

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Research Unit for Indigenous Language.

RUIL consists of a team of researchers from the School of Languages and Linguistics, led by **Professor Rachel Nordlinger** and **Associate Professor Nick Thieberger**.

This newsletter presents some of the highlights of the last 5 months, and focuses particularly on events, field-work, new and continuing projects, and new grants.

For a full list of all publications, conference presentations and current grants, please visit our website:
<http://arts.unimelb.edu.au/indiglang>

PROJECT MILESTONE 50 WORDS IN 50 LANGUAGES!

RUIL's 50 Words Project works with communities across Australia to provide words in Indigenous Australian languages through our online map which showcases Australia's fascinating linguistic diversity (<https://50words.online>). The map can be searched by language or by word, with translations included for 'welcome', 'hello', 'goodbye', 'yes' and 'no', family members, animals and the local environment, as well as phrases like 'what is your name?'. The map is currently being used as a learning resource in schools, educational organisations and homes around the country.

Unfortunately, project activity has been restricted in recent months as we haven't been able to travel to support speakers to make new recordings in person. But thanks to our incredible contributors we've reached an exciting milestone: you can now hear 50 words in more than 50 languages on our map!

Recent additions include Dalabon from the Arnhem Land region of the Top End, Mpakwithi from far north Queensland's Cape York, and Ngarluma from the Pilbara. The project has also developed a Learning Activities pack to accompany the map, with word searches, quizzes, and language challenges for students of all ages. You can download a copy from the [50 Words Project page](#).

Now the project needs your help to reach 100 languages! If you, or someone you know, is in a position to make some recordings at the moment, please contact us (RUIL-

contact@unimelb.edu.au). We'll send out everything you need to get started, and support you through the process.

The 50 Words Project is led by RUIL Director Professor Rachel Nordlinger and Deputy Director Associate Professor Nick Thieberger, with project support from Dr Jill Vaughan and Allyra Murray.

Languages available on the 50 words website

Akarre · Alyawarr · Anmatyerr · Awabakal · Bangerang
Banyjima · Barnjarla · Bilarra · Bunuba · Burarra · Dalabon
Djambarrpuyngu · Djinang · Eastern Arrernte · Gurindji · Iwaidja
Jaru (Balgo) · Jaru (Yaruman) · Jingulu · Kariyarra · Kurna
Kaytetye · Kukatja · Kunbarlang · Kuninjku · Malak Malak
Manyjilyjarra · Marri Ngarr · Mathi Mathi · Mawng · Miriwoong
Mpakwithi · Mudburra · Murrinhpatha · Ndjébbana
Ngaanyatjarra · Ngalia · Ngaliya · Ngardi · Ngarluma · Ngarrindjeri
Nyangumarta · Nyiyaparli · palawa kani · Pililuna · Walmajarri
Pintupi · Pitjantjatjara · Southern Walmajarri · Thalanyji · Tiwi
Wadjak Noongar · Wajarri · Warlmanpa · Warlpiri
Wik-Mungkan · Wiradjuri · Wirlomin Noongar · Yan-nhanju
Yawuru · Yindjibarndi · Yinhawangka

Follow us @indiglang

To hear about upcoming RUIL events and
connect with other organisations talking
about Indigenous languages





THE ABC'S PRONUNCIATION OF ABORIGINAL WORDS

At the beginning of June, Tiger Webb, a language specialist with the Australian Broadcasting Commission wrote a piece for ABCOnline suggesting changes to the ABC pronunciation guide. The article recommended including the sounds of Australian Indigenous Languages in the pronunciation guide used across the organisation. Announcers on ABC radio and television are often required to use the names of Indigenous languages and places. These words contain sounds from Australian Indigenous languages that may be unfamiliar to an announcer. The current ABC pronunciation guide uses a pronunciation key based around English (including a little knowledge of French), but does not have many sounds common in Indigenous languages. This can lead to confusion and mispronunciation. During the preparation for the piece Tiger Webb talked with Dr. Hywel Stoakes and Dr. Jill Vaughan from RUIL and Tracey Cameron, a Gamilaraay language specialist who teaches at the University of Sydney, who gave suggestions about which sounds would be appropriate to include. The main suggestion was that the unique sounds of Indigenous languages should be added to the pronunciation key, including initial velar nasals [ŋ], retroflex sounds and dental consonant sounds. These sounds would be illustrated in the pronunciation key using Indigenous language names such as Ngunnawal (for initial velars), Warlpiri (for retroflex /l/-sounds) and Guugu Yimithirr (for dental consonants). These proposals haven't been adopted by the organisation yet, but we remain hopeful that the ABC's board will consider the suggestion.

