

Mirima Linguistic Forum

Monday 19th July 2021

Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre (MDWg) would like to announce its 28th Linguistic Forum to take place on Monday, 19th of July 2021, starting at 1:15pm (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 info@mirima.org.au

This meeting will host the following presentation:

Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond

Prof. Ghil'ad Zuckermann
The University of Adelaide

Ghil'ad Zuckermann is a leading expert in 'revivalistics' and Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide. His study of language, culture and identity has taken him across the world, he is highly acclaimed in the media, and he has been instrumental in the revival of many languages in Australia and abroad. His latest book with the above title was published by Oxford University Press in 2020.

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

Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond

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This talk will introduce Revivalistics, a global trans-disciplinary field of enquiry that studies language reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration from various angles such as law, mental health, education, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, geography, politics, history, biology, evolution, genetics, genomics, colonization studies, missionary studies, media, technology, talknology (talk+technology), archaeology, meteorology, theatre, dance, music, and even architecture.

For example, an architect involved in Revivalistics might ask the following 'location, location, location' question, which is, of course, beyond language: Should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a natural Indigenous setting, to replicate the original ambience of heritage, culture, laws and lores? Or should we reclaim an Indigenous language in a modern building that has Indigenous characteristics such as Aboriginal colours and shapes? Or should we reclaim an Aboriginal language in a western governmental building — to give an empowering signal that the tribe has full support of contemporary mainstream society?

The talk will explore the differences between Revivalistics and Descriptive Linguistics, and also propose Native Tongue Title, compensation for language loss.

The talk will explain why language revival is (1) right, (2) beautiful, and (3) beneficial. In our current world, more and more groups are losing their heritage. Language reclamation (e.g. Hebrew and the Barngarla Aboriginal language of South Australia), revitalization (e.g. Shanghainese and the Adnyamathanha Aboriginal language) and reinvigoration (e.g. Te Reo Māori and Welsh) are becoming increasingly relevant as more and more people seek to reconnect with their ancestors, recover their cultural autonomy, empower their spiritual and intellectual sovereignty, and improve their wellbeing and mental health.

There is an urgent need to offer comparative insights, for example from the Hebrew revival, which resulted in a hybrid that I call "Israeli".

Main Reference:

Zuckermann, G. 2020. *Revivalistics: From the Genesis of Israeli to Language Reclamation in Australia and Beyond*. New York: Oxford University Press.