



Centre for Communication Research

An AUT Key Research Institute

Annual Report 2006



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INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Communication Research (CCR) inaugurated in 2001, is located administratively within the Faculty of Applied Humanities. Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty through the Associate Dean (Research), the Centre has sought to develop its activities by involving academics from a range of Schools across AUT. The goal of CCR, which became one of nine funded Key Research Institutes within AUT in 2003, has been to undertake and stimulate research in communication (broadly interpreted) among AUT staff and students. The Centre fosters a collegial environment that encourages research projects in its strategic areas of interest, mentoring less experienced staff and postgraduate researchers. It encourages research which addresses issues of both practice and theory, and engagement with socially important research questions.

The Centre is characterised by a range of disciplinary, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research interests and practices. In 2006 its activities focused on:

- discourse analysis, especially of media texts
- critical perspectives in communication
- language, culture and identity
- sociolinguistics, especially language learning and languages of New Zealand
- new media and digital communication, specifically the Internet
- visual and linguistic analysis of media texts.

The four objectives inherent in the Centre's activities are:

1. **Research Development**

- to develop research capability in communication among AUT staff and students.

2. **Publications**

- to present and publish the findings of communication based research conducted at AUT.

3. **Funding**

- to seek and develop funding opportunities to support research in communication.

4. **Collaborations**

- to develop relationships with other researchers and centres of research excellence in communication both within AUT and outside the university.

This annual report is organised primarily under the above headings.

PERSONNEL

Centre for Communication Research Board

Mark Jackson (chair)	Senior Lecturer, School of Art & Design
Allan Bell	Director, CCR
Sharon Harvey	Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Applied Humanities
Charles Crothers	Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences
Lynn Grant	Senior Lecturer, School of Languages
Ian Goodwin	Lecturer, School of Communication Studies
Richard Smith	Senior Lecturer, School of Education

The Board met approximately quarterly in 2006. It discussed matters relating to the portfolio areas of research development, publications, funding and collaborations and CCR's role as a Key Research Institute within AUT.

Centre for Communication Research Staff

Communication research is people-intensive and the Centre recognises the value of building research capabilities within AUT. The bulk of CCR's centrally-allocated funding has therefore gone to supporting people undertaking research, research management, research development, research support, and publication.

Allan Bell, Director

Professor of Language and Communication

Philippa Smith, Projects Manager

Philippa has been responsible for co-ordinating and researching special projects as well as assisting in the management of the Centre and its activities.

Kate Brett Kelly-Chalmers, Research Administrator

Kate provided administration support to the Centre and its activities.

Andy Gibson, Researcher

Andy has worked as a researcher on a number of CCR research projects and also provided editorial support to CCR journals.

Susan Shaw, Editorial Assistant

Provided copy-editing services to the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* and *ACCESS*. Her proofing and copy editing skills were also utilised by other researchers affiliated to the Centre.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Research Fellowships

The CCR Research Fellowship scheme supports a proportion of a selected fellow's time away from teaching to carry out a programme of research. The Fellowships are contestable and involve a refereed application process. This was the 4th year that CCR has been able to offer the Fellowships and it was marked by the particularly high quality of research produced by 2006 Fellows Junji Kawai and Shanjiang Yu from the School of Languages.

Dr Yu prepared two papers on maintenance of Chinese by young immigrants to New Zealand. The first, *Language use: a missing link between parental language belief and language shifting?* was presented at the 10th New Zealand Language and Society Conference in Christchurch, August 19-20, and at the CLESOL 2006 conference in Napier in September. The second paper is titled: *Parental language choice as interactive strategy and its effect*. Dr Yu plans a third paper for 2007 to complete his fellowship. All three papers will be submitted to international journals for publication.

Dr Junji Kawai, investigated aspects of the pronunciation and grammar of Japanese. He wrote two papers *Emphatic Expressions in Japanese* and *The Formation of the Past Tense of Japanese Verbs* which have been submitted to international journals. His third project will be to write a book in 2007 on casual Japanese phonology.

