

CURRICULUM VITAE

Stephen C. Levinson

Personal Data

Citizenships: Australia, United Kingdom
Born: London, 6 December 1947
Married: 18 September 1976, to Penelope Brown
Children: son, born October 1980
<http://www.mpi.nl/people/levinson-stephen>

Current and former positions:

Managing Director at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands (1998-2001, 2007-8)
Director, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (1994-)
Professor of Comparative Linguistics at the Radboud University Nijmegen (1995-)
Reader, University of Cambridge, Dept. of Linguistics (till 1994)
Head, Max Planck Cognitive Anthropology Research Group, Berlin (1989-1991) and Nijmegen (1991-1997)

Education, Scholarships and Research Fellowships

University of Cambridge, 1967-70: BA in Social Anthropology, First Class Honours
University of California, Berkeley
 Fulbright Award, Special Career Fellow 1970-75
 MA in Linguistic Anthropology, 1973
 Doctorate in Linguistic Anthropology, UCB, 1977
 (Thesis: "Social Deixis in a Tamil Village")
LSA Fellowship, and Fellowship from Mathematical and Social Sciences Board, 1973
Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, 1974, Visiting Scholar
Australian National University, Visiting Research Fellow 1980-82
Center for the Study of Information and Language, Stanford University, Visiting Professor, 1987-8

Honours, etc

Senior Scholar, King's College, Cambridge, 1970
Fullbright Award, 1970
Member of High Table, King's College, Cambridge, 1975-
Professor, Linguistic Society of America Linguistics Institute, Stanford University, 1987
Fellow of the British Academy, 1988
The Nijmegen Lectures 1988
Stirling Prize, American Anthropology Association, 1992
The Stern Lectures, Gothenburg, Sweden, 1998
Professor, Linguistic Society of America Linguistics Institute, U.C. Santa Barbara 2001
Stanford Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Fellow-Elect 2001
Member of the Academia Europaea, 2003-
Hale Professor, Linguistic Society of America, 2009

Teaching Positions

University of Cambridge, England:
 Assistant Lecturer in Linguistics (1975-1978),

Lecturer in Linguistics (1978-90), Reader in Linguistics (1991-1994)
Director of Studies, Archaeology and Anthropology, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1978-1980
Professor, Linguistic Society of America Linguistics Institute, Stanford University, summer 1987
Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, Stanford University, 1987-8
Convenor, Research Seminar on Implicature, Center for the Study of Language and Information, Stanford, 1987-88
Economic and Social Research Council: annual course in Linguistic Field Methods for Anthropologists (1982-8)
Professor in Comparative Linguistics, Radboud University Nijmegen, 1995-
Professor, Linguistic Society of America Linguistics Institute, Santa Barbara, summer 2001
Ken Hale Professor, Linguistic Institute Berkeley, summer 2009.

Administrative positions, etc.

Faculty Board of Archaeology and Anthropology, Univ. of Cambridge (1982-87)
Head, Projektgruppe Kognitive Anthropologie, Berlin (1989-1991)
Director, Forschungsgruppe Kognitive Anthropologie, Nijmegen (1991-1997)
Director, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen (1994-)
Managing Director, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (1998-)
Chair, Search Committee for Chair in General Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, University of Nijmegen
Elector, Cambridge University, chair in General Linguistics.
Executive Board (from 2000), International Pragmatics Association
Scientific Advisory Committee, Project on Typological Database System, RU Utrecht.
International Board, "Languages of Emotion" Cluster of Excellence, Freie Universität Berlin.
Scientific Advisory Board Gutenberg Forschungskolleg, Mainz (from 2008).

Editorial Boards

Sole Editor, Cambridge University Press series, Language, Culture & Cognition:
Co-Editor, Mouton de Gruyter Series, Language and Cognitive Categories
Editorial Board, Language Typology
Editorial Board, Current Psychology Letters: Behaviour, Brain & Cognition
Editorial Board, International Pragmatics Association Working Paper Series
Consulting Board of Editors, Cognitive Linguistics
Advisory Board, Encyclopedia of Discourse Studies
Consultation Board, International Pragmatics Association
Editorial Board, Language en Contexto, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Honorary Board, Discourse Studies
Editorial Board, Current Research in the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface
Editorial Board, Spatial Cognition & Computation

Previously:

Editorial Board, Cambridge University Press series, Socio-cultural Foundations of Language (till 1998)
Editorial Board, Linguistics (until 1992)
Editorial Board, Journal of Semantics, (until 1998)
Editorial Board, Anthropological Linguistics, Oxford University Press (till 2000)
Editorial Board, Cognitive Science, Journal of the Cognitive Science Society
Editorial Board, Language and Cognitive Processes

Additional Positions and Memberships

Academia Europaea (2003-)
British Academy (Fellow, since 1988)
Scientific Council of the Fyssen Foundation, Paris (till 2001)
Steering Committee International Pragmatics Association
Foundation Committee Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin

Foundation Committee Max-Planck-Institut für demografische Forschung, Rostock
Foundation Committee Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie, Leipzig
Directorial Search Committee, Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie
Search Committee, Nachwuchsgruppe Leiter, MPI evolutionäre Anthropologie, Leipzig
Search Committee, Nachwuchsgruppe Leiter, MPI, demographische Forschung, Rostock
Foundation Committee Max-Planck-Institut für Ethnologie und inter-ethnische Beziehungen, Halle.
Association of (British) Social Anthropologists (member)
Linguistics Association of Great Britain (member)
American Anthropological Association (member)
Linguistic Society of America (member)
European Association of Social Anthropologists (member)

PhD students

Cambridge: 12, including Y. Huang, C. Holes, R. Geluykens, R. Blench, P. Kerswill, V. Herman, R. Bhaya, C. Filer.

Nijmegen: G. Bennardo, J. Bohnemeyer, B. Bickel, J. Essegbey, D. Haun, C. Goldap-Stolz, A. Keusen-Margetts, B. Hellwig, F. Lüpke, S. Neumann, P. Perniss, D. Haun, T. Widlok, E. Schultze-Berndt, F. Seifart, M. Seyfeddinipur, A. Sonnenschein, S. Stoll, C. Wegener, R. Zavala.

Current Research

Director of research team engaged in field investigation of, *inter alia*, spatial description and conceptualization. Currently there are over a dozen non-Indo-European language families under first-hand investigation (in e.g. Mesoamerica, Africa, South America, Southern India, Papua New Guinea, Australia).

New experimental and elicitation tools have been developed for the cross-linguistic, cross-cultural study of spatial concepts. These are now widely in use by other research teams and institutions in many countries.

The Nijmegen project has produced over 150 publications since August 1991, together with many Working Papers. It has organized 10 international conferences and symposia. The work has evoked wide public interest (with e.g. TV and radio programmes).

Major grants and Projects

British Academy award, for work on logical form and implicature

(with Professor J.D. Atlas, Princeton Institute of Advanced Study), 1978

SSRC major grant (with Dr M.L. Owen) for work on topic in conversation (report submitted September 1980)

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, for work on Guugu Yimithirr and Aboriginal English, 1981-2 (with P. Brown)

Smuts Fund and Cambridge University Funds for sociolinguistic work in India, 1981

ESRC major grant with Drs F. Nolan and P. Kerswill for sociophonetic study of connected speech processes, 1985

British Academy award for work with John Haviland on Guugu Yimithirr, 1986

Max Planck Society Project Group for Cognitive Anthropology, Berlin (1989-91). (Project director)

Cognitive Anthropology Research Group at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen (1991-1997) (Project director)

5th. EU Forschungsrahmenprogramm: 2 multi-media projects funded.

VW-Stiftung Endangered Languages Project: 2 projects funded 2000- :

Documentation of Trumai, Brazil (with Dr Guirardello) (c. €90,000 p.a.)

Software development and archiving for the entire 6 year project (c. €160,000 p.a)

ESF Eurocores Project: Pioneers of Island Melanesia – 3 year funding of three postdoctoral positions (c. €450,000)

ECHO project for EU 5th Framework: Comparative Sign Language 2002 (c. €150,000)

