Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the RNLD newsletter!

Volunteering at RNLD

RNLD has recently launched a volunteering program. Elena Mujkic, our first volunteer, has been working with us for six weeks on a project to create new instructional videos for using the software Audacity. These will be a part of the ‘Create a language resource with technology’ module in the DRIL Resource Room.

Elena writes:
I studied linguistics during my Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne, and am currently undertaking my Honours year there, working on a topic in Murrinh-Patha syntax. Since my exposure to linguistics has been very technical at university, it was fabulous to see the work that RNLD does, which has a much more grassroots feel to it. I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to help out at RNLD because it’s really opened my eyes to some of the broader roles linguists can play in the wider community. I thank Alison, Margaret, Donna and Flick at RNLD who have been so welcoming and helpful along the way.

I hope I’m not leaving RNLD forever when I go overseas next week to visit family and friends in Eastern Europe, and I look forward to seeing where RNLD’s work goes in the future. Next year, I’m embarking upon the challenge of being a Teach for Australia associate at a disadvantaged Australian school, but I hope to stay in touch with the linguistics community and with RNLD.
DRIL training activities
Ceduna, SA

In late March, Margaret returned to Ceduna to run a DRIL workshop with staff at the Far West Languages Centre. On the first day, Margaret travelled with Estelle Miller and Leonard Miller to the Scotdesco (Tjilkaba) Wirangu community west of Ceduna to watch them run a full day Master-Apprentice session with three apprentices. The second workshop day focused on continuing training in field methods, linguistics, and language analysis.
Kempsey, NSW

In April, Donna and Margaret ran the first DRIL workshop in Kempsey with Dhanggati participants. The participants learned to use digital recorders, transfer and name audio files, edit recordings with Audacity and burn CDs. Non-verbal language activities provided a fun warm up for the sessions.
Woorabinda, Queensland

Gavan Breen and Michael Jarrett joined Margaret and Donna at our sixth Woorabinda workshop, at which participants built their skills in linguistics, and in learning and teaching Mumbarra, Barada, Bidjara and Gunggari.

Gavan Breen and Michael Jarrett

Uncle Anthony Henry during a sequencing exercise

John Waterton, Gavan Breen, James Doyle and Uncle Anthony Henry during a songwriting session

Uncle Wally Saunders talks about the history of Woorabinda

Donna McLaren teaches James Doyle to use the Zoom H1
Port Hedland, Western Australia

A DRIL workshop at Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre in May launched Master-Apprentice teams for Banyjima, Nyangumarta, Ngarla and Kariyarra, and a Yinhawangka family Language Pod. Manager of Wangka Maya, Julie Walker, talked to us about the workshop.

What did participants learn?
Participants first learned awareness about the endangerment of language. They hadn’t realised how easily it could be lost. They didn’t realise the more interaction we have with Western society, the less we use our language. They also learned that they are the experts and they have the knowledge.

Up front the training was a little bit daunting, but once they got into it, they realised it is things they can do and that was very empowering. Once the Master-Apprentice teams were established and everyone felt comfortable with each other it was easy to participate.

What are they going to do with those skills?
We have the Master-Apprentice teams now and they are going to be doing their own learning. At the workshop each team made plans to come up with some of their own language learning activities. They are going to create their own word lists and games as well as some of the activities the facilitators presented in the workshop.

The Banyjima team (Beverley Hubert and Andrew Dhu) will be going to the Master-Apprentice workshop in Ceduna. Beverley is a very good teacher of language and she wants to teach Andrew. Unfortunately they live quite a distance from each other but they try and make time to talk in language. Andrew is going to make a list of questions and sayings that he wants to say, which Beverley will teach him.

I am a part of a Yinhawangka team (shown on front page) and we are recording the sounds of our language and creating sound files because our language is not spoken anymore. We are also going to record place names in the Yinhawangka language as sometimes the place names give you the meaning of an animal or a word.
Boggabilla, New South Wales

In early June, a Gamilaraay Language Pod was launched in Boggabilla. Donna and Margaret trained the group to use non-verbal exercises to leave English behind in language learning. They were introduced to linguistics and began studying morphology. The participants began building a resource kit for their pod.