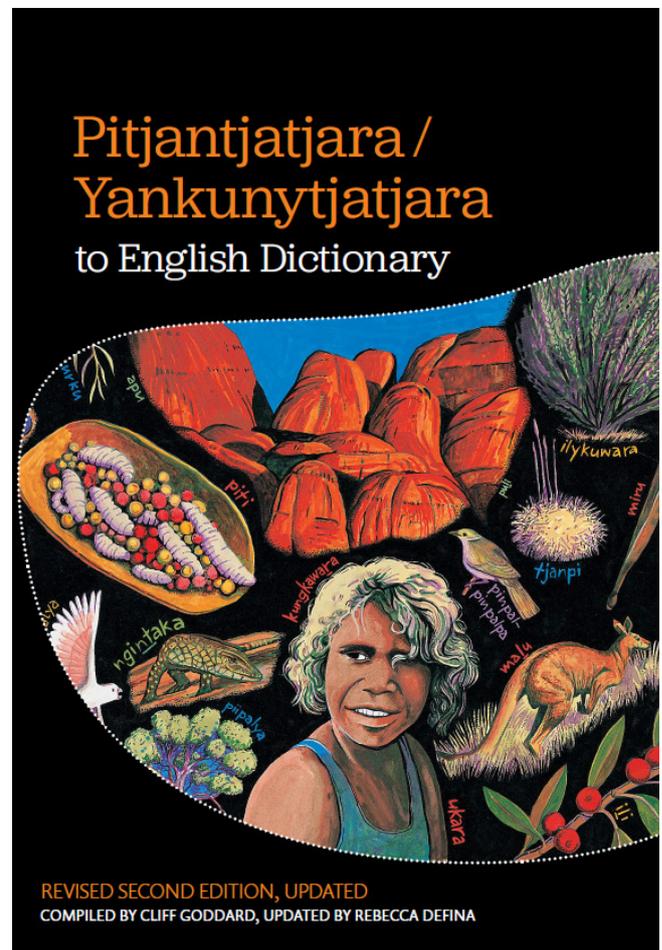
For more on the pronunciation of Australian Indigenous languages visit the "The Sounds of Australian Aboriginal Languages" series on the RUIL website (<http://go.unimelb.edu.au/4ykr>).

PITJANTJATJARA/YANKUNYTJATJARA DICTIONARY: UPDATE & RERELEASE

Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara are closely related dialects spoken around the tri-state region of the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. Unfortunately, the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English dictionary (Goddard, 1996) had been out of print for the last several years. Thanks to an AIATSIS dictionary grant, IAD Press were able to rerelease it. RUIL member Rebecca Defina took the opportunity to review and implement change requests which had been accumulating since the dictionary's last release in 1996. Many of these suggested changes are thanks to the meticulous eye and detailed notes of Anne Lanham a long-time teacher in Docker River. Changes were also suggested by Dave Barnett, Anne Jack, Sandra Lewis, Inawinytji Stanley, Tjariya Stanley, Tjulyata Tjilya, Angkuna Tjitayi, Janet Tjitayi, Katrina Tjitayi, Umatji Tjitayi and Sasha Wilmoth. All change requests were confirmed with a group of fluent speakers. Despite the great temptation to leave them for the sake of irony, the revisions include a correction of two minor errors in the example sentence *Panya paluru ngunti-ngunti tjuta nyakula tjukarurulpai*. 'He proofreads and corrects minor errors.'

The updated and revised second edition is now available from IAD Press.

It is hoped that a third edition with more extensive revisions, including the addition of many words not currently in the dictionary, will be available in the coming years.





LINGUISTICS IN THE PUB ONLINE: *keeping research and community language work with Indigenous communities going*

This year, Linguistics in the Pub gatherings at Naughton’s hotel have not been possible. So we have been using Zoom and Youtube to continue our monthly discussions. In May and June people from all over Australia and the world have participated in discussions about how to continue collaborative fieldwork and support Indigenous languages with COVID-19 travel restrictions. Two panel discussions brought together linguists and Indigenous people who have found ways to work with communities on language at a distance and these were followed by small group discussions on Zoom. The May session, moderated by RUIL linguist Ruth Singer addressed two main questions: What research can we still do at a distance and how can we support community language needs at a distance? Panelists included Professor Claire Bown (Yale), Emiliana Cruz (CIESAS-CDMX Mexico), Tom Ennever (U Queensland),

Bryn Hauk (U Hawai’i), Stephen Morey (La Trobe), Anthony Woodbury (Austin). In June, Andrew Tanner (Living Languages) organised a group of Indigenous language workers and community linguists who discussed how they support Indigenous languages at a distance, something they have been doing for many years due to the vast distances in outback Australia. Ebony Joachim (Living Languages) and Andrew Tanner moderated the discussion by Rosie Sitorus and Peter Salmon (Irra Wangga Language Centre, WA), Brendan Kennedy (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages), Clifton Girgirba and Duke Earl-Spurr (Kanyinirnpa Jukurrpa, WA), Eleanor McCall (Mobile Language Team, SA) and Sharon Edgar-Jones (Muurrbay Language, NSW). Recordings of both the May and June discussions can be found at the Linguistics in the Pub Youtube channel - <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/9zkj>

RUIL WELCOMES A NEW RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



Joel Little Perrurle (pictured) is an Arrernte man with family ties to country in and around Alice Springs in central Australia. His mother’s family are non-Indigenous and first arrived in Victoria in 1852. Joel commenced his PhD at the University of Melbourne in 2019. His research focuses on using archival cultural collections to build bilingual and bicultural curricula for young Arrernte people in order to promote positive identity and enhanced mental health outcomes.