- VW-Stiftung Endangered Languages Project: 2003
Documentation project on =Akhoe-Hai//om, Namibia (for Dr T. Widlok and partners)
(€566,300 over 3 years)
- VW-Stiftung Endangered Languages Project: 2003
Documentation project on Tsafiki (for Dr. C. Dickinson and partners)
(€203,000 over 3 years)
- VW-Stiftung Endangered Languages Project: 2005
Tongues of the Semang (for Dr. Niclas Burenhult) (€305.100 over 3 years)
- VW-Stiftung *The documentation of Yuracaré* 2006–2008 (for Rik van Gijn, Sonja Gipper, Vincent Menzel)
(312.200 over 2.5 years)
- Max Planck Innovation fund: Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, MPI for evolutionary Anthropology (for Daniel Haun/ Michael Tomasello) 2008–2013
(428.000 per year)
- ARC Discovery Proposal: *Social cognition and language – the design resources of grammatical diversity* (N. Evans, A. Rumsey, B. Kelly, A.C. Schalley, N. Enfield & S.C. Levinson) 2008–2010.
- Advancing video/audio Technology in Humanities Research (AVATeCH). (Wolfgang Klein/Stephen Levinson/Peter Wittenburg) 2009–2012.
680.000 for 3 years

Fieldwork

- Archaeological fieldwork: Greece, 1968; Libya, 1967
- Anthropological and Linguistic fieldwork:
- (a) *Miscellaneous*: South Wales, 1969; Kumaon, India, 1970; Madras, India, 1972;
Trobriand Islands, 1992
- (b) *Mayan Indians*: Tenejapa, Chiapas, Mexico
1973, summers 1980, 1990, 1991, winter 1992-3, 1993, 1994, 1995;
- (b) *Dravidian Indians*:
Madras, Tamilnadu, S. India 1972
Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu, 1974-5, 1981
Tribal peoples, Nilgiri Hills: Spring 1992
- (c) *Australian Aboriginals*:
Hopevale Mission, Cape York, Queensland,
summer 1982; summer/fall 1992
- (d) *Rossel Island* (Papua New Guinea)
Summer 1995, Spring 1996, Fall 1996, Spring 1997, Fall 1997, Summer 1999, Winter 2000/2001, Summer 2003, Summer 2004, Summer 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

Selection of Talks 1990-2010

- Levinson, S.C. (1990) "Interactional biases in human thinking." Conference on the social origins of human intelligence, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, May.
- Levinson, S.C. (1990) "Cognitive anthropology of space." 89th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropology Association, New Orleans, November.
- Levinson, S.C. (1990) "Conversational inference and the semantics/pragmatics interface." Institut für Philologie, F.U. Berlin.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S.C. (1990) "'Recentering' in Mayan spatial description with special reference to Tzeltal." Paper delivered to the Workshop on Spatial Conceptualization in Mayan language and action. Max Planck Projektgruppe für Kognitive Anthropologie, Berlin, September.

Levinson, S.C. (1990) "Figure and ground in Mayan spatial description: Tzeltal locative descriptions." Paper delivered to the conference 'Time, space and the lexicon'. Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, November.

Levinson, S.C. (1991) "Relativity in spatial conception and description. Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Symposium "Rethinking Linguistic Relativity". Ocho Rios, Jamaica, May.

Levinson, S.C. & P. Brown (1991) Immanuel Kant among the Tenejapans: Anthropology as empirical philosophy. Paper presented at the Workshop on Space in Mesoamerican Languages. December.

Levinson, S.C. (1992) Shape, space and the theory of vision, with special reference to Tzeltal. Paper presented at the Workshop on Spatial Conceptualization in Mayan Languages. Cognitive Anthropology Research Group, February.

Levinson, S.C. (1992) "Spatial conceptualization and language". Plenary lecture given to the 1st Australian Linguistic Institute.

Levinson, S.C. & Haviland, J.B. (1992) Introduction and conclusions to the Workshop on Spatial Description in Australian Languages. Sydney, July.

Levinson S.C. (1992) "Overview of issues in language and conceptualization". Annual Conference of the Linguistic Society of Belgium, Antwerp, November.

Levinson S.C. (1992) Studying spatial conceptualization across cultures: The cognitive science background. Talk given at the AAA meetings, San Francisco, December 2-6.

Levinson, S.C. (1992) "Background to the Stirling Prize Essay." Psychological Anthropology Society, 91st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropology Association, San Francisco, December.

Levinson, S.C. (1993) Introduction to the work of the Cognitive Anthropology Research Group. Talk given at the Departments of African Studies and General Linguistics, University of Cologne, February.

Levinson, S.C. (1993) "The Cognitive Anthropology Research Group's current project and research results". University of Alaska, Fairbanks, February.

