



LING701

Modern Theories of Linguistics in the History of Human Sciences

S1 Day 2017

Dept of Linguistics

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General Information

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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:

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development

- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists

- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory

- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories

- demonstrate a capacity to 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

- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about how linguistics may develop in the particular sub-discipline most relevant to his/her domain of future research

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Seminar presentation	20%	No	To be selected by students
Short profile	20%	No	End of recess May 1st
Major essay	40%	No	End of week 12 June 2nd
Seminar participation	20%	No	Ongoing

Seminar presentation

Due: **To be selected by students**

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:

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory

Short profile

Due: **End of recess May 1st**

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:

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory

- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories

Major essay

Due: **End of week 12 June 2nd**

Weighting: **40%**

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

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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
- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about 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:

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists

Delivery and Resources

This unit is taught over 13 weeks in a 3 hour symposium.

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'.

Unit Schedule

Week 1: Linguistic Theories; Evidence; and Falsifiability [DGB]

Mon 27th Feb: Do linguists as scientists need to consider the "philosophy of science"? How should we navigate between reliable scientific methods and the need to think about 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.

How can we usefully survey the wide span of 20th Century thinking on language? By setting out from sounds and signs, perhaps. We can 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 and structuralism; the 'reality' of the phoneme, and some dissenting voices.

But: What constitutes a sign? How many levels do we need to consider in the description of language? What do you consider to be the basic units at each of these levels of analysis?

Week 2: Pre-Modern Approaches to Language [DGB]

Mon. 6th 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. how the university Trivium becomes 'trivial').

Week 3: Theories of Language Change and the Emergence of Pedagogical and Applied Traditions [DGB]

Mon. 13th 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 4: Grammar, Syntax, and the Realization of Meanings [DGB]

Mon 20th March: Here, we range over an intellectual landscape which will help you select where you might wish to engage with the course in a more specific way, that is with a particular theme or continuity of theories. The Margaret Thomas volume (2011) will assist you in picking out theorists who carry the most significance for you.

With the passing of the 19th century, there was a turn in 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; and applications of functional theories to real world problems, from AI to professional discourses and literature. We also 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 mention the influence of Logical Positivists in Europe, and the development of Pragmatism with Peirce and James in America; and studies of interaction since WWII, for instance, speech acts and conversational maxims.

Week 5: Theories of Syntax: the Generative Tradition [DGB]

Mon 27th March: In order to appreciate Chomsky's theoretical motivations, this week we first reflect on Bloomfield's alignment of linguistics with Behaviourist psychology in the second edition of *Language* (1933). We will briefly look into the claims of B.F. Skinner in his *Verbal Behaviour* (1959); and then move on to Chomsky's critique of Skinner, briefly touching on 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 in general – 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 6: Stylistic and Forensic Evidence: When Many Methods Are at One [DGB]

April 3rd: In the professional evaluation of texts from psychiatry, and in the analysis of literary texts, small textual differences can constitute significant differences in the direction that interpretations may take. This is particularly the case when there are extended patterns of semantic consistency that appear too consistent to be dismissed as random. Whether the choices behind such patterns of consistency are conscious or unconscious, the non-randomness means that there is a case to be made that they are “motivated” (following eg. Jakobson and Tynjanov 1928): that there is a thematic value to the organization that the textual analysis brings out. In this seminar we look at examples of “motivated selection” and their interpretation in psychotherapy and in verbal art.

Week 7: Approaches to Interaction: Conversational Analysis [SB]

Mon 10th April: Speech acts and Gricean maxims (see week 4) have had a powerful influence on the conduct of pragmatics since the resurgence of semantics and pragmatics after 1975. This week, Dr Barnes will be examining a third force of influence over the domain of pragmatics, again one derived from outside of linguistics – Conversational Analysis (C.A.). Through detailed examples, Dr Barnes shows how C.A. adds value to the analysis of meaning, particularly when the conventional modes of speaking and listening are compromised by injury or illness. These tools have been applied in research projects more recently. We consider the explosion of discourses around “Pragmatics” and ethnomethodology.

Week 8: Genetic Relationships between Languages: Typological Findings and Debating Language Universals [CW and DGB]

Mon 1st 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 [AL]

Mon 8th 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: Review of Written Assignments and of the Research of Class Members [DGB et al.]

Mon. 15th May: Each class member will have 30 minutes to present and defend her/ his proposed assignment. This will be c.20 days before the final submission of the written version. All those present can raise issues and express constructive evaluations.

Part of the motivation of this plan is to ensure there is no rush to wording without review, given the approaching end of semester.

Week 11: Language, Culture, and Sociolinguistics in Society [IP]

Mon 22nd May: Professor Piller 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?

Topics include 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 human sciences may be discussed as background in the tutorial discussion.

Week 12: Theories of Sound Structure [MP]

Mon 29th May: Dr. Mike Proctor considers fundamental issues in the relation between phonetics and phonology, and current methods for achieving evidence in relation to articulatory processes. Three readings are offered to students well ahead of the class; and these set up a discussion of basic questions about the representation of speech.

Week 13: Theories of Language Development and of Language Acquisition [DGB et al.]

Mon 5th June: 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; and at current attitudes to genetic and epigenetic factors in human growth.

A very useful textbook is:

Allan, Keith (2010: 2nd (expanded) Ed.) *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics*: London; Oakville: Equinox. In a different way, the early book by Robert de Beaugrande (1993) *Linguistic Theory. The Discourse of Fundamental Works*. England: Longman Linguistics Library is useful in that it stitches together the actual wordings of leading linguists of the C20th, and supplies the reader with many details so that one can follow up references. Both the above books are 'solid', and you will be guided to particular sections and excerpts where particularly relevant to a seminar topic.

In 2017, greater use will be made in seminars of students reporting back their own views from selections they make from a number of brief introductory texts on 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 reviewed, and helpful commentary. Other references with very useful, but very brief, accounts of the careers of important 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. This means that the course will require a broad spectrum of choices alongside your chance to develop a more specialized theme in your two written assignments.

The Allan text and the Thomas text are the best places at which to commence your survey of **Modern Theories of Linguistics in the Human Sciences**.

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

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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
- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about 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

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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

- demonstrate an understanding of selected key linguistic theories in their historical context, and in relation to the motivations of the communities of scholars responsible for their development
- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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
- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about 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

- demonstrate an understanding of the distinguishing concepts of major theories and theorists
- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to 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

- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about 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

- demonstrate an understanding of the use of evidence in different kinds of theory
- demonstrate a capacity to adopt a coherent position with respect to the claims and assumptions of different theories
- demonstrate a capacity to present clear and cogent arguments about 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