



LING701

Modern Theories of Linguistics in the History of Human Sciences

S1 Day 2016

Dept of Linguistics

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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

David Butt

david.butt@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Michael Proctor

michael.proctor@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Ingrid Piller

ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Felicity Cox

felicity.cox@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Canzhong Wu

canzhong.wu@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Haidee Kruger

haidee.kruger@mq.edu.au

Guest lecturer

Scott Barnes

scott.barnes@mq.edu.au

Margaret Wood

margaret.wood@mq.edu.au

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Language, along with the night sky and the 'signs' of illness, has been one of the longest studied objects of human enquiry. This unit examines the contemporary theories produced in that sustained human effort. In particular, we investigate the claims that twentieth century linguistics makes to being a science; and we look closely at the current ways in which linguistic theories are extended by the techniques of twenty-first century sciences: genetics and evolutionary theory; language corpora; neurosciences and medicine; complexity and computational modelling; and electronic translation tools.

The unit gives prominence to scholars concerned with the special conditions that pertain to the study of sign systems, of syntax, and of meaning: for example, Saussure; Chomsky; and various theorists across disciplines who offer methodical accounts for the study of meaning. Students in the unit can choose a strand of specialisation in their readings and assignments: one can choose by the level of language (from phonetics up to context), by the orientation to theory (eg, functionalist, structuralist, generative, or other), and by era (1900-1950, 1950-2010, or classical and other). All students will be encouraged to place their own research interests in the context of historical developments in the subject.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Seminar presentation	20%	TBA
Short profile	20%	End week 8
Major essay	40%	End of week 13
Seminar participation	20%	Ongoing

Seminar presentation

Due: **TBA**

Weighting: **20%**

Individual presentation on a key theory/school, its major conceptual contributions and its mode of argumentation

On successful completion you will be able to:

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory

Short profile

Due: **End week 8**

Weighting: **20%**

Written profile on a key theory/school, its major conceptual contributions and its mode of argumentation

On successful completion you will be able to:

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories

Major essay

Due: **End of week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

Essay presentation on a key theory/theorists of 20th linguistics

On successful completion you will be able to:

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Seminar participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Weekly preparation for seminar and contributions to discussion

On successful completion you will be able to:

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists

Delivery and Resources

This unit is taught over 13 weeks in a 3 hour symposium (Semester 1- Friday 1pm - 4pm: C5A 218).

These sessions are compulsory. Before attending each class, students will be expected to have read the relevant text, and made notes about issues they wish to discuss. As indicated in the assessments explained above, one or two students will be expected to explain their 'sense' of the reading, its problems and importance. Students will be asked to nominate a topic for which they can lead off 'the tutorial debate'.

The textbook is:

Allan, Keith (2010: 2nd (expanded) Ed.) *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics*: London; Oakville: Equinox

A number of volumes now give useful, brief introductions to important linguists and language philosophers and anthropologists. For example, ***Landmarks in Linguistic Thought II The Western Tradition in the Twentieth Century***, Joseph, J.E.; Love, N.; and Taylor, T.J.; Routledge History of Linguistic Thought Series: London & New York. The strength of this work is that there are brief selections from each of the linguists discussed. Other references with very useful, but very brief, accounts of the careers of relevant scholars are: Thomas, M. (2011) ***Fifty Key Thinkers on Language and Linguistics*** London New York: Routledge; and Chapman, S. and Routledge, C. (2005) ***Key Thinkers in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language*** Edinburgh: Edinburgh Uni. Press.

Each lecture may involve an additional text - at the specific recommendation of the lecturers for that topic. The convenor will circulate additional material prior to the seminar. While other texts need to be cited to discuss the various topics, the Allan text (or an indicated alternative) is the required reading.

Unit Schedule

Here's the outline of weeks for LING701 for 2016:

Week 1: Pre-Modern Approaches to Language

Fri. 4th March

What are the linguistic legacies of Greece and Rome? Is there an ambivalence in the continued influence of Greek and Latin grammars and philology? Why did Socrates & Plato vehemently oppose the Sophists of Athens? We will consider Aristotle and the codification of Rhetoric, Grammar, and Logic; the pursuit of a 'lingua mentalis' from mediaeval to early modern scholarship; the widening of linguistic enquiry (both William and Alexander von Humboldt in the C19th); developments of modern logic; the continuing debate between persuasion & truth; investigating natural languages as linguistic metalanguages: the problems of using English as a metalanguage; the limitations of Western Classical categories of grammar and rhetoric; the pedagogical fate of the "tradition" (viz. Dickens and "Mr. Gradgrind").