Research Associates

In 2006 19 Faculty staff were affiliated to the Centre as Research Associates, to receive mentoring and support for their research activities from CCR. A fruitful meeting of CCR's 19 Associates in October provided an opportunity for researchers to share individual research interests with an eye to future collaborative work.

2006 Research Associates:

Alice U	School of Languages
Darryl Hocking,	School of Languages
Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul	School of Art and Design
Pat Strauss	School of Languages
Graeme Couper	School of Languages
Heather Denny,	School of Languages
Paul Mountford	School of Languages
Shanjiang Yu	School of Languages
Junji Kawai	School of Languages
Ineke Crezee	School of Languages
John Bitchener	School of Languages
Dianna Holster	School of Languages
Annette Sachtleben	School of Languages
Ian Goodwin	School of Communication Studies
Charles Crothers	School of Social Sciences
Mark Jackson	School of Art and Design
Sharon Harvey	Faculty of Applied Humanities
Lynn Grant	School of Languages
Richard Smith	School of Education

Research Projects - bro'Town

In 2005 CCR was awarded contestable funding from the Faculty of Applied Humanities to conduct a research project on the popular television show *bro'Town*. The project titled "*Identity construction in the Pasifika animated comedy bro'Town*" was concluded in 2006 and formed the basis for the majority of conference papers presented by CCR staff in this year. The research provided a preliminary investigation of a relatively new genre, influenced by popular US television programmes such as *The Simpsons* and *South Park*, which impacted on New Zealand audiences challenging perceptions of cultural and ethnic identities and their representation. *bro'Town's* construction of identities in a multi-cultural setting became the focus of CCR's research which developed into three areas of examination:

- The positioning of a New Zealand produced animated comedy within the country's broadcasting history.
- A sociolinguistic analysis of the way speech is used to perform identity in the Samoan characters in bro'Town.
- A semiotic visual analysis looking at the ways in which aspects of identity are communicated visually.

In 2006 Philippa Smith and Andy Gibson had the chance to meet with two of the creators of *bro'Town*, Oscar Kightly and Elizabeth Mitchell, with whom they discussed the implications of their research. This meeting was followed by media coverage of CCR's research project in AUT's alumni magazine *Insight*, the community newspapers *Harbour News* and *Central Leader*, *East and Bays Courier* and on the Internet news website www.scoop.co.nz

bro'Town conference presentations

Allan Bell attended the Sociolinguistics Symposium in Limerick, Ireland while on sabbatical leave presenting a paper prepared in conjunction with Andy Gibson titled: *Talking Pasifika in New Zealand English: The case of bro'Town*. This research focused on the varieties of English spoken by Pacific Islanders in New Zealand using some of the Samoan characters in *bro'Town* as a model of these features.

Andy Gibson presented a paper *bro'Town: Morningside English for Life* at the 10th Language and Society Conference in Christchurch. Allan and Andy's research on the Samoan English varieties used in *bro'Town* provided the foundation for this paper. Pasifika people who have English as a second language use several pronunciation features that are influenced by their first language. The results of this study suggest that some of these features are becoming markers of ethnic identity for NZ-born Pasifika people who have English as their first language. These features are used to varying degrees by the young characters in *bro'Town*. Andy's talk was very well attended, and resulted in an invitation for a subsequent talk and also a request for the findings to be published in a New Zealand Linguistics journal. Andy also attended the New Ways of Analysing Variation (NWAV) conference at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio where he presented similar findings from the *bro'Town* research. NWAV is one of the most prestigious Sociolinguistics conferences worldwide and had a record number of submissions in 2006.

Towards the end of the year Philippa Smith presented the paper "*The global popularity of animated sitcoms: bro'Town - New Zealand's answer to The Simpsons*" at the conference *Youth, Media and Culture in the Asia Pacific Region* held at Monash University, Melbourne. The paper was co-written with former CCR Postgraduate Fellow Dr Katalin Lustyik and focused on why the adult animated programme was popular with children and explored its multi-cultural portrayal of New Zealand.

