

## **Journeys Symposium 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

### **Abstracts**

#### **Innovation and continuity in Warlpiri classroom talk**

**Emma Browne**

##### **Abstract**

Communities in Australia's Central Desert have long advocated for the inclusion of local languages, values, and knowledges into remote schools. While the importance of first language (L1) programs for student learning, wellbeing and engagement is well established, much less is understood about the actual language practices employed in L1 programs in remote classrooms. This presentation gives an account of research undertaken at Yuendumu School involving a combination of arts-informed methodologies, interviews, documentary evidence and audio-recordings of Warlpiri teaching and learning events in three classrooms.

Classroom interactions revealed how teachers draw on their communicative resources to enhance student participation, cultural safety and create a favourable framework for in-depth processing of academic content and literacy. This research highlights the importance of L1 medium education and the central place of oral and written texts in L1 pedagogy. The research demonstrates the ways in which L1 educators are uniquely positioned to cater for and extend students' learning of language and subject matter, engaging their hearts and minds in learning.

#### **Accounting for Impact: Is standardised reporting fulfilling the information disclosure needs of Indigenous Not-For-Profits in Australia?**

**Ellie Norris, PhD Student**

##### **Abstract**

This research project considers the usefulness of standardised reporting for Indigenous not-for-profits (NFPs) in Australia. It will explore the meaning of accounting in an Indigenous NFP setting, and the impact of standardisation on organisational reporting. The purpose of financial and non-financial information is to disclose information which meets the needs of stakeholders, and reporting standards have been developed to achieve consistency. However, standardised reporting has been criticised for failing to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives. Indigenous cultural values are not always aligned with Western accounting principles, and their stakeholders require information in different forms to meet their needs. Indigenous NFPs provide important services to the community, including the protection of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and the socio-economic empowerment of Indigenous Australians, which are not easily measured in financial terms. Non-financial reporting is widely adopted by NFPs, and frameworks such as Integrated Reporting are being designed to standardise reporting. This project will consider whether accounting standards should be adapted for Indigenous cultural values and explore stakeholders' financial and non-financial information

needs, adding knowledge to an under-researched area of NFP reporting. It will also deliver an example framework for reporting which has been co-designed by participants to address stakeholder needs. This responds to calls for stakeholder participation in the design of reporting and offer insights from an Indigenous cultural perspective which will be relevant to a wide range of reporting entities.

## **Developing an early years word list for Arrernte, Warlpiri and English in central Australia**

**Carmel O'Shannessy<sup>1</sup>, Vanessa Davis<sup>2</sup>, Denise Foster<sup>2</sup>, Jessie Bartlett<sup>3</sup>, Alice Nelson<sup>3</sup>**  
**<sup>1</sup>Australian National University, <sup>2</sup>Tangentyere Research Hub, <sup>3</sup>Red Dust Role Models**

### **Abstract**

There is currently a focus in the national government Closing the Gap initiative on early childhood development, yet little is known about young children's paths of language development in Indigenous languages. This includes the language children hear directed to them and therefore learn. Contexts in which there is language change and where people speak in more than one language seem to be even less well understood. There are guides for health professionals in the form of Communicative Development Indices (CDI) for about 90 languages world-wide, but only one for an Australian Indigenous language, Kriol (Jones et al 2020). A CDI is a list of the most common words that young children up to age 3 years are likely to know and say. A CDI is usually a written list that carers and health professionals can use to identify common known words.

In Alice Springs many Indigenous children grow up hearing and learning more than one language. Including more than one language in an utterance or conversation is common. In addition, speakers often do not have opportunities to engage with reading and writing in the languages they speak. This context presents a specific challenge for describing children's paths of language development and developing a tool such as a CDI.

A multilingual CDI for four of the languages spoken by young children in Alice Springs is currently under development. The focus here is not on a specific language, but on the repertoire of ways of speaking a family draws on. The CDI will be available as an online tool with audio, and carers will hear a word and click on whether their child understands or says each word. The spoken CDI will include 4 languages to allow for a child's multilingual vocabulary development. The languages are Eastern & Central Arrernte, Western Arrarnta, Warlpiri and English. In this talk we outline the methods of the study and present preliminary findings.

The team of Indigenous researchers and Project Leader worked with 20 families in initial data collection. The sessions with families had three parts: a) an interview where carers were asked which words their young children know and say, b) carers talking with the children about textless picture books, and c) free play and talk between children and families. The sessions were transcribed, and translated where they were not in English.

Jones, Caroline, Eugenie Collyer, Jaidine Fejo, Chantelle Khamchuang, Anita Painter, Lee Rosas, Karen Mattock, Alicia Dunajcik, Paola Escudero, and Anne Dwyer. "Developing a parent vocabulary checklist for young Indigenous children growing up multilingual in the Katherine region of Australia's Northern Territory." *International journal of speech-*

*language pathology* 22, no. 5 (2020): 583-590.  
Kalashnikova, Marina, Schwarz, iris-Corinna, & Burnham, Denis. (2016). OZI:  
Australian English communicative development inventory. *First Language*, 36(4),  
407-427.

## **The Study of Indigenous Religions in the Twenty-first Century: Refashioning Traditional Phenomenology as ‘Relational Research’**

**James L. Cox, Adjunct Professor in the Religion and Society Research Cluster, Western Sydney University and Emeritus Professor of Religious Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland**

### **Abstract**

During the middle part of the twentieth century the phenomenology of religion dominated the academic study of religions in burgeoning departments of religious studies. The primary aim of the phenomenological method was to foster understanding (*Verstehen*) of religious traditions by suspending temporarily the researcher’s personal and pre-formed academic judgements, by employing an empathetic approach aimed at overcoming the insider-outsider problem and then by creating structures or typologies for comparative purposes. The knowledge attained served to promote tolerance and inter-religious cooperation. This interpretation came under severe criticism during the latter part of the twentieth century and with it also came the widespread rejection of the phenomenological method as fostering grand narratives derived from quasi-theological assumptions that were empirically non-falsifiable. A further development in research methodologies that is particularly relevant to the study of Indigenous Religions is now emerging called ‘relational research’. Based on the concept that knowledge is the communal property of the traditional ‘objects’ of scholarly enquiry, this method challenges the pervasive academic assumption that knowledge is freely accessible to anyone interested in investigating it. Based on two case studies drawn from recent studies in Australia, this paper argues that the phenomenological approach, when reinterpreted as ‘relational research’, opens new ways of constructing research projects among Indigenous societies.