



LING121

Language Myths and Realities

S1 Day 2019

Dept of Linguistics

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	4
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	8
<u>Changes from Previous Offering</u>	13
<u>Changes since First Published</u>	14

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General Information

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit starts by looking at myths that surround language, from everyday (mis)understandings of what language is, to the way language appears in mythology around the world. Students are provided with the tools to test these myths through the exploration of different linguistic theories and methods, and are asked to consider what we understand as linguistic data. We discuss the history and evolution of language, and consider the links between speech, gesture, signs and writing.

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:

Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.

Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.

Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.

Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

General Assessment Information

Late Assignment Submission

- Late submissions without an extension will receive a penalty of 3% of the total mark available for the assessment task per day including weekend days (i.e. this is 3% of the total marks possible for the task – NOT 3% of the marks the student received. For example, if the assessment task is worth 100 marks and the student is two days late their mark for the task is reduced by 6 marks.)
- Late submission of an assessment task without an extension will not be accepted at all after the date on which marked assessment tasks have been released to the rest of the class. Any student with unsubmitted work at this date will receive a mark of 0 for the assessment task.
- Extensions will only be given in special circumstances, and can be requested by completing the Special Consideration request at ask.mq.edu.au and providing the requisite supporting documentation.
- Extensions that will result in submissions after the assessment task has been returned to the class will require a separate assessment task to be completed at the unit convenor's discretion.
- For more information on Special Consideration, see the university website <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>
- If a student fails the unit due to non-submission of an assignment or non-attendance at an exam, an FA grade will be applied in accordance with the University's Assessment Policy.
- Unit convenors have the discretion to determine whether or not students should fail a unit on the basis of lateness penalties alone if other learning outcomes of the unit have been met.

Moderation of assessment

With the exception of automatically marked online quizzes, all assessment is marked by tutors and is moderated using pre-marking forms of standardisation such as the use of marking rubrics,

and post-marking moderation such as sample checking and statistical analysis of the spread of marks to ensure fairness and consistency across the unit. Final marks are subject to ratification at the Faculty of Human Sciences exam meeting at the end of semester.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Etymology and Meaning</u>	20%	No	Week 3
<u>Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt</u>	10%	No	Week 7
<u>Comparative Method</u>	20%	No	Week 9
<u>Major Essay</u>	50%	No	Week 13

Etymology and Meaning

Due: **Week 3**

Weighting: **20%**

You will be asked to research the etymology of several words, chosen from a list provided. You will also have to search an online corpus of English to find examples of the word in use and exemplify different meanings of each word. You will also be required to write a short piece of analysis on how the meanings of words change over time.

A template will be provided for this task.

This task gives you experience of working with language data and an understanding of how data about language change is collected.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt

Due: **Week 7**

Weighting: **10%**

In place of your tutorial in week 7, you will visit the Museum of Ancient Cultures (on campus). During this trip you will complete an online quiz that requires you to find certain objects. This will

require you to identify the ancient writing script that is found on the objects, and you will be asked to decipher some hieroglyphics.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Comparative Method

Due: **Week 9**

Weighting: **20%**

You will be provided with a set of words from several related languages and asked to reconstruct these words in an ancestor language, based on the linguistic data you are provided with, and answer associated questions. A template will be provided for your submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Major Essay

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **50%**

This is the main piece of assessment for the unit. You will be provided with a list of essay questions by week 5 and will choose one of these for your essay, which should be of no more than 1500 words, and must appropriately use academic sources to support your argument.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Delivery and Resources

LING121 is taught by **2 one-hour lectures** and **1 one-hour tutorial** per week. **There are no lectures or tutorials in Week 13.**

Lectures

Lectures begin week 1, and are on **Monday at 2pm** and **Wednesday at 10am**.

All lectures are recorded and live-streamed using Echo360 and will be available to view on iLearn. However, the recordings are not a substitute for attending the lectures as they will not capture discussions or question and answer sessions fully. You should use the recordings as a revision and study aid, not as a substitute for class attendance. Bear in mind that we have lectures on topics such as sign language and gesture, which do not get adequately captured by lecture recordings.

Tutorials

Tutorials begin week 1.

Each tutorial is based around a key skill that is linked to the assessment tasks or extend the topic from the lectures in the previous week. You will usually be asked to do some sort of preparation for each tutorial, and it is expected that you have accessed the content of the previous week's lectures prior to attending the tutorial.

Tutorials are your opportunity to ask questions about topics you haven't fully understood, or want to know more about. If you have questions, you should ask them!

Attendance at tutorials is required and attendance will be monitored by tutors.

Reading

We will aim to provide alternative texts to help with your independent study of linguistics, and these may be in the form of podcasts and videos, but we will specify specific readings on occasion. Leganto is the access point for all readings. You will find a link to this on iLearn.

There is no required text for this unit, however you may find the following useful:

Bauer, Laurie, Holmes, Janet, and Warren, Paul. (2006) *Language Matters*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. (BHW)

Bauer, Laurie, and Trudgill, Peter. (1998) *Language Myths*. London: Penguin. (B & T)

*Kaplan, Abby. (2016) *Women Talk More than Men ... And Other Myths about Language Explained*. Cambridge: CUP.

*Napoli, Donna Jo, and Schoenfeld, Vera-Lee. (2010) *Language Matters*. (2nd Ed) Oxford: OUP. (N & S)

You should also familiarise yourself with the range of introductory books on linguistics that the library holds.

Those marked with a * are available as e-books from the library.

Unit Schedule

Topics will be structured around the following blocks (a full lecture by lecture schedule will be posted on iLearn):

- **Myths: Folk-linguistics and Prescriptivism**
- **Realities: Modes of communication**
- **Myths and Realities: Historical Linguistics and Language Evolution**
- **Multiple realities: Linguistic Debates about Language Acquisition/Development**
- **Myth or Reality? The future of language**
- **Myths and Realities: What do Linguists do?**

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.
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Assessment tasks

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- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.
- Understand how language data is collected for the purpose of linguistic research.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of real world language data.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Ancient Writing Treasure Hunt
- Comparative Method
- Major Essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Understand how societal perspectives about language do not always align with current linguistic research.

Assessment tasks

- Etymology and Meaning
- Major Essay

Changes from Previous Offering

Fewer assessments with a change in the weighting of marks (change approved by FSQC)

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
21/02/2019	Corrected error in the Delivery section about the days for lectures.