Discourse Research Group

Established by CCR in 2005 the Discourse Research Group continued to meet monthly throughout the 2006 academic year maintaining a great deal of interest from staff across AUT. The Group provides a valuable focus for scholars interested in approaching research texts (spoken or written) through discourse analysis with meetings that offer a forum for education and discussion in a collegial environment. The popularity of the meetings is characterised by the wide range of disciplines practised by its members and the diversity of presentations made. The Group has continued to bring together researchers from various schools within AUT (Health, Social Sciences, Business, Communication Studies, Languages, Art and Design, and Tourism) and has also seen increased interest from academics outside the university.

2006 Presentations

The Oracle-text as a Literary Genre

Paul Mountfort, School of Languages

The Quest to Control Emotion: A Foucauldian Analysis of EQ

Tony MacCulloch, School of Health Care Practice, and Debbie Payne, Centre for Midwifery and Women's Health Research

Genre Analysis

Darryl Hocking, School of Languages

Oracle-text/Cybertext in The Man in the High Castle

Paul Mountfort, School of Languages

Narratives on Nature and Purity: German Imaginaries of New Zealand

Eveline Duerr, School of Social Sciences

The War of the Whales – a case study of news discourse

Philippa Smith, Centre for Communication Research

COLLABORATIONS

World Internet Project

At the start of 2006 CCR became the New Zealand partner in the World Internet Project (WIP) - an international, longitudinal study that looks at developing trends in the use of the Internet, studying new communication technology and its impact on individuals, communities and societies around the globe. The project, which began six years ago, is responding to signals that suggest the Internet will transform our social, political and economic lives. It involves the surveying of a random sample of both users and non-users of the Internet. More than 20 countries have joined the project progressively over the years and include China, the UK, Australia, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Chile. Each international partner is responsible for funding its involvement in the WIP for a minimum of three years. CCR's work on the project in 2006 involved three areas of activity: meeting with World Internet Project partners and Director Professor Jeffrey Cole; developing and executing a preliminary New Zealand pilot project; and seeking potential funders for the main 3 year project.

Professor Jeffrey Cole Visit

WIP Director Professor Jeffrey Cole, from the USC Annenberg Center for the Digital Future, visited AUT as a CCR Visiting Fellow in May 2006. Professor Cole was able to offer first hand advice on the preparation of the WIP survey questionnaire and methodology, and raised awareness about the WIP research in New Zealand. He spoke of the latest WIP findings on Internet use through a series of public lectures, which are accessible as podcasts through CCR's website, and gave an additional lecture on media violence related to his earlier research on television violence conducted at UCLA during the 1990s. Professor Cole was interviewed by media from National Radio, TVNZ's Breakfast programme, the New Zealand Herald and the Dominion Post. Accompanied by Allan Bell and Philippa Smith, Professor Cole met with a number of Government and corporate representatives in both Auckland and Wellington to initiate talks regarding potential funding support for the main project. InternetNZ, a non-profit organisation that oversees internet practises in New Zealand and a key contact for CCR's WIP involvement, hosted the visit to Wellington.

Professor Cole's public lectures:

- *Surveying the Digital Future: Lessons from Six Years in the Field*
- *Just an Essential Part of Everyday Life: the Role of the Internet and Wireless Technology*
- *The Culture of Media Violence*

WIP international partners meeting

Philippa Smith was awarded funding from the Royal Society of New Zealand's International Science and Technology Fund to attend the annual meeting of the WIP international partners held in Beijing in July. She made a presentation to the partners about Internet use in New Zealand and took the opportunity to meet with other international partners from countries such as Finland, Hungary, Canada, Singapore, Australia, the UK, Chile, Spain, Japan and Iran. The meeting was hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

WIP Pilot Project

CCR was successful with an application for contestable funding from the Faculty of Applied Humanities to support a pilot project that would form the basis of the larger World Internet Project in New Zealand. The pilot is designed to test the WIP methodology in a New Zealand environment and involves telephone interviews of a random sample of 100 people aged 12 and up from a range ethnic backgrounds. After receiving AUT ethics approval in October, data from the survey was collected and will be analysed early in 2007.