Sisters Mary McGrady and Charmaine (Babe) McIntosh work together on a wordless book

Linguists Peter Hill and Amanda Hamilton support Larissa Brown, Esther Quintal and Nora Cooke in preparing survival questions

Nyangumarta Master Nanna Janet Stewart preparing survival questions with Nyangumarta teacher and Apprentice Kayleen Arnold

Aunty Colleen McGrady with the language dice

Beatrice Torrens with her puppet

The group uses a language dice game to practice locatives

Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity
Suite 1107, 530 Little Collins St
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
(03) 9041 5474
0488 086 031
www.rnld.org
contact@rnld.org
Skype: rnldorg
Twitter: @rnldorg
Animation videos

In the last couple of months RNLD’s Outreach Officer, Felicity Houwen, has been working on a series of instructional videos for creating stop motion animation as part of the ‘Create a language resource with technology’ DRIL module. During this process she also made her own stop motion animation using characters she created out of plasticine - Cathy Cockatoo and Eddie Echidna. The videos, along with Felicity’s animation will be uploaded to the RNLD Resource Room.

RNLD Giving Back

On Thursday 18 April, Felicity volunteered at Melbourne City Mission’s Sleep at the ‘G which raised money and awareness for youth homelessness. Participants received a cardboard box and some pillows to sleep on and set up camp around the inside tunnel of the MCG. Everyone got a pie and soup for dinner, and watched the bands providing entertainment. The event was a big success, raising over $300 000.

Upcoming DRIL workshops

June 24-26 — Gundjeihmi language, Jabiru, Northern Territory (trainers Donna McLaren and Margaret Florey)

June 28-30 — Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marithiel languages, Northern Territory (trainers Donna McLaren and Margaret Florey)

July 16-18 — Marra, Ngandi, Rembarrnga, and Wa:gilak languages, Ngukurr, Northern Territory (trainers Donna McLaren and Margaret Florey)

July 22-24 — Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Marra, and Gudanji languages, Borroloola, Northern Territory (trainers Donna McLaren and Margaret Florey)

August 6-8 — Gamilaraay language, Boggabilla, New South Wales (trainer Donna McLaren)

August 19-20 – multiple languages, Woorabinda, Queensland

September 10-12 — Boandik language, Mt Gambier, South Australia (trainer Margaret Florey)

September 17-19 — Wirangu and Gugada languages, Ceduna, South Australia (trainer Margaret Florey)
Ceduna Master-Apprentice workshop

RNLD will be holding a Master-Apprentice workshop in Ceduna from the 15th to the 17th of October. The workshop will be co-hosted by the Far West Languages Centre. Around 20 participants will take part in the workshop which will include Master-Apprentice teams, language pod members, and people carrying out family language revitalisation.

Advisory Panel focus - Rob Amery

Rob Amery is the Head of Linguistics at the University of Adelaide, and joined the RNLD Advisory Panel in 2011. Rob started working with Kaurna in 1989 and began running Kaurna language workshops in the early 1990s. He studied the language intensively for a PhD which was published as Warrabarna Kaurna! Reclaiming an Australian Language in 2000. He has been instrumental in setting up Kaurna language programs in schools and universities.

How did you first become involved with language work?
I trained as a nurse years ago and when I went up to work at Balgo in the Kimberley I made a concerted effort to learn Kukatja and use it on a day to day basis for dealing with patients. At that time, many Kukatja people spoke little or no English. I worked side by side with Kukatja health workers and soon realised the importance of language. Each week I also visited Billiluna, an Aboriginal owned and run cattle station to the north of Balgo, where I collected a Billiluna/Walmajarri word list. Billiluna Walmajarri turned out to be quite different to the Fitzroy Valley Walmajarri that Joyce Hudson documented. Later on I worked with healthworkers in North East Arnhem land to produce a resource in Yolŋu Matha for health professionals and worked with Yolŋu health workers to translate health education booklets that had been produced by NT Health in English into Gumatj and Djambarrpuyŋu.

What work are you currently doing?
We are just about to publish our long-awaited Kaurna learners guide, and we also have a Kaurna dictionary coming out. We are also producing some Kaurna radio shows and are putting out a selection of YouTube clips with Jack Kanya Buckskin, Steve Gadlbarti Goldsmith and Taylor Tipu Power-Smith. In some clips Jack is doing small language lessons, such as introductions, or requests, and we are making clips about Kaurna animals, which are filmed in the wildlife reserve. We also did some filming during the Kaurna summer school at Adelaide University of language games that Jack invented and with his class at Salisbury HS. So lots happening. Check out our webpages at www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp.

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