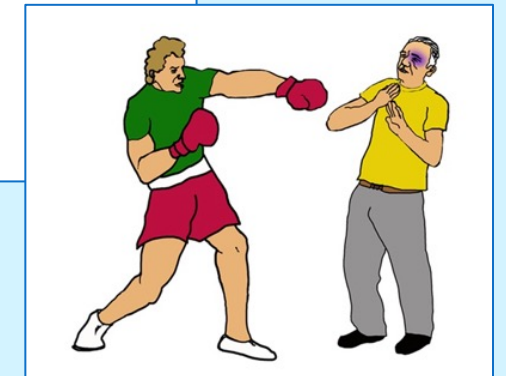
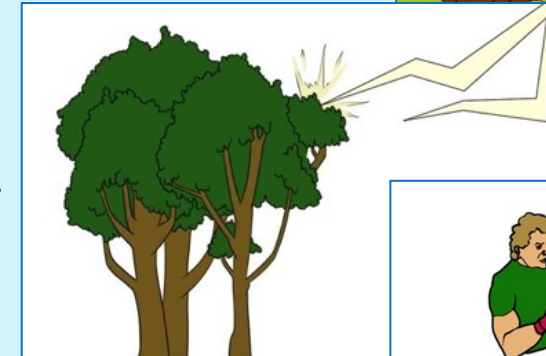
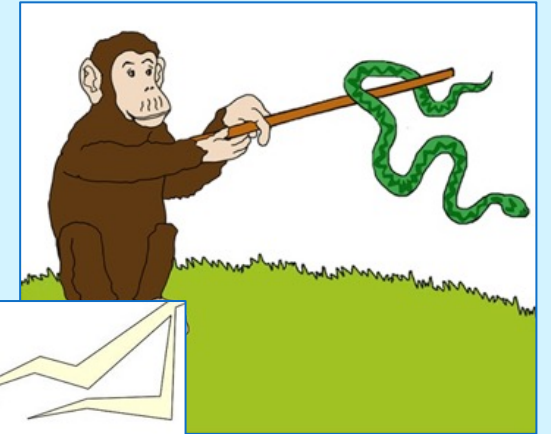


Word order across apparent time: an experimental study of Pitjantjatjara

Sasha Wilmoth¹, Rachel Nordlinger¹ & Evan Kidd²

- Pitjantjatjara is described as having basic order of APV in transitive sentences (Bowe, 1990), with a possible recent shift to AVP (Langlois, 2004).
- Like many Australian languages, word order varies according to context and doesn't change the meaning.
- Our experiment:
 - 50 participants, age 18-60 (31F/19M)
 - 48 transitive events + filler images
 - Eye tracker attached to laptop



¹ University of Melbourne

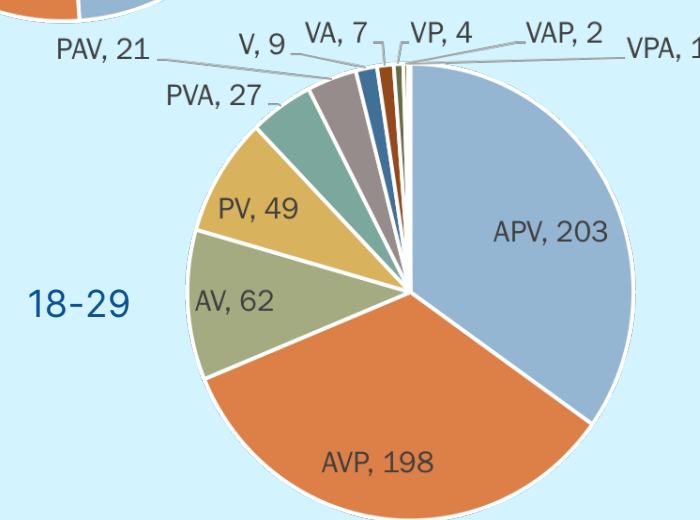
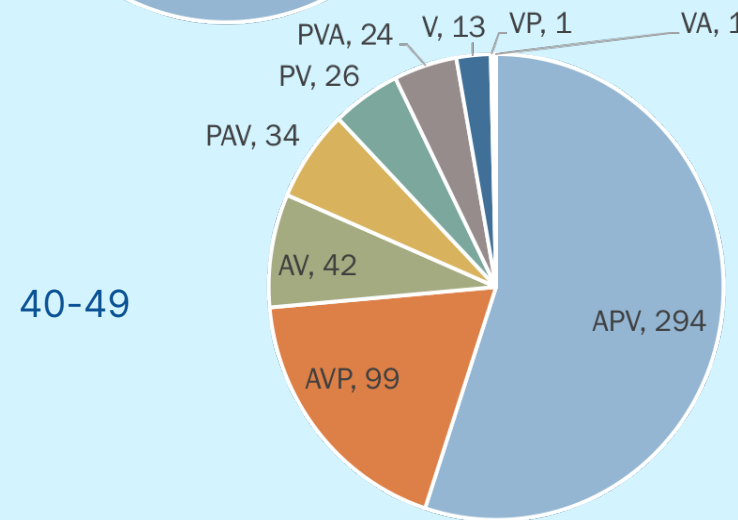
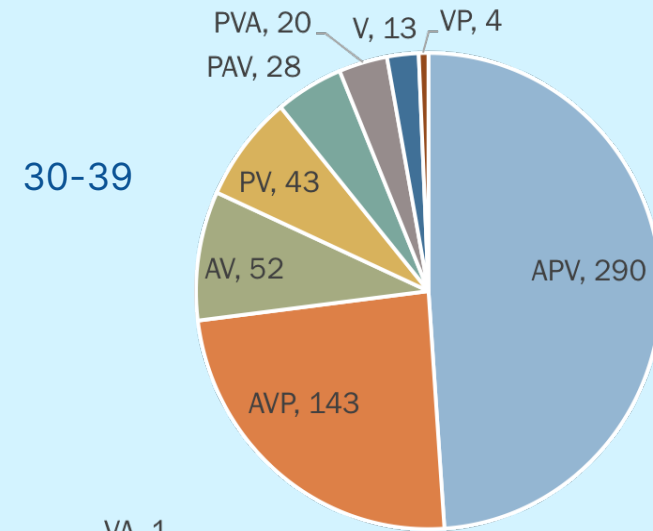
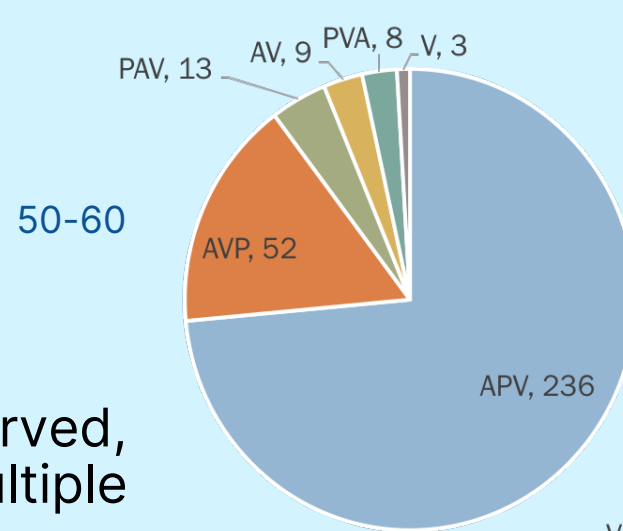
² MPI Nijmegen/ANU

Bowe, H. J. (1990). *Categories, constituents, and constituent order in Pitjantjatjara: An aboriginal language of Australia*. Routledge.

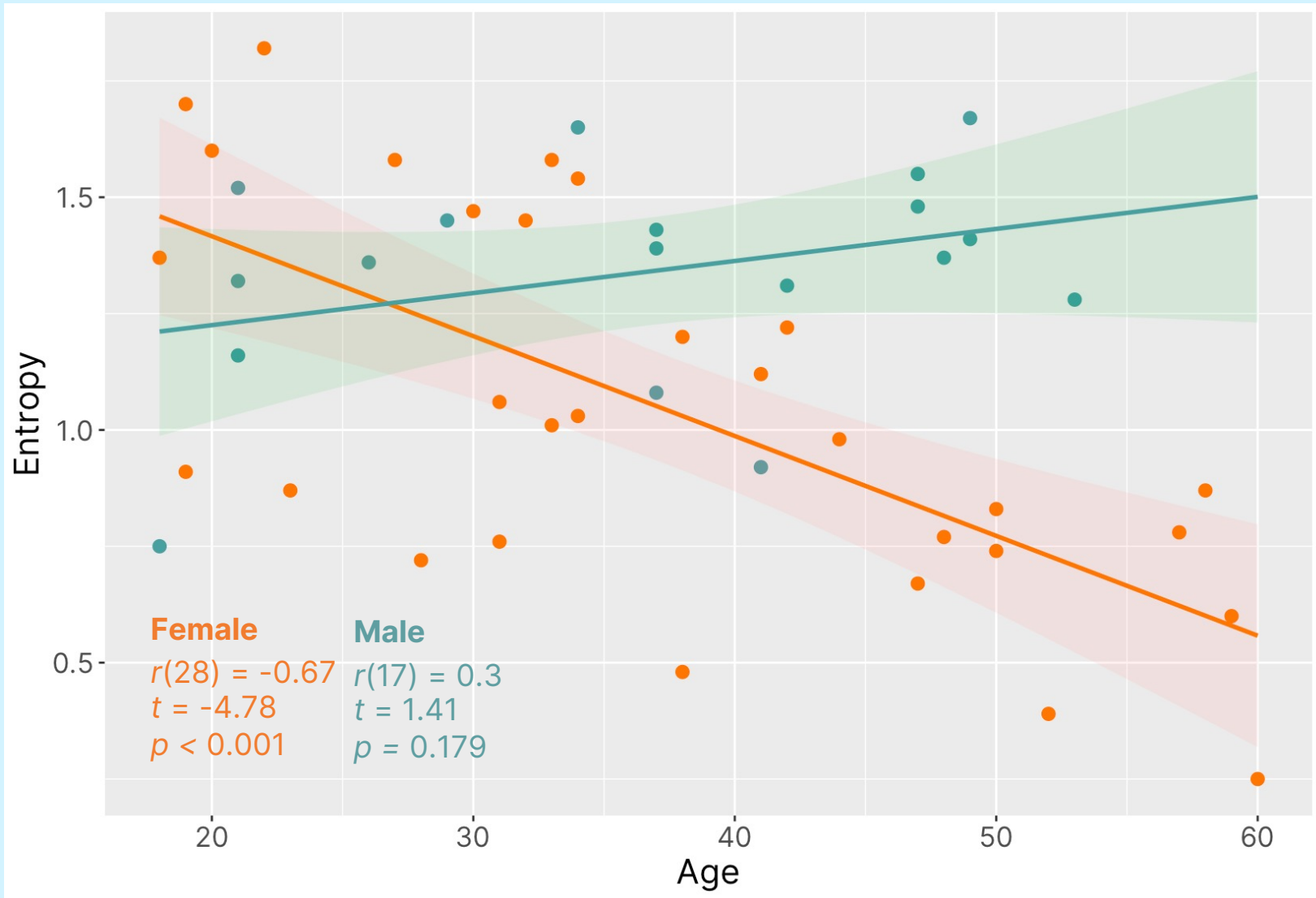
Langlois, A. (2004). *Alive and kicking: Areyonga Teenage Pitjantjatjara*. Pacific Linguistics.

Who produced which word orders?

- All possible orders observed, and all speakers had multiple orders
- About 50% were APV
- Overwhelmingly A-initial
- AVP more frequent with each generation, but other orders are on the increase too



Variability of individuals



Many possible interpretations:

- Women becoming more entrenched over lifetime?
- Men leading language change, women lagging behind?
- Innovation by young people, but older men picking up on it?

What's the role of prescriptivism and language contact?

- Many of the older women are translators/teachers and speak very good English

Watch this space for further analysis of animacy and eye-tracking data!