

PSU12160 Language

5 ECTS

One semester: Michaelmas Term

22 lectures; 103 hours independent study

Prerequisites: Cognate introductory level modules (e.g., cognitive psychology/science, linguistics modules)

Module description

Psycholinguistics is the scientific study of the psychology of language. Language dominates our cognitive and social activities and psycholinguistics examines the relationship between language and the human mind. It is one of the most important areas of cognitive psychology and studies how we acquire, understand, and use language, and how these processes are affected by ageing and brain damage. Modern psycholinguistic research makes use of biology, neuroscience, cognitive science, and information theory to study how the brain processes language and to evaluate the psychological reality and underpinnings of linguistic rules and processes. The objective of this module is to introduce students to some of the main principles, methods and findings in the study of language within psychology.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students should be able to:

- Describe the structure of the language system
- Describe the broad functional divisions of the brain relevant for language
- Describe theories of how language is processed in the normal and atypical brain
- Describe the variety of methods used in language science to understand how the brain is organised to produce and comprehend language
- Describe models of speech perception, comprehension and production
- Discuss research on theories relating to key issues in psycholinguistics (e.g., the critical period, language and species-specificity, language and thought, speech perception)

Indicative topics

- The evolution of language
- Non-human animal communication
- The structure of the language system
- Biological basis of language
- Methods in psycholinguistic research
- Understanding speech
- Producing speech
- Word processing
- Sentence processing
- Discourse processing
- First language acquisition
- Bilingual language processing

- Aphasia
- Language & Thought

Assessment: TBC

Recommended text: Traxler, M.J. (2023). *Introduction to Psycholinguistics*. (2nd Ed.). Wiley