**Cocos Keeling Island English: A new emerging variety?**

Hannah Hedegard (University of Bern)

This sociolinguistic study is the first to investigate the development of English on the Cocos Keeling Islands, and thereby contributes to existing research into lesser-known varieties of English (Schreier et al. 2010, Williams et al 2015). These varieties provide an opportunity to examine typologically distinctive developments in English that are a direct result of language contact, without the linguistic effects of prescriptive standardisation that we often find in countries like the UK and the US.

The Cocos Keeling Islands are the outermost Australian external territory in the South Indian Ocean, and have a population of approximately six hundred inhabitants. A turbulent colonial history and eventual integration with Australia have resulted in the majority Cocos Malay-speaking inhabitants learning English amid complex language ideology debates and political tension.

The data for this study consists of sociolinguistic interviews conducted in 2016 on the island, as well as in one of the diaspora communities in Western Australia. Systemic features of the islanders’ English are analysed in light of any (extra) linguistic influences. Preliminary results highlight the description of salient features in the islanders’ speech that contribute to the emergence of a new variety of English.

**Keywords:** World Englishes; Lesser-known varieties of English; Variationist linguistics; Australian minority ethnic groups

**References**

Schreier, D., Trudgill, P., Schneider, E. and Williams, J. ed., (2010). *The lesser-known varieties of English: an introduction*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, J., Schneider, E., Trudgill, P. and Schreier, D. ed., (2015). *Further studies in the lesser-known varieties of English*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.