

J.A. Brown



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CURRICULUM VITAE

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

My main research interest is the relation between language, cognition and culture. I am concerned with how the human being evolved and spread around the world, and I believe linguistics is one angle from which to approach this big puzzle, the one I chose. After obtaining my PhD, I would like to become a postdoctoral researcher. I have the beginnings of an interdisciplinary research program in mind, though not properly formulated as of yet, and I would like to work on this program with neuroscientists, psycholinguists and perhaps researchers from other disciplines.

EDUCATION

Radboud University

Sep 2019–present

Master of Arts (Research) in Linguistics and Communication Sciences

Radboud University

Sep 2018–present

Master of Arts in Linguistics, specialization General Linguistics

I took 94 EC worth of classes in one year, while the normal study load is 60 EC per year. This means I worked roughly 1.5 times as hard as other MA students. I obtained 78 EC out of those.

Together with the EC for my internship and my thesis, I expect to have obtained 108 EC over the course of 18 months.

Electives: The Syntax-Semantics Interface; Translation Studies; Structural Aspects of Language; Philosophy of Mind and Language; Linguistic Universals and Diversity; New Ways of Analyzing Syntactic Variation; Optimality Theory; CLS Colloquium Series; Psycholinguistics; Introduction to Language and Speech Technology; Neurobiology and Genetics of Language; Evolution and the Mind; Languages and Society: Variation and Diversity; Language Testing; Computer-Assisted Language Learning

University of Amsterdam

Sep 2009–Aug 2013

Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics

BA Thesis: *Het declaratief-procedureel model van het geheugen als verklarend instrument in de taalwetenschap: evidentie en contra-evidentie* [“*The declarative-procedural memory model as an explanatory instrument in linguistics: evidence and counter-evidence*”, in Dutch]. Advisor: Dr. Jan de Jong.

For my BA thesis, I researched Michael Ullman’s claims about the explanatory power of his declarative/procedural model of lexicon and grammar, which states that lexical information is stored in declarative memory, whereas grammatical rules (in this case, verbal inflection) are accessed “in real time” using procedural memory. I reviewed existing literature on the subject and ultimately found that even though Ullman’s model is neurologically accurate, it is not sufficiently powerful to explain the psycholinguistics of verb inflection. I presented my thesis at the “Thesis Festival” in June 2013. It was awarded the grade of 7.6 on a 10-point scale.

Electives: Linguistics of European Languages; Minority Languages; Interlinguistics; Language Acquisition Sign Language of the Netherlands I-IV; Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies

INTERNSHIP

Radboud University, Nijmegen

Jul 2019–present

Donders Centre for Cognition

Internship

During this internship (with Prof. Dr. Ton Dijkstra), which I expect to complete in late 2019 or early 2020, and which will form the basis of my MA thesis, I use the Multilink computational model to investigate language processing in the case of multiple form–meaning mappings (including polysemy and homonymy).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Brown, J.A. 2019, October 24. *The Meme-ing of Meaning*. Presented at the Moving Humanities: Finding Meaning conference, Graduate School of the Humanities, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Presentation about the relationship between meaning and memes, in which I review the work of Oxford philosopher Mark Richard who claims meanings are better thought of as species than as memes. I argue, by contrast, that thinking of meanings as memes is a good way of thinking about meanings, and that meaning in the linguistic sense (semantics) or as it relates to signs more generally (semiotics) is one side of a coin, the other side of which is meaning in the existential sense (the meaning of life). In my view, all these kinds of meaning, which propagate by means of memes, are evolutionarily adaptive.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

These articles were originally written as term papers for my courses.

Accepted for publication

Brown, J.A. 2019. “Eu nunca falei nada pra ninguém não, né!” A variationist corpus study of negative concord in Brazilian Portuguese. *Radboud Universiteit Taalwetenschap Studententijdschrift* 1. Expected October 2019.

Paper for New Ways of Analyzing Syntactic Variation in which I analyze the incidence of two possible constructions used in Brazilian Portuguese to express negation in several corpora of written and spoken language: negative concord (default) vs. absence of negative concord (marked), with reference to Agostini and Schwenter’s research on negation in Brazilian Portuguese. Originally written January 2019. Grade: 8.5.

Accepted for publication

Brown, J.A. 2019. Independent Pronoun Semantics: the pragmato-semanto-syntactic processing of pronominal reference. *Radboud Universiteit Taalwetenschap Studententijdschrift* 1. Expected October 2019.

Paper for The Syntax–Semantics Interface in which I review several studies, both theoretical and experimental, on the influence of semantics on language processing, specifically with regard to anaphoric pronouns. I conclude that pragmatics, semantics and syntax are related in the form of a “chain” of influence going from pragmatics, to semantics, to syntax. Originally written February 2019. Grade: 8.5.

NON-PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

This is a list of term papers I wrote for various courses. Most of these writings and others, including my BA thesis, can also be found (sometimes in slightly adjusted form) on my Academia.edu page: <https://radboud.academia.edu/JABrown> and my ResearchGate page: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ja_Brown2.