Joel is passionate about learning languages, is a speaker, reader and writer of the Arrernte language

‘Iknggerrepenhe’, and he works alongside linguists and other researchers from the central Australian region. Over the last decade Joel has worked on a variety of projects, including as a language consultant on the Indigemoji project that produced a set of emojis in the Arrernte language (<https://www.indigemoji.com.au/>).

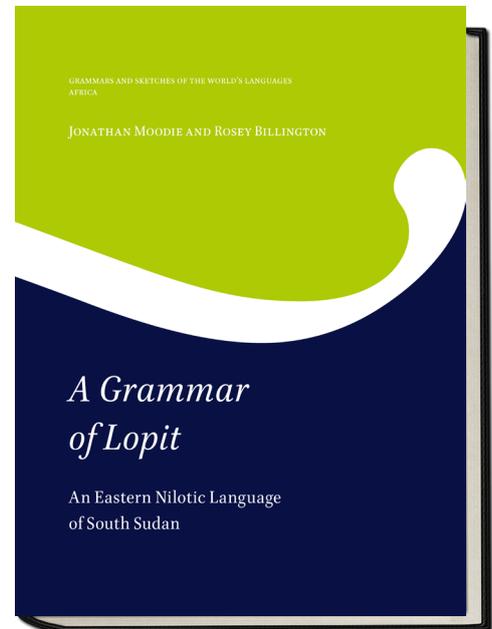
Joel is currently collaborating on a CoEDL funded ELPIS translation project with Jenny Green (RUIL, Unimelb) and Ben Foley (University of Queensland) to develop voice recognition technology for Arandic Languages. The aim to assist with the transcription of audio recordings of Arandic languages and thus improve community accessibility to important language materials.

In July Joel and Jenny also presented a paper via Zoom at a symposium hosted in Alice Springs honouring the life’s work of Gavan Breen, who for almost 50 years has been a pioneer of language documentation in many parts of remote Australia. Gavan played a pivotal role in developing the foundations for language programs in schools, and for resources in Arrernte and many other languages. As an Arrernte scholar who is familiar with the random spellings of Arrernte words found in archival sources, Joel reflected on Gavan’s legacy from the perspective of today’s generations of Arrernte language learners.



A GRAMMAR OF LOPIT: AN EASTERN NILOTIC LANGUAGE OF SOUTH SUDAN

September saw the publication of *A Grammar of Lopit: An Eastern Nilotic Language of South Sudan*, by RUIL associate Jonathan Moodie and RUIL member Rosey Billington, in the Brill series *Grammars and Sketches of the World's Languages: Africa*. The Lopit language is traditionally spoken in the Lopit Mountains of Eastern Equatoria State in South Sudan, by an estimated 50,000 people. Until recently, materials in and about the language were very limited. Jonathan and Rosey have been collaborating with members of the Lopit communities in Melbourne, Australia and in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya since 2011, collecting audio and video recordings of the language and studying its unique patterns. This book combines aspects of their research to provide the first detailed description of the sound system and grammatical structures of the Dorik dialect of Lopit. It includes discussion of various kinds of fascinating and complex linguistic phenomena common to Nilotic languages, as well as some patterns which have not previously been described for the language family. Jonathan and Rosey look forward to continuing to work with South Sudanese communities in Melbourne and Kenya to learn more about Lopit and related languages. For more information see: <https://brill.com/view/title/57490>



Congratulations



Congratulations to Brigitte Agnew for successfully completing her PhD thesis "The core of Mangarla grammar". Mangarla is a highly endangered language from the northern parts of the Great Sandy Desert region of north-west Western Australia and Brigitte's thesis provides an important record of this fascinating language. Well done Brigitte!

Language Word Search

We have created a word search using the 50 words website as the resource. You can find 15 words in Dalabon – good luck!

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| mimal (fire) | wah (water) | dolngno (smoke) |
| djewk (rain) | mudda (sun) | ngorlno (sky) |
| kinhkinh (star) | nidjarra (here) | dubmi (now, today) |
| kahke (no) | djenj (fish) | kalwan (goanna) |
| manjh (bird) | djeno (nose) | ngarrinjno (hand) |

