



LING1121

Language Myths and Realities

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

Department of Linguistics

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Disclaimer

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores some common misunderstandings about language, and introduces students to a range of linguistic topics such as historical linguistics, language evolution, writing systems, and gesture. The unit showcases what linguists do outside of academia and provides practice in analysing real linguistic data.

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:

ULO1: Compare societal perspectives about language with findings from current linguistic research.

ULO2: Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.

ULO3: Evaluate how sets of language data represent particular linguistic features.

ULO4: Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of language data.

ULO5: Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

General Assessment Information

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the [Macquarie University Assessment Policy](#).

All final grades are determined by a grading committee, in accordance with the Macquarie University Assessment Policy, and are not the sole responsibility of the Unit Convenor.

Students will be awarded a final grade and a mark which must correspond to the grade descriptors specified in the [Assessment Procedure](#) (clause 128).

To pass this unit, you must demonstrate sufficient evidence of achievement of the learning outcomes, meet any ungraded requirements, and achieve a final mark of 50 or better.

Further details for each assessment task will be available on iLearn.

Late Submissions

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (OF THE TOTAL POSSIBLE MARK) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical concern.

For example:

Number of days (hours) late	Total Possible Marks	Deduction	Raw mark	Final mark
1 day (1-24 hours)	100	5	75	70
2 days (24-48 hours)	100	10	75	65
3 days (48-72 hours)	100	15	75	60
7 days (144-168 hours)	100	35	75	40
>7 days (>168 hours)	100	-	75	0

For any late submissions of time-sensitive tasks, such as scheduled tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, and/or scheduled practical assessments/labs, students need to submit an application for Special Consideration.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Language data analysis	50%	No	30 March & 11 May
Writing Systems Quiz	10%	No	13 April
Major Essay	40%	No	8 June

Language data analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **30 March & 11 May**

Weighting: **50%**

This case study analysis models the work of a lexicographer. You will analyse different elements of a dictionary entry to draw conclusions about how meaning for particular words has changed over time. You will also collect evidence from corpus data as a basis for creating your own dictionary entries.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Evaluate how sets of language data represent particular linguistic features.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of language data.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

Writing Systems Quiz

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **13 April**

Weighting: **10%**

You will complete an online quiz which focuses on topics covered in the unit about writing systems. This will involve deciphering ancient scripts and identifying types of writing system, as

well as demonstrating an understanding of key terms.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Apply basic theoretical and technical linguistic knowledge to the analysis of language data.

Major Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **8 June**

Weighting: **40%**

You will be provided with a list of questions relating to content across the unit, and you will choose one of these for an essay, which will use appropriate academic sources to explain linguistic concepts to a general audience.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Compare societal perspectives about language with findings from current linguistic research.
- Demonstrate some basic theoretical and technical knowledge about some sub-disciplines of linguistics.
- Evaluate how sets of language data represent particular linguistic features.
- Critically discuss a myth about language in light of linguistic realities using standard written English discourse.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

This unit is taught through 2 x 1 hour lectures each week and 1 x 1 hour tutorial.

All lectures will be delivered on-campus on Monday (11am) and Wednesday (11am). A recording of the lecture will be available later on the day of delivery. All tutorials will also be on-campus.

There is no textbook for this unit. All readings are available through the Leganto reading list, accessible via the iLearn page.

Unit Schedule

A weekly schedule will be available on iLearn. Topics that will be covered include:

- Language and Meaning
- Human vs. animal communication
- Speech and Articulation
- Signs and Gesture
- Language Acquisition
- Language endangerment
- Language technology
- Professional applications of linguistic knowledge

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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 connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.

Inclusion and Diversity

Social inclusion at Macquarie University is about giving everyone who has the potential to benefit from higher education the opportunity to study at university, participate in campus life and flourish in their chosen field. The University has made significant moves to promote an equitable, diverse and exciting campus community for the benefit of staff and students. It is your responsibility to contribute towards the development of an inclusive culture and practice in the areas of learning and teaching, research, and service orientation and delivery. As a member of the Macquarie University community, you must not discriminate against or harass others based on their sex, gender, race, marital status, carers' responsibilities, disability, sexual orientation, age, political conviction or religious belief. All staff and students are expected to display appropriate behaviour that is conducive to a healthy learning environment for everyone.

Professionalism

In the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences, professionalism is a key capability embedded in all our courses.

As part of developing professionalism, students are expected to attend all small group interactive sessions including clinical, practical, laboratory, work-integrated learning (e.g., PACE placements), and team-based learning activities. Some learning activities are recorded (e.g., face-to-face lectures), however you are encouraged to avoid relying upon such material as they do not recreate the whole learning experience and technical issues can and do occur. As an adult learner, we respect your decision to choose how you engage with your learning, but we would remind you that the learning opportunities we create for you have been done so to enable your success, and that by not engaging you may impact your ability to successfully complete this

unit. We equally expect that you show respect for the academic staff who have worked hard to develop meaningful activities and prioritise your learning by communicating with them in advance if you are unable to attend a small group interactive session.

Another dimension of professionalism is having respect for your peers. It is the right of every student to learn in an environment that is free of disruption and distraction. Please arrive to all learning activities on time, and if you are unavoidably detained, please join activity as quietly as possible to minimise disruption. Phones and other electronic devices that produce noise and other distractions must be turned off prior to entering class. Where your own device (e.g., laptop) is being used for class-related activities, you are asked to close down all other applications to avoid distraction to you and others. Please treat your fellow students with the utmost respect. If you are uncomfortable participating in any specific activity, please let the relevant academic know.

Unit information based on version 2025.03 of the [Handbook](#)