

# Seminar 17312

# Introduction to Linguistics

**Institute for English Language and Literature**  
**Winter Semester 2020/2021**

**Academic Instructor: Magdalena Borowik**

**Session 1: Introduction**

This module (seminar and lecture) offers an introduction to the basic concepts and methods of linguistics on various levels of analysis (phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and text linguistics). In the end, you will be able to understand the language of linguistics and pursue further studies in the discipline.

Lecture: **Introduction to Linguistics I: Survey of English and Language (17308)**, Prof. Anatol Stefanowitsch, ONLINE via Webex:

<http://fu-berlin.webex.com/meet/anatol.stefanowitsch>

Seminar: **Introduction to Linguistics II (17312)**, Thursday 10.15-11.45 ONLINE via Webex: <https://fu-berlin.webex.com/meet/borowik>, Magdalena Borowik, M.A.

# Contact details

Academic Instructor: **Magdalena Borowik, M.A.**

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Office hours: Tuesday, 4-5pm via Webex (please send me an email)

# Elements of the course (the seminar)

## The Blog:

- Links to video presentations and additional video material;
- Announcements about homework;
- General announcements;
- Link to the files (course syllabus, bibliography, general information about the course);
- The forum

## Blackboard:

- Some of the texts that are not available on Primo;
- Exam tasks

# Weekly workflow

- Lecture on Monday;
- Throughout the week: watch the videos and read our weekly readings, solve the homework tasks, make notes of questions that might come to your mind;
- It is really important that you watch the videos before the class!;
- Our seminar on Thursday: discussions of the homework; in-class tasks, group work, additional videos;
- Individual completion of the exam tasks: Friday noon – Monday 2pm
- Our seminar will be a mixture of a live session and a Q&A session/group work

# Course requirements

- Read the weekly homework tasks, watch the