Levinson, S.C. (1993) "Spatial conception and description: An interdisciplinary and cross-cultural project (with an illustration from Aboriginal Australia)". University of Alaska, Fairbanks, February.

Levinson, S.C. (1993) "Spatial reckoning: an anthropological perspective." Department of geography, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, February.

Levinson, S.C. (1993) "Pragmatics and processing". Talk to staff of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, 'Brainstorming Meeting', Venlo, May.

Levinson, S.C. (1994) "Frames of reference and Molyneaux's question: Cross-linguistic evidence". Talk given at the Conference on 'Language and Space', Tucson, March.

Levinson, S.C. (1994) "Language and spatial conception". Keynote lecture given at the LAUD Conference, Duisburg, March.

Levinson, S. (1994) Spatial frames of reference. Invited talk at the Neurocognition Seminar, MPI Tübingen, May 19.

Levinson, S. (1995) Frames of spatial reference in language and cognition: Some crosscultural evidence. Talk given at the Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf (Neurology Dept.), January 27.

Levinson, S. (1995) Linguistic relativity: Some new evidence from spatial language. Talk given at the Seminar f. Allg. Sprachwiss., Universität Tübingen, February 9.

Levinson, S. (1995) The body in space: Cultural differences in the use of body-schema for spatial thinking and gesture. Talk given at the 'Gesture' workshop, CARG Nijmegen, December 8.

Levinson, S. (1996) Cultural differences in the use of body-schema for spatial thinking and gesture. Talk given at the Fyssen Fondation Symposium: Culture and the uses of the body. Paris, March.

Levinson, S. (1996) Frames of reference in language and spatial thinking. Talk given at the 3rd CBR Workshop 'Mental representations in navigation'. Cambridge, MA. June 24-25.

Levinson, S. (with Brown, P.) (1996). Frames of spatial reference and their acquisition in Tenejapan Tzeltal. Talk given at 'The growing mind' conference, Geneva, Switzerland, September.

Levinson, S. (1996) Diversity in mind. Talk presented at the AAA meeting, San Francisco, November.

Levinson, S. (1998) Semantic representations vs conceptual representations. The Stern Lectures, presented at the University of Gothenborg, Sweden, March 30.

- Levinson (1998) The semantics and cognition of space in a cross-linguistic perspective. The Stern Lectures, presented at the University of Gothenborg, Sweden, March 31.
- Levinson, S. (1998) Pragmatics and semantics. The Stern Lectures, presented at the University of Gothenborg, Sweden, April 1.
- Levinson, S. (1998) Language and selection. Talk presented at the Lustrumcongres of the Catholic University 'Grenzeloze selectie'. Nijmegen, October 7.
- Levinson, S. (1998) Language as nature and language as art. Talk presented at the Pontifical Academy, symposium on 'Changing concepts of nature and the turn of the Millennium'. Vatican City, October 28.
- Levinson, S. (1999) H.P. Grice on Location on Rossel Island. Keynote talk presented at the 25th BLS meeting. Berkeley, CA, February 12.
- Levinson, S. (1999) 'Central issues in the coevolution of language and culture'. Fyssen International Colloquium, Paris, Nov 13th.
- Levinson, S. (2000) 'Color and culture'. Symposium at the College de France, Paris, March 30.
- Levinson, S. (2001) 'Diversity in spatial language and cognition'. Lectures to the Linguistic Society of America, Linguistics Institute, Santa Barbara, July-August 2001.
- Sérgio Meira & Stephen Levinson (2002) Patterns of semantic discrimination in spatial adpositional systems. International Conference on Adpositions of Movement, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, January 14-16.
- Levinson, S. (2002). Prospects for a new field: Semantic typology. Paper presented at the International Linguistics Conference 'Reviewing linguistic thought: Perspectives into the 21st century'. Athens, May 21-24.
- Brugman, H., Wittenburg, P., Levinson, S. & Kita, S. (2002). Multimodal annotations in gesture and sign language studies. Paper presented at the LRECC conference, Las Palmas, May.
- Levinson, S. (2003). Evolutie en taal. Course given at the University of Nijmegen, Honours Program, April 3.
- Levinson, S. (2003) Thoughts on notions of projection. Workshop on Projection in Interaction. MPI Nijmegen, March.
- Levinson, S. (2003). Rossel and Sudest. Conference Pioneers of Island Melanesia. King's College, Cambridge. April.
- Levinson, S.C. (2003). The evolution of human spatial cognition: Or how we nearly lost our bearings. Talk given at the conference 'From brain to behaviour: The evolution of human cognition'. Leverhulme Center for Human evolutionary studies. Univ. of Cambridge, November.
- Levinson, S.C. (2004) Living with Manny's dangerous idea. Talk given at the Symposium: Theories and Models of Language, Interaction and Culture UCLA. February 27-8.
- Levinson, S.C. (2004). Diversity in human spatial cognition: where prehistory, culture, language and biology meet. Influential Thinkers Series, Department of Anthropology, UCLA. March 1.
- Levinson, S.C. (2004). On the human 'interactional engine'. Wenner-Gren Symposium 'Roots of human sociality'. Duck, NC: The Sanderling Resort, October 2-9.
- Janzen, G., D. B. M. Haun and S. C. Levinson (2005). Neural correlates of intrinsic and relative frames of reference. Poster presented at the 13th Conference of the European Society of Cognitive Psychology (August 31st –September 3rd, Leiden).
- Levinson, S. C. (2005). Spatial relationships in Oceania: Language, mind and culture. Talk given at the AAA Annual meeting, Washington, DC, December.
- Levinson, S. C. (2006). Enrolling other sciences in language documentation: Describing an isolate language, Yélf Dnye, in Papua New Guinea. Meeting of the 28th DGfS conference, Bielefeld, February.
- Levinson, S.C. (2006). Questions about questions. Talk given at the workshop: Questions and their responses, MPI Nijmegen, March.
- Levinson, S.C. (2006). Reciprocals in Yélf Dnye, the Papuan language of Rossel Island. Talk given at the Reciprocals workshop, MPI Nijmegen, April.
- Levinson, S.C. (2006). The 'interaction engine': A core ethology and its diverse manifestations. San Jose, CA: American Anthropological Association conference, November.