Week 2: Theories of Language Change and Language Relationships

Fri. 11th March

This week begins from the notion of a "language family". We will consider the impact of the study of Sanskrit on Europeans, the idea of Proto-Indo-European and the understanding of language change and the idea of language laws. We also discuss the Neogrammarians and the comparative method, the relationship between language and the growing interest in evolutionary theories in the C18th (and Darwin's later use of language change to illustrate "descent with modification" and the origin of species); the counter pressures for stability and "rules" in society and in language. This period of linguistics also sees the rise of popular grammars and reference guides to language, including dictionaries.

Week 3: Approaches to Interaction: Philosophy and Ethnomethodology

Fri. 18th March

This week we consider the split in the early C20th between the development of logic (eg. Russell and the early Wittgenstein) and sociological approaches to interaction and language (eg. Durkheim; Saussure). We cover the influence of Logical Positivists in Europe, and the development of Pragmatism with Peirce and James in America; studies of interaction since WWII; and the new “pragmatics” – eg. speech acts and conversational analysis (CA), and consider how it builds on the past, and how these ideas have been applied in research projects more recently. We consider Grice’s switch from logic to the logic of conversations; the status of “linguistic meanings” and the characterization of semantics during the syntactic preoccupations of 1965 to the 1985; and the explosion of discourses around “Pragmatics”, natural language semantics, and anthropological linguistics.

Week 4:

Fri. 25th March: Easter Friday Holiday: **NO CLASS**

Week 5: Grammar, Syntax, and the Realization of Meanings

Fri: 1st April:

With the passing of the 19th century, there was a development of descriptions of languages outside of classical and historical enquiries. A number of scholars are relevant here. We discuss Jespersen’s 4 volume treatment of English; Sapir’s writings “On Language” and the reconciliation of linguistic “drift” with the experience of individual speakers; Russian linguistics and the debate concerning ergative patterning in languages of the Caucasus; Firth and the description of languages at the School of Oriental and African Languages in London; the functionalism of the Prague School; Halliday and the emphasis on the description of spoken Chinese. We consider developments in representing functional theories of language; the relations between anthropology and linguistics; recent developments among functional theories of grammar, including construction grammar and historical perspectives reintroduced through corpus studies and other techniques; and applications of functional theories to real world problems, from AI to professional discourses and literature.

Week 6: Theories of Syntax: the Generative Tradition

Fri. 8th April

This week we review Bloomfield’s alignment of linguistics with Behaviourist psychology in the second edition of *Language* (1933). We will look into the claims of B.F. Skinner in his *Verbal Behaviour* (1959); Chomsky’s critique of Skinner; and Chomsky’s teachers – Harris and Goodman. We review the development of Chomsky’s approach in “*Syntactic Structures*”(1957); the “*Aspects...*” model (1965): deep structure, phrase structure and formalization – the goals of transformational generative grammar; language as a sub-branch of “cognitive psychology”; the split c.1968 with “notational variants” (debate over deep structure: syntactic or semantic); innateness and “the poverty of the stimulus” in relation to language acquisition; the debates with Searle and speech act theory (“*Reflections...*”1975). We consider the shifts in the model 1975 to 1995, via “*Language and Thought*” (1993), and the development of “Minimalism” (1995). We

review “recursion” and “merge” in Chomsky’s current thinking (Chomsky and McGilvray 2010); evolutionary theory and Chomsky (e.g. “Why only Us”, Berwick and Chomsky 2015). We also discuss Chomsky’s linguistics and his political writings: human nature and authoritarian governments.

Week 7: Theories of Sound Structure I

Fri. 29th April

This week we consider the isolation of basic units in linguistic sciences. Our topics include the notion of a basic unit of sound: the phoneme; Henry Sweet (‘Professor Higgins’ in Shaw’s play: “Pygmalion”) and phonetics in Britain; De Courtenay (1845-1929), Trubetzkoy (1890-1938), and Jakobson (1896-1982) in Russia; the Prague school in the development of phonology; the reality of the phoneme, and some dissenting voices; Firth and prosodic phonology: pattern and process; the emergence of a generative approach to phonology (Chomsky and Halle 1968); work on intonation; variation among languages: how variation is represented and understood; the studies of the Australian accent.

Week 8: Genetic Relationships between Languages: Typological Findings and Debating Language Universals

Fri. 6th May:

World Languages “in the round” – by features and by maps. This week we debate the findings and the reasons for, and the methods of, field work. We look at language families – the global view. Are there language universals emerging from typological evidence? We start with the early work of Greenberg, and consider Comrie and his relative clause hierarchy. We consider the topic from the perspective of Australian languages, including the scholarship of A. Capell, R.M.W. Dixon, C.L. Yallop and K. Hale’s generative account of Walpiri. We look at the longstanding debates about thought and language: Whorf (Hopi); Evans and Levinson (various languages); Everett (Pirahã). We also touch on the issues arising from language contacts, and the view from translation studies.

Week 9: Text and Meaning

Fri. 13th May:

This discussion sets out from questions about units of meaning and proceeds to how these are realized. The initial unit is “the text”, and its place in language studies and linguistics is reviewed. Specialists in classics, stylistics, narratology, and semiotics have all analysed “texts” (alongside any particular focus on details of sentence or word). Such analyses have long included structural analysis (e.g. Propp 1928; Barthes 1975). Fieldwork on natural languages has necessarily focussed on text as a higher unit of linguistic analysis (e.g. Pike 1967; Becker 1979). Over the last 60 years, however, there has been a formalisation of ‘Textlinguistics’, now with greater focus on explicit realizations between meanings and wordings. Such formalisations has offered new tools for extracting evidence from text patterns – evidence applied in a wide range of public domains. We consider some of the key concepts in text linguistics, including cohesion and coherence, context, register, rhetorical structure, and genre (e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1976, 1985).

Week 10: Language, Culture, and Sociolinguistics in Society

Fri. 20th May:

This session addresses the two key questions of sociolinguistics and traces their historical development:

- How do we organize our social lives in and through language?
- How does language serve to produce and reproduce the social order?

The emergence of sociolinguistics with 19th century dialectology (Jules Gilliéron, Georg Wenker) to 20th century variationist sociolinguistics (Bill Labov, Peter Trudgill). The discussion will focus on the critical apparatus of language sociology in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Background might also include 20th century views of culture in linguistics (eg. Sapir); the role of variation in linguistics and in other sciences (eg. Lewontin in genetics/epigenetics).

Week 11: Theories of Language Development and of Language Acquisition

Fri. 27th May:

How do children develop language? This week we consider the current broad spectrum of ideas about evolution and the development of language in children. We review both nativist accounts (eg. Chomsky and Pinker on language acquisition) and functionalist traditions (eg. Trevarthen; Halliday; and Bruner). We consider evidence from neuroscience, including the general versus narrow conceptions of the “language ready” brain. We look at language development 0-2yrs; 3-6; and over a life span; at language “disruptions” in individuals as evidence about language development/acquisition; at current attitudes to genetic and epigenetic factors in human growth.

Week 12: Theories of Sound Structure 2

Fri. 3 June

The topic this week is current methods for achieving evidence in phonetics and phonology. We consider the development and extension of instrumentation in the analysis and representation (eg. imaging) of speech processing; the theoretical implications of more finely grained evidence; and the potential for new applications.

Week 13: Linguistic Theories, Evidence and Falsifiability

Fri. 10th June:

Do linguists as scientists need to consider the “philosophy of science”? How should we navigate between reliable scientific methods and the need to think and research genuinely innovative possibilities? What constitutes a tractable scientific research topic in language studies? What constitutes an ‘appropriate’ scale for research at Masters and/or Doctoral levels.

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Allan, Keith (2010: 2nd (expanded) Ed.) *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics*: London; Oakville: Equinox

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Western Tradition in the Twentieth Century, Joseph, J.E.; Love, N.; and Taylor, T.J.; Routledge History of Linguistic Thought Series: London & New York. The strength of this work is that there are brief selections from each of the linguists discussed. Other references with very useful, but very brief, accounts of the careers of relevant scholars are: Thomas, M. (2011) ***Fifty Key Thinkers on Language and Linguistics*** London New York: Routledge; and Chapman, S. and Routledge, C. (2005) ***Key Thinkers in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language*** Edinburgh: Edinburgh Uni. Press.

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Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different

theories

- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment tasks

- Major essay
- Seminar participation

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences

Assessment tasks

- Seminar presentation
- Short profile
- Major essay
- Seminar participation

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based

critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences

Assessment tasks

- Short profile
- Major essay
- Seminar participation

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- place certain key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment tasks

- Short profile
- Major essay
- Seminar participation

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- explain clearly and concisely the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- explain in clear and logical terms the ramifications of linguistic theory for other forms of intellectual enquiry, in particular how linguistics plays a role in the direction of the human sciences
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment tasks

- Seminar presentation
- Short profile
- Major essay
- Seminar participation

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- evaluate the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- offer clear and cogent ideas as to how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment tasks

- Seminar presentation
- Major essay
- Seminar participation

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
23/02/2016	With apologies, a couple of small changes need to be made: Mike Proctor no longer wants to be listed as a convenor, and there was an error in the one of the citations