

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.74-99

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE
STUDIES

Subject PROPOSAL FOR A MAJOR IN LINGUISTICS

Date JULY 26, 1974

MOTION: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-99
the proposal for a Major in Linguistics."

(Note: The intent is that this Major will commence in the
Fall semester 1975.)

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.74-99

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

Subject

Date July 26, 1974

At its meeting of 23rd July, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies considered the attached proposal for a Major in Linguistics. It is now transmitted to Senate for its consideration; and the Committee recommends that it be approved.

The Committee wished to draw the attention of Senate to a number of features of this proposal. First, it is the intention of the Department of Modern Languages that, should this proposal be approved by Senate, it will be put into effect in the Fall semester, 1975. Second, the Calendar entry for this proposal is included in the letter from Professor Newton to the Chairman of the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee, dated 24th May, 1974. Third, the proposal represents no additions to the course offerings of the Department of Modern Languages, but rather a rearrangement of courses presently being offered.

I. Mugridge
I. Mugridge

:ams

att.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

to Dr. I. Mugridge, Chairman,
Senate Committee on Undergraduate
Studies

Subject Proposal for a Major in
Linguistics

From L.A. Boland, Chairman,
Arts Curriculum Committee

Date July 10, 1974.

At its meeting of June 13, 1974, the Arts Curriculum Committee passed the following motion.

"That the Committee approve the proposal documented in C. 84-1 for a major in Linguistics."

Would you please place this proposal and the attached documentation on the agenda for the next meeting of SCUS.

Thank you.



L.A. Boland

vp
Attach.

cc: Dr. C. Bouton, Chairman,
Modern Languages

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

SCUS 74-31

MEMORANDUM

.o. Mr. H. Evans

Registrar

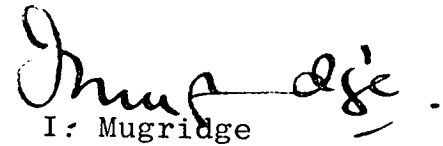
Subject Proposal for a Major in
Linguistics

From I. Mugridge

Assistant Vice-President, Academic

Date July 16, 1974

I am attaching a copy of material on the proposal for a major in linguistics, submitted by the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee. This should be placed on the agenda of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies as soon as possible.


I. Mugridge

:ams

att.

C. 84-1



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, BURNABY 2, B.C., CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES; 291-3111

The Chairman,
Arts Faculty Curriculum Committee,
Simon Fraser University.

May 24, 1974.

Dear Dr. Boland,

Towards the end of the fall 1973 semester I submitted on behalf of the Department a proposal for the introduction of a major program in Linguistics. It was agreed at the Arts Faculty Curriculum Committee of December 6 (reference in minutes "c. 77-6") that a motion for approval in principle be delayed until consultation had taken place between members of the Linguistics division and the Philosophy Dept. regarding the incorporation of Philosophy 344 and 444, and with the Psychology Dept. regarding the incorporation of Psychology 365 and 465. This consultation took place in Spring (Dr. Roberts acting for me during my research semester) and at the meeting of the Linguistics Division of May 23 a motion was carried that the Calendar be amended to include immediately under "Course Requirements" (p. 126, 1974-75 edition) the following:

"A major program in Linguistics is offered consisting of the following courses:

-Lower levels : LING. 130-3, 220-3, 221-3

-To be taken in the upper levels : At least 30 hours of which 21 comprise LING. 401-3, 402-3, 403-3, 404-3, 405-3, 406-3, 407-3 and the remaining 9 hours to be selected from other upper division courses in General Linguistics, French, German, Spanish or Russian Linguistics, Philosophy 344-3, 444-5, or psychology 365-3. Students intending to take a Major in Linguistics are strongly advised to combine it with a Major or Minor in a language."

I therefore wish to resubmit our proposal as formulated above. The general justification remains as in our original submission (copy attached). I may add, however, that the Linguistics Division agrees wholeheartedly with the interdisciplinary trend implied in this reformulation.



There is no doubt that many topics in Linguistics as commonly understood nowadays constitute a highly specialized area within cognitive psychology and that the recent phenomenal interest in Linguistic semantics has done much to tie in traditional philosophical issues in theory of meaning with the work going on in transformational grammar. Secondly my comments in the earlier submission regarding student interest may be supplemented by the observation that enrolment in Linguistics courses is up over 40% compared to last summer.

sincerely,

Brian Newton

Brian Newton
Chairman, Linguistics Division
Acting Chairman, DML Graduate
Studies Committee.

c.c. Dr. Ch. P. Bouton, D.M.L.
Dr. L. Resnick, Philosophy.
Dr. M. Coles, Psychology.

Charles Bouton

Charles Bouton
Chairman, D.M.L.

BN/HH

Proposal to Introduce Linguistics Major

The Department of Modern Languages, at its plenary meeting of November 20, voted unanimously to instruct me, as Chairman of the Linguistics Division, to initiate procedures for the introduction of a major degree program in Linguistics.

The only calendar change which would be entailed by this development would be as follows:

"Course Requirements

(Present wording) A minor in Linguistics is offered consisting of the following courses:

Lower Levels: 130-3, 220-3, 221-3

To be taken in the Upper Levels: At least 15 hours at 400-division."

(Proposed Change)

"Both a major and minor in Linguistics are offered consisting of the following courses:

Lower Levels: (as above)

To be taken in the Upper Levels: At least 30 hours (for major) or at least 15 hours (for minor) at 400-division."

There are many reasons why the Department feels that it is appropriate to apply for the introduction of a major in Linguistics at the present moment.

I mention four:

(a) We already have a minor program in Linguistics to graduate in which students select five of a total of thirteen 3-credit courses each of which is offered at least once a year; students proposing to major would select ten of these same courses, so that no additional demands of any nature would be

imposed on our personnel and space resources. The schedule which has been approved departmentally for the period up to fall 1975 would stand exactly as it is and there would be no reason to depart from the pattern on which it is modelled in the immediate future.

(b) Since its inception the Department has offered a Ph.D. program in Linguistics alone of the three areas taught at the undergraduate level (French, German, Spanish, Russian languages, the literatures in these languages, linguistics). Yet while majors in one of our four languages have been available it has not been possible to major in just that subject which is taught at the graduate level. One of the results of this situation has been that practically all our graduate students have entered the graduate program from outside SFU. This has been a continuing source of difficulties; in particular it has been very hard to develop a properly integrated sequence of Linguistics courses at both levels and often quite frustrating to have to teach graduate students who may know less on a given topic than our own undergraduate students majoring in a language. The introduction of a major would considerably enhance the efficiency of our Linguistics program as a whole.

(c) Although no attempt has been made to secure precise numerical data, it is the experience of everyone involved in our Linguistics program that there has been a steadily developing show of student interest in a linguistics major. If figures are to be cited we may point to the fact that while the overall enrollment in some language courses has fallen dramatically over the years, yet demand for linguistics has remained steady; indeed this semester, in spite of the fact that our largest Division (French), dropped its requirement for a Linguistics component in its major, our total Linguistics enrollment went up from 127 (fall 1972) to 156 (fall 1973, figure for September 30).

(d) Our reasons for believing that students should take Linguistics at all remain as outlined in, e.g., our previous submission regarding course reorganization. To repeat, most of our students will probably continue to study linguistics because of its intimate relevance to the theory and practice of language teaching and learning. To teach a foreign language, in addition to knowing it, one must 'know about' it. This entails an understanding of its phonetics, its grammatical structure and its semantic organization. While individual features under these heads may be language-specific the essential characteristics of linguistic organization vary but little from one language to the other and modern linguistic theory is largely concerned with the universal aspects of human language of which individual languages provide instances; in particular the student of linguistics acquaints himself with those concepts in terms of which his knowledge of a language can be both organized and conveyed. Effective material selection, drill preparation, teaching techniques, teaching aid evaluation, and ultimately pedagogic efficiency all depend to a large extent on the application of the tools provided by Linguistics. We feel that a student with a good knowledge of a language who has followed a course of study in our Linguistics program has as effective a tool for the job of language teaching as is available in the modern university. It is anticipated that many students contemplating a career in language teaching will prefer to combine a major in Linguistics with a minor in their chosen language rather than take the option open to them at present of minoring in Linguistics and majoring in the language. Furthermore, assuming the acceptance of the present submission, the prospect of a language and linguistics double major will doubtless open up. A perusal of any selection of relevant advertisements

will show that some knowledge of Linguistics is now recognized generally as an essential qualification for language teaching. The demand for highly qualified 'applied linguists' will undoubtedly increase in Canada as both bilingualism and the teaching of the two official languages to immigrants continue to receive systematic attention.

More generally a course in Linguistics might benefit the student's appreciation and understanding of his own language. In an age when the flood of published and spoken verbal input is increasing at a rate unparalleled in the history of mankind systematic knowledge of linguistic communication become particularly relevant. The range of grammatical and semantic devices available in a given language and embodied in its numerous styles (colloquial, legal, scientific, literary, commercial, political etc.) can be more effectively studied given the appropriate analytical tools. Linguistics is certainly not meant to replace traditional literary studies, but it can complement them by inculcating careful observation and investigation of the facets of language which come under its purview - phonological, grammatical and syntactic structures.

There are doubtless other practical reasons for studying Linguistics (its application to speech therapy, machine translation, automatization of speech recognition and synthesis etc.) but the main attraction of Linguistics to some students will continue to lie in the significance of language in human thinking and all forms of social interaction. The study of the acquisition and use of language can illuminate many important aspects of human cognitive processes. Linguistics in its modern connotation is largely concerned with defining the function which relates the child's

linguistic input (the words, phrases, sentences it hears) to its linguistic output (its practical command of linguistic structures) and in general it is probably true that as much detailed information has been accumulated and analysed as in any of the social sciences. The study of language largely coextends with the study of the specifically human attributes of homo sapiens. It is thus that at a time when the significance of interdisciplinary studies is gaining increasing recognition in universities, Linguistics can play a crucial role. Our own experience has shown that students specializing in areas such as Psychology, Anthropology and English are likely to obtain useful insights into the areas of concern to them; again the option of a possible double major should appeal to some students. It should be emphasized that Linguistics has much to offer to students with no particular desire to qualify in foreign languages.

Brian Newton
Brian Newton

Chairman, Linguistics Division,
Department of Modern Languages
November 20, 1973.