The pilot project research team consists of Professor Allan Bell, Andy Gibson, Philippa Smith and Kevin Sherman of CCR, Dr Ian Goodwin, School of Communication Studies, and Professor Charles Crothers, School of Social Sciences.

Funding the WIP Project in NZ

A number of possibilities for funding CCR's involvement in the main World Internet Project in New Zealand have been developed. Philippa Smith and Dr Ian Goodwin made a presentation to representatives from the Ministries of Education, Economic Development, Culture and Heritage, Social Development, Justice, Internal Affairs as well as Statistics NZ and the State Services Commission about the importance of internet research in New Zealand. This meeting enabled an effective forum for these representatives to give feedback as to how the WIP could benefit their departments.

The National Library of New Zealand and Internet NZ have played key roles in developing CCR's relationship with applicable governments departments.

Professor Michael Gurstein

CCR and AUT's Tourism Research Institute hosted a seminar on community informatics by Professor Michael Gurstein, Executive Director of the Centre for Community Informatics Research, Development and Training in Vancouver Canada. His presentation was titled: *Community Informatics, Local Tourism Development and Cape Breton Island, Canada*. Drawing on his experience in this area in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, Dr Gurstein presented theoretical developments and new approaches to using Community Informatics (community based technology development) as a means to enhance and sustain community tourism and improve local economic development. He also explored how issues have evolved historically and suggested ways forward for local communities in using ICTs for tourism based local development.

bro'Town

The international symposium *Youth, Media and Culture in the Asia Pacific Region* held at Monash University provided Philippa Smith with an opportunity to present a paper she had written in conjunction with former CCR Postdoctoral fellow Dr Katalin Lustyik, Assistant Professor in Television and Radio at the School of Communications, Ithaca College New York. The paper titled "The global popularity of animated sitcoms: *bro'Town* - New Zealand's answer to *The Simpsons*" focused on why the adult animated programme was popular with children and explored its multi-cultural portrayal of New Zealand as well as other aspects of self-reflexivity and base humour. Philippa was among four speakers from New Zealand Universities at the symposium. Other countries represented were Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea.

Other collaborations

The Centre maintains active and continual collaboration with the Centre for Language & Communication Research at Cardiff University through the co-editorship of the Journal of Sociolinguistics.

FUNDING

The central AUT grant of \$250,000 covers mainly staff salaries, plus other expenses. Other income includes that from teaching, supervision and publications, plus publisher support for publication editing.

Internal Funding

- CCR successfully applied for contestable funding from the Faculty of Applied Humanities to conduct a preliminary pilot project as part of the World Internet Project.

External Funding

- The Royal Society of New Zealand's International Science and Technology Linkages Fund awarded a grant to CCR for Philippa Smith to travel to Beijing and participate in the annual meeting of the WIP partners.
- Internet NZ supported Professor Jeffrey Cole's visit to New Zealand.
- Allan Bell received a research grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, one of the German Government bodies which offer support for visiting scholars. This grant supported Allan in his sabbatical at the University of Regensburg.
- Copy editing on *Journal of Sociolinguistics* and *Access* was funded by external monies.

PUBLICATIONS

Working Papers in Communication Research (WPCR)

This online publication gives authors the opportunity to have their work peer reviewed and gain feedback before submission to an academic journal. Mark Jackson and Philippa Smith continued in their roles as co-editors. Papers collected from authors in 2006 were wide ranging in their subject matter being submitted by staff from the School of Languages and the School of Social Sciences. These were reviewed and will be published in the next issue of WPCR planned for early 2007.

Journal of Sociolinguistics

The Journal of Sociolinguistics, published by Blackwell Publishing, continued as the Centre's largest publication in 2006 with 5 issues totalling approximately 720 pages. Submissions continued to be received from authors world wide and topics ranged from social stereotypes, multi-functional teasing and a sociolinguistic exploration of cross-examination in court, to a themed issue on sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication edited by Jannis Androutsopoulos from the University of Hanover in Germany.

ACCESS: Critical perspectives on communication, cultural and policy studies

ACCESS published 2 volumes in 2006 including a special double-issue edition on the legacy of the late Jacques Derrida and an issue on Researching Women in AUT. The journal is edited by Elizabeth Grierson based at RMIT, Melbourne while Andy Gibson and Kate Brett Kelly-Chalmers provide editorial assistance at AUT.

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Allan Bell, Director

The Director's role includes management of the Centre and its staff, research development, editorship, mentoring, funding applications, leadership of research teams, teaching, and supervision as well as his own researching, reading and writing commitments.

Involvement with academic journals extends beyond that of Allan Bell's constant editorial and reviewing work for the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* which he co-edits. He reviewed for several other journals, and for conference papers. He is on the editorial boards of *Discourse Studies*, *Access*, *Pacific Journalism Review*, *NZ Studies in Applied Linguistics* and *Discourse & Communication*. Publications appearing during the year included articles on language style and news discourse in the 14-volume *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* published by Elsevier, and a chapter in a sociolinguistic text from Routledge. A major paper completed in 2006 was a chapter on the importance of Bakhtin's thought for sociolinguistics, to appear in a Cambridge University Press volume.

Mentoring is another important part of the Director's role. In particular Allan Bell read and commented on draft papers by CCR staff and research fellows before submission, and gave similar guidance to other staff members in their research work. Advice on research projects from academics in New Zealand and overseas was sought in his areas of expertise (principally media language and discourse).

Allan was a member of the PBRF national panel in Social Sciences and other Cultural/Social Studies, which assessed academics' evidence portfolios during 2006, including a final panel meeting in December.

Teaching

Allan taught on the MA (Applied Language Studies) in the first semester, paper 168103, Language & Society. The standard of student research project work was very high.

Supervisions

- Ruth Thomas, School of Communication Studies (PhD): investigating how journalism students are socialized into production of the genre of news discourse. Expected to submit in 2007.
- Ineke Crezee, School of Languages (PhD): investigating attrition of English and reversion to Dutch by elderly Dutch immigrants to New Zealand.
- Frank Smedley, School of Languages (MA): English-Tagalog code-switching in internet blogs. Completed in 2006, degree awarded with First Class Honours. Proceeding to PhD in 2007.
- Kevin Sherman began as a PhD candidate in April 2006, with support from one of the highly-competitive NZ Government PhD international scholarships. His area of interest is the role of the internet in political activism.
- Philippa Smith, CCR, was awarded an AUT PhD scholarship to commence in 2007.

Study leave

Allan Bell was on sabbatical leave in the 2nd semester. The leave included work on existing projects, and reading into new areas of research. He travelled to Europe in June-July, primarily to attend the Sociolinguistics Symposium in Limerick, Ireland, July 2006, the main European sociolinguistics conference. A joint paper with Andy Gibson was presented on 'Talking Pasifika in New Zealand: the case of bro'Town', together with participation in a panel of sociolinguistic journal editors, and a presentation to celebrate the 10th year of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*.

Allan also attended the Conference on Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines, at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.

September-November was spent at the University of Regensburg, Germany, in the Centre for Research in World Englishes. Despite the time required by journal work and the PBRF panel assessments, this was a particularly productive period working in a hospitable department and living in an astonishingly beautiful medieval city. Even this was topped by a week spent at a study and retreat centre, Schloss Mittersill, in the Austrian Tirol, during which a vast amount of reading, writing and reflecting were accomplished in magnificent surroundings. The time in Regensburg was supported by a grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst under its scheme for Re-invitation of Former Scholarship Holders. The visit serves as precursor to exchange visits to AUT by Regensburg colleagues. A seminar presentation on the *bro'Town* research was made at Regensburg.

Allan's reading programme focused on the new area of biblical discourse analysis. To gain background in the application of discourse analytical methods to biblical texts, reading into the field of biblical exegesis and New Testament studies was prioritized. Analytical work on an appropriate text will begin in early 2007, in conjunction with a colleague at Victoria University who is a New Testament specialist. Further reading was begun in post-modern and critical theory, beginning with Bourdieu and Ricoeur, particularly the work directly addressing linguistic, discursal and narrative issues. Writing concentrated on Allan's textbook in sociolinguistics. Using lecture recordings as a basis, content for several chapters of the book was drafted.

Philippa Smith, Project's Manager and Acting Director

Philippa is CCR's projects manager and has responsibility for the co-ordination of projects, preparing research proposals and funding applications. This year she concentrated on liaising between parties on Governmental and corporate levels in relation to the World Internet Project giving presentations and attending meetings in Wellington and Auckland to secure financial support. She represented CCR at the WIP international partners meeting held in Beijing, China in July with her trip receiving financial assistance awarded through the Royal Society of New Zealand's International Science and Technology Fund. Another research project Philippa was involved in was an examination of identity construction in the New Zealand animated sit-com *bro'Town*. She presented a paper she had written in conjunction with Dr Katalin Lustyik at a conference held at Monash University, Melbourne on Youth Media and Culture. Philippa was also asked to examine a Master of Arts thesis for the School of Languages and reviewed a paper for the publication *Journalism*. She also co-authored two book chapters on discourse analysis with Allan Bell which are due to be published by Sage Publications and Blackwell Publishing in 2007.

During the latter six months of 2006 Philippa took on the role of CCR acting director while Allan Bell was on sabbatical. This involved representing the Centre at Faculty and Post Graduate Board meetings, writing reports, liaising with personnel both within and outside AUT, as well as ensuring the smooth running of the Centre.

Andy Gibson,

Researcher, WIP Pilot Project Co-ordinator, Editorial Assistant

Under the supervision of Allan Bell, Andy Gibson conducted a sociolinguistic analysis of the speech of three characters in the primetime animated comedy *bro'Town*. His tasks involved research and reading, the collection and analysis of a large quantity of data and the write-up of results for presentation and publication. Andy also gave media interviews about his research and met with *bro'Town* creators to discuss his findings.

Andy is also involved in CCR's World Internet Project as project co-ordinator of the preliminary pilot survey. This role entailed facilitating between members of the CCR research team and the external market research company Phoenix Research, contributing to the development of the survey methodology, and participating in the designing and refining the survey itself.

As editorial assistant to the CCR publications the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* and *ACCESS*, Andy also facilitated submission and peer-reviewing processes, liaised with editors, authors and referees, and organised the transfer of manuscripts between the various parties.

Andy attended several conferences in 2006 including the Language and Society Conference, Christchurch; Australian Linguistics Society Conference, Brisbane; New Ways of Analyzing Variation conference, Ohio, USA; and the Speech Science Technology conference, Auckland.

Kate BrettKelly-Chalmers

Kate attended to CCR's everyday administration duties ensuring the smooth running of the Centre and its activities. She assisted in organising WIP Director Professor Jeffrey Cole's visit to New Zealand including the arrangement of his public lectures. Kate also continued to see to the facilitation of CCR's activities including meetings of the Discourse Research Group; managing the requirements of CCR Research Fellows and PhD Students; organising CCR Board meetings; and maintaining and developing the CCR website.

CONCLUSION

In its five years of existence CCR achieved a great deal for communication research at AUT, with collaborations enabled, publications produced, a high PBRF rating achieved, considerable external research funds won, and significant research capability developed among the Centre's constituency. Regrettably these achievements did not receive the support they merited in AUT's review of research institutes, and from 2007 the unit receives much diminished central funding and will be located at Faculty rather than University level.

However, the change will enable the new Institute of Culture, Discourse & Communication to focus its capability and resources. Director and staff are confident that the result will be a strengthening of our research capability and performance in 2007 and beyond.

I want to record my special thanks to Sharon Harvey, Associate Dean (Research) for her support of the Centre throughout its life; to those who have served as Board members; and to CCR's staff, Kate BrettKelly-Chalmers, Andy Gibson, Susan Shaw, and especially Philippa Smith, who was Acting Director during my study leave and has been a key to the Centre's success over the past three years.

Allan Bell
Director
February 2007