- Levinson, S.C. (2007). Guugu Yimithirr narrative as multimodal interaction. Talk given at the Cape York workshop, MPI January.
- Majid, A. & Levinson, S.C. (2007). Quantifying semantic regularity across languages. ALT VII International conference Paris. September
- Levinson, S.C. (2007). Towards principles of primate social life. Workshop Competition meets cooperation, Radboud University and MPI, October.
- Levinson, S.C. (2008). The elements of motion. Talk given at the workshop on Human locomotion across languages. MPI, June 6.
- Levinson, S.C. (2008). From landscape to grammar. Talk given at the meeting of the Philological Society, Manchester, November 7.
- Levinson, S.C. (2008). Levels of distinction: On the regimentation and lamination of linguistic levels. Discussant panel discussion, AAA San Francisco, November.
- Levinson, S.C. (2008). Semplates – Implicit conceptual templates in language – and their origin. AAA. San Francisco, November.
- Levinson, S.C. (2009). The island of time. Workshop Time in space. MPI Nijmegen, April.
- Levinson, S.C. (2009). The language Sciences in the Darwin Centenary. Festvortrag for the opening of the Graduate School Empirical and Applied Linguistics University of Münster, April.
- Levinson, S.C. (2009). Rethinking the Language Sciences. Talk given at the Conference: Why aren't the social sciences Darwinian? Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, Cambridge. May 15.
- Levinson, S.C. (2009). Linguistic diversity and its implications for the language sciences. Ken Hale Lecture. 2009 Linguistic Institute, Berkeley, CA, July–August.
- Levinson, S.C. (2010). Language and Thought in Yeli-Dnye (Rossel Island, PNG). Workshop on the Languages of Papua. Manokwari, PNG, February.

