

Mirima Linguistic Forum

Thursday, 1st October 2020

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) would like to announce its 25th Linguistic Forum to take place on Thursday, 1st of October 2020, starting at 1:30pm (AWST - Western Australia). The forum will be held at Mirima Language Centre, Kununurra with the possibility of joining online.

→ To join online via Zoom, please request a link from manager@mirima.org.au.

This meeting will host the following presentation:

Getting to the semantics: The expression of aspecto-temporal relations in a Kriol variety

Connor Brown, University of Western Australia

CONNOR BROWN is a PhD candidate at the University of Western Australia. He is currently working on a model-theoretic analysis of aspecto-temporal features in Kriol, with a focus on East Kimberley varieties. Prior to this, Connor has worked on aspects of discourse and syntax in Kriol varieties of the Northern Territory, and on language admixture in the central desert. Connor's research interests broadly encompass language contact and change, grammaticalization theory, and formal perspectives on semantics and pragmatics.

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: manager@mirima.org.au.

ABSTRACT

Getting to the semantics: The expression of aspecto-temporal relations in a Kriol variety

Connor Brown, UWA

The expression of tense and aspect in creole languages has been subject to widespread study since the latter half of the 20th century. This is in large part due to the legacy of the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis (LBH), a theory of creole genesis that drew heavily from universal grammar (Bickerton, 1984; Veenstra, 2008). Although this theory has been largely refuted by creolists, Bickerton's conceptualization of a rudimentary tense-mood-aspect system that was regular and predictable across all creole languages inspired an extensive research tradition into how these features surface across them.

Since this time, study on creole aspecto-temporal forms has been concentrated in the Atlantic region and has favoured the morphosyntax of such forms rather than their semantics. For the many creoles situated outside of this region, information concerning aspecto-temporal semantics is scarce. Kriol, an English-lexified creole spoken throughout northern Australia is a typical example, where the extent of tense-aspect research has been limited to broader grammatical description and so there is a large gap concerning the semantics of these forms (Hudson, 1983; Sandefur, 1979).

In this presentation I provide an initial exploration of the semantics of selected parts of the tense-aspect system in a Kriol variety of the East Kimberley. The variety in question is used as the daily code of interaction by Miriwoong people residing in and around the town of Kununurra. I consider the aspecto-temporal domains of past time reference and imperfectivity. An initial analysis of these selected domains reveals a complex semantic configuration in how these concepts are expressed. Additionally, diachronic processes influencing the expression of these domains are observed where relevant. The analysis here suggests that Kriol, like many other languages of its kind, hosts an array of internal complexity in its aspecto-temporal system. This is contrary to commonplace assumptions of semantic simplicity and compositionality across creole languages, which is a legacy of theories like the LBH.

References

- Bickerton, D. (1984). The language bioprogram hypothesis. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 7(2), 173–188.
- Hudson, J. (1983). *Grammatical and Semantic Aspects of Fitzroy Valley Kriol*. Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Sandefur, J. (1979). *An Australian Creole in the Northern Territory: A Description of Ngukurr-Bamyili Dialects*. Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Veenstra, T. (2008). Creole Genesis: The Impact of the Language Bioprogram Hypothesis. In S. Kouwenberg & J. V. Singler (Eds.), *The Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies* (pp. 219–241). Oxford: Blackwell.