CLS Colloquium Series

Iconicity of the vowels in Dutch verbs: A review of Foolen (2019) and related literature

Critical review of Ad Foolen's lecture Vowels in Dutch verbs: a case of iconicity?, in which he claims that the vowels in certain Dutch verb forms could be a case of sound iconicity, where the vowel sounds stand for the action they describe. I investigate his claim from the three paradigms he mentions: direct iconicity, phonaestemes, and Mouth-Gesture theory, eventually coming to a synthesis. July 2019. Grade: 8.5.

Philosophy of Mind and Language 2

Consciousness as an Aid in Participatory Sense-Making: An enactivist account of cognition, consciousness, and meaning

In this paper, I reflect on the concept of consciousness in philosophy and attempt to fit it into the enactivist view of cognition as established by Varela, Thompson, De Jaegher, inter alios. To accomplish this, concepts such as autopoiesis, perception, and meaning are used. July 2019. Grade: 5.9.

Optimality Theory

Phonological adaptation of non-native words and the perception of feature contrasts

In this phonology paper, I argue that Optimality Theory constraints in the context of loanword adaptation function in such a way as to map non-native feature contrasts onto native feature contrasts, rather than non-native features onto native features directly, with reference to work by Jacobs, Boersma and Hamann, and other phonologists. July 2019. Grade: 8.5.

Psycholinguistics

Linguistic relativity and perceptual origins of colour–pitch mappings: A proposed experiment

Proposal for an experiment that would investigate the associations speakers of languages with different pitch terms make between various pitches and various colours, in order to test the results of the experiment I did (see below). June 2019. Grade: 7.1.

Linguistic Universals and Diversity

The Colour of Pitch: A pilot experiment in linguistic relativity

Report of an experiment in which I tested the associations speakers of languages with different pitch terms make between various pitches and various colours. A small group of participants ($n = 15$) was instructed to associate high and low pitches with colours that vary in either hue or luminance. The results suggest that such associations are language-independent, which gives credence to a view in which physical properties of colour and pitch underlie such associations. June 2019. Grade: 7.8.

Language and Society: Variation and Diversity

Age Differences in Chiac: A variationist study

For this sociolinguistic study, I researched the speech of older and that of younger speakers of Chiac, a French–English mixed code spoken in Maritime Canada, and found that the two not differ as much as I hypothesized. June 2019. Grade: 9.

Translation Studies

Ins Blaue Hinein: Conceptual metaphors with the colour blue around the world

For this paper, I collected a large amount of conceptual emotion metaphors involving the colour blue from various languages ($n = 14$) from several language families, then analyzed them according to Lakoff's theory of conceptual metaphor. Implications for translation are discussed. January 2019. Grade: 8.

Evolution and the Mind

What sets humans apart from other animals?

In this philosophy paper, written with three other students (all of different disciplines), we review Leroi-Gourhan's notion of "the gap" between pre-human cognition and human cognition, and we conclude that there are in fact two "gaps": the biological "gap" between humans and other animals, and the behavioural "gap" between unconscious behaviour driven by needs and conscious, planned behaviour. Technology contributed to the creation of both of these "gaps". November 2018. Grade: 7.5.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

J.A. Brown, Nijmegen**April 2019–current***Founder and Owner*

I founded and run my own enterprise, a sole proprietorship, registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, through which I deliver services related to language and linguistics.

Dutch Ready, Amsterdam**February 2018–present***Tutor of Dutch as a Second Language*

I teach Dutch to expats with various mother tongues, according to a method that prioritizes their individual needs and wishes, which allows for a more tailored learning experience than would be available through conventional methods.

Vertaalbureau Textwerk, Amsterdam**April 2018–present***Dutch to English Translator*

I translate a variety of texts from Dutch to English, and occasionally from English to Dutch, for mostly commercial clients.

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Tests and exams*GRE*, November 2017

Completed the GRE with a 98th-percentile Verbal Reasoning score.

IELTS, November 2017

Completed IELTS with a score of 9/9 (CEFR level C2).

Non-university courses

Human Evolution: Past and Future, Coursera, March 2014

I took this paleoanthropology course taught by Dr. John Hawks to gain more insight into the evolution of pre-*Homo sapiens* hominins into *Homo sapiens*.

Book mention

Grauer, V. 2015. *Sounding the Depths: Tradition and the Voices of History* (2nd ed.).

Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing.

Dr. Victor Grauer, an ethnomusicologist who designed the Cantometrics tool for comparative music analysis together with Alan Lomax, mentions me in his book for having made valuable contributions to his writing on cultural evolution, including evolution of language.

LANGUAGES AND SKILLS

Language proficiency

Dutch: Fluent, native language.

English: Fluent, near-native level (C2).

Portuguese: Conversational. Good reading ability, some writing ability (B2).

French: Conversational. Good reading ability, some writing ability (B2).

German: Conversational. Good reading ability (B2).

Spanish: Some speaking ability. Moderate reading ability (B1).

Galician: Some reading ability.

Other skills: Some familiarity with computational linguistics, machine learning and natural language processing. Fast learner. 90 WPM typist. Creative and associative thinker.

REFERENCES

Prof. Dr. Ton Dijkstra, Principal Investigator, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour; Principal Investigator, Donders Centre for Cognition, Faculty of Social Sciences, Radboud University; Professor, Centre for Language Studies, Faculty of Arts, Radboud University; Professor, Department of Language and Communication, Faculty of Arts, Radboud University; Professor, Psycholinguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Radboud University
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