Workshops and Conferences convened 1990-2008

- September 10-20, 1990: "*Spatial conceptualization in Mayan language and action*". Berlin.
- May 3-11, 1991: Symposium no. 112: "*Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*". Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological research. Ocho Rios, Jamaica.
- December 3-4, 1991: "*Space in Mesoamerican languages*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- February 10-14, 1992: "*Spatial conceptualization in Mayan languages*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- March 12-13, 1992: Workshop on "*Classifiers*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- May 18-22, 1992: "*Other minds: Methods in the cross-cultural study of cognitive variation*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- July 1992: "*Space in language and interaction in Aboriginal Australia*". Organized by CARG at the Australian Linguistics Institute, Sydney.
- December 2-6, 1992: "*Anthropological contributions to the mind's new science: My space or yours?*". American Anthropological Association meetings, San Francisco.
- May 25-27, 1993: Workshop on "*Back to basic issues in nominal classification*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- November 29 - December 3, 1993: "*Multiple worlds: A conference on spatial representation*". CARG, Nijmegen.
- April 4-5, 1993: "*Himalayan Space in Language and Culture*". An interdisciplinary workshop. CARG, Nijmegen.
- November 13-17, 1995: *Conference on Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development*. MPI for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen.
- December 8, 1995: *Workshop on 'Gesture'*. Organized by Stephen Levinson and S. Kita (CARG), Nijmegen.
- June 12-15, 1997: *Workshop on 'Pointing gestures'*. Organized by S. Kita (MPI), Turnhout.
- April 28-29, 1998: '*Australianists Workshop*'. Organized by David Wilkins & David Nash (MPI & ANU Australia),
- May 17, 1998: *Language and the Brain*. Organized by S. Levinson, W. Klein a.o.
- June 26-28, 1998: *Workshop on 'Cross-linguistic perspectives on argument structure: Implications for learnability'*. Organized by P. Brown (MPI).

November 12-16, 1999: *Fyssen International Colloquium on Evolution and Culture*. Organized by Stephen Levinson (MPI) & Pierre Jaisson (LEEH, Paris), Paris.

December 17-19, 1999: *Workshop 'Event representation in language and cognition'*. Organized by Jürgen Bohmeyer, MPI Nijmegen.

February 8, 2000: *SAHUL Workshop: possible connections between Australian and Papuan languages*. Organized by S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

July 4-5, 2002: *Pioneers of Island Melanesia Workshop*. Organized by S. Levinson, MPI Nijmegen.

March 5-7, 2003: *Workshop on 'Projection in Interaction'*. Organized by S. Levinson & N. Enfield). MPI Nijmegen.

March 23–25, 2006: *Questions and their responses*. Organized by J.P. de Ruiter & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

April 19–21, 2006: *Workshop on Reciprocals Across Languages*. Organized by S. Levinson, Nick Evans, Alice Gaby, and Asifa Majid. MPI Nijmegen.

November 15–19, 2006: *Human Sociality and the four fields: A Wenner–Gren Panel*. San Jose, CA: American Anthropological Association Presidential Panel (organized with N. Enfield).

January 26, 2007: Cape York workshop. Organized by C. Hill & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

April 16–17, 2007: Organized by N. Enfield, N. Burenhult & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

October 11–13, 2007: *Workshop on Competition meets Cooperation*. Organized by T. Stivers, N. Enfield & S. Levinson. RU Nijmegen.

October 26–28, 2007: *Australianist workshop*. Organized by C. Hill & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

April 11, 2008: *Workshop on Expressives across Languages*. Organized by N. Enfield & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

June 6, 2008: *Workshop on human locomotion*. Organized by A. Majid, G. Senft & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

February 26–27, 2009: *Universals of sound–symbolism*. Organized by A. Majid, S. Tufvesson, M. Dingemanse & S. Levinson. MPI Nijmegen.

May 21–22, 2010: *The evolutionary revolution in the language sciences*. Talk given at the Seminar on Evolutionary perspectives on human sciences. Kone Foundation. Turku, Finland.

Statement of Research

My research has been focussed on quite a few different lines of inquiry, some of these strands sequential, others in parallel. The main strands have been:

1. Interactional sociolinguistics

My dissertation work was the investigation of verbal interaction in a Tamil village, studying all sixteen castes and their interaction. From this study, I came to believe that universal principles underly much verbal interaction, and developed a theory of politeness universals (with Penelope Brown, 1978, 1987). This formed the basis for the growth of what is now a specific kind of sociolinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, to which I still contribute from time to time. I continue to work on interactional principles, and have collected data in four different societies (Dravidian, Aboriginal Australian, Mayan, Papuan).

2. Linguistic Pragmatics

In the 1970s, together with Gerald Gazdar (with whom I edited the first journal in the field), Jay Atlas and others, I played an important role in gelling the field of linguistic pragmatics, from an inchoate series of parallel developments in philosophy, sociology and linguistics. My textbook of 1983 was the first and is still the standard work in the field, although there are now a dozen rivals, reflecting the fact that pragmatics is now institutionalized as a major subdiscipline of linguistics. In the late 1980s, I pushed the theory of implicature further, and published a number of papers showing how the theory could play an important role in semantic and syntactic theory. I continue to publish in this area, and my new book (*Presumptive Meanings*, 2000) tries to assemble the evidence for both these claims, and

details interactions with formal semantics and generative grammar. I consider this my most important theoretical work, with many implications for linguistics and psycholinguistics.

3. Cognitive Anthropology

During the 1990s, I set out to revive cognitive anthropology, because I felt that cultural and linguistic diversity should play a much larger role in the cognitive sciences than it now does. I became interested in the role that language plays in cognition, and thus in the much maligned Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see the collection *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*). I have been able to show that in fact language difference does have repercussions for cognition, and that simple minded conceptual universalism will not do. I have also shown that some of the best examples of universals in semantics, like color, have exceptions (see article in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 2000). Unfortunately, the anthropological community is on post-modernist holiday, so the impact of all this has been largely in cognitive science circles. The best exemplification of this comes from the following field.

4. Spatial Language and Cognition

In the 1990s I formed a research team to investigate cross-linguistic variation in spatial language, and to see whether this correlates with conceptual difference. This was one of the largest detailed cross-cultural comparisons ever undertaken, involving extended fieldwork in over 40 small-scale societies (myself working on Guugu Yimithirr, Tzeltal, and Yéli Dnye.) We had to construct the relevant linguistic typology, and then invent methods for tapping into non-linguistic spatial cognition. The data showed quite clearly that there are correlations between linguistic difference and non-linguistic cognition. This work has had quite some impact in cognitive science and linguistic circles, partly because it has clarified the whole important field of frames of spatial reference. I am currently writing a book summarizing the large scale research (much of which has already appeared in the journals), editing a book (with David Wilkins) summarizing much work in my research group on the topic, as well as finishing a volume with Penelope Brown on Tzeltal spatial language and cognition in cultural perspective.

5. Language and Cognition

I now run an interdisciplinary unit that is charged more generally with investigating the relation between language and non-linguistic cognition. We are interested in the relation between semantic parameters, innate concepts (if any), and cultural concepts reflected in grammar and the lexicon. These issues can be studied empirically in many different ways. We can look at language acquisition and conceptual development (see Bowerman & Levinson, 2000). We can study the process of language production, investigating how descriptions are formed on line (using e.g. eye-movement methods), and how these relate to the expression of information in gesture. Currently, we are studying the ways in which events are linguistically broken up, languages differing greatly in the packaging e.g. of maximal event sequences. We have developed new stimulus materials to study this cross-linguistically on a wide scale. These studies should contribute centrally to issues in psycholinguistics.

6. Linguistic description and documentation

In addition to my early work on Dravidian, I have done extended fieldwork on Tzeltal (Mayan), Guugu Yimithirr (Pama-Nyungan) and Yéli Dnye (Papuan) languages. I have published on detailed syntactic and semantic topics – e.g. on Binding and spatial language in Guugu Yimithirr, presupposition and social deixis in Tamil, positional verbs and relational nouns in Tzeltal, positional verbs, spatial description and color and kinship nomenclature in Yéli Dnye. I have also built up large text archives of these languages, with associated videotape of verbal interaction (now archived in the Max Planck Institute), which offers a superb database for future research on many topics. I am now writing a grammar of Yéli Dnye, a linguistic isolate with an extremely complicated grammar crucial for understanding the prehistory of the Coral Sea area.

Summary

Although these different lines of research cross disciplinary boundaries (linguistics, anthropology, psychology) and may seem very diverse they are united around a couple of major themes. First, I believe that linguistic diversity is underplayed in current theory and research – being human is being equipped to handle many different linguistic, cognitive and cultural possibilities, and the success of our species rests on this adaptability. We need to understand both the limits and the consequences of this mental diversity. Second, there are fundamental universals in areas where we are not looking for them systematically, especially in factors underlying our communicative abilities, in principles of social interaction and pragmatics. Thus my work attempts to shift the orthodoxy about where exactly the universals and cultural specificities lie, with all the theoretical consequences that such a shift would have for how we view language and its role in human evolution.

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