 2013 to take on the role of Language Nest Facilitator, with the aim of developing the Miriwoong Language Nest as a new initiative. She has trained a number of Miriwoong women as Language Engagement Officers as part of this project which recently started rolling out in collaboration with various local providers of early childhood care. Stephanie expresses that taking part in the Language Nest initiative positively combines her interests and experiences in language learning and teaching, working with children, Indigenous affairs and broader community development. Her presentation will shed light on the background, progress and current state of the Miriwoong Language Nest program.