TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

MASTER OF ARTS
LALS 517 SPECIAL TOPIC: COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS AND L2 PEDAGOGY
15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 29 June 2016
Teaching dates: 29 February to 5 June 2016
Easter break: 24–30 March 2016
Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016
Last assessment item due: 13 June 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Thursday 4.10-6pm   24 Kelburn Parade, Room 103

Names and contact details

Course coordinator / lecturer:
Associate Professor Frank Boers
Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room 409
In office: On appointment
Phone: 463 6014
Email: frank.boers@vuw.ac.nz

MA course administration at LALS:
Janet Attrill
Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ210
Phone: 463 5894 or 463 5600
Email: janet.attrill@vuw.ac.nz
Post: School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington,

PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

Prescription

This course familiarises students with a novel approach to L2 instruction which treats language phenomena as non-arbitrary. We review the research (concerned mostly with the teaching of vocabulary and phraseology) on the merits of the approach, fine-tune its pedagogical applications, and identify avenues for further research.

Course content

This course aims to familiarise students with the principal tenets of the school of thought known as Cognitive Linguistics (CL), and how these can be applied to the field of instructed second language acquisition.

CL rejects the vocabulary-grammar dichotomy and instead considers language as a large inventory of symbolic units ranging from single words over multiword units to syntactic patterns. CL therefore emphasises the importance of item-based learning in general and of acquiring multiword units in particular. If language learning is to a large extent a matter of item-learning, then it must rely very much on memory. Fortunately, CL proposes pathways for cognitive engagement that are believed to make language items, multiword units and patterns memorable. These pathways become available if one recognises that many aspects of language are far less arbitrary than is often assumed. There are often plausible explanations as to why particular words have developed their meanings and functions, as to why certain words seek each other's company and form word partnerships, and as to why messages are formulated in conventionally established ways. The course will provide ample illustration of such non-arbitrary aspects of language, and how language learners can benefit from becoming aware of these.

Indeed, a growing number of quasi-experimental studies have demonstrated the merits of CL-informed language pedagogy. We will evaluate the robustness of this evidence in favour of applying CL insights to language learning and teaching, identify avenues for much needed further research, and discuss ways of fine-tuning the pedagogical implementations.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. recognize the importance of 'idiomaticity' (i.e., the abundance of multiword lexis) in natural discourse

2. recognize the importance of polysemy (i.e., words with more than one meaning) and the abundance of figurative expressions in natural discourse

3. recognize features of teaching materials that match or clash with Cognitive Linguistics (CL) tenets

4. propose judicious implementations of CL proposals in L2 pedagogy

5. evaluate the evidence put forward in support of CL applications in L2 pedagogy and propose further avenues for pedagogy-oriented CL research

Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as workshops. For distance students, the course is delivered on-line through http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz.

In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Preparation for each class involves reading one or more articles and performing a task / responding to a question.

Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes and/or contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard (25 hrs), reading and reviewing the essential and recommended texts (85 hrs), and preparing the assessment items (40 hrs).

Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 517:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	CLOs
1.	Choose a sample of authentic language (e.g., a radio interview, magazine article) that might be suitable for use with your students. Analyse this for the presence of multiword lexis and for non-literal uses of words. What challenges for comprehension might these items pose for your students?	25%	1,200	4 April	1, 2
2.	Analyse an EFL course book of your choice for features that chime or clash with CL tenets. In the case of clashes, propose ways of adapting the materials in accordance with the CL tenets.	35%	1,600	9 May	3, 4
3.	Design a classroom activity (or a sequence of activities) of about 50 minutes that incorporates a non-arbitrary feature of language. Describe how you could test the effectiveness of your lesson (while trying to avoid the shortcomings of some of the studies discussed in the course).	40%	2,200	13 June	4, 5

The criteria for marking are:
- coherence and clarity of the argumentation
- evidence of having grasped the course contents
- incorporation of ideas and findings from (cited) research articles

Grade descriptors (applicable to all LALS MA courses) will be made available on Blackboard.

Submission and return of work

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Feedback will be given to students also via Blackboard. Feedback will be given within a period of two weeks after submission.

Extensions and penalties

No penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission (requested via e-mail) to submit the assignment after the deadline. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also consult the course coordinator (via e-mail) in case your text exceeds the word limit, to be advised whether/what cuts need to be made.

Set texts

Articles to introduce and exemplify Cognitive Linguistic approaches to language pedagogy, and a time schedule for reading them, will be made available on the LALS 512 Blackboard site. You will typically be required to read two articles per class. These should be read before the relevant class.

Recommended reading

Additional articles on diverse strands of CL applications will be made available on Blackboard as further support. These may be particularly helpful background reading in preparation for assignment 3.

The following books (available from the University Library) may be useful, too:

Boers, F., & Lindstromberg, S. (2009) *Optimizing a lexical approach to instructed second language learning*. Palgrave

Littlemore, J. (2010). *Applying Cognitive Linguistics to second language learning and teaching*. Palgrave.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected in the first week of the course. Her/his name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard.

Student feedback

The course was last taught in 2013 and was well received. No suggestions for improvement were made at the time. The course content has of course been updated, and I am planning to use slightly more hands-on activities in class that will help students prepare for the assignments.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progess (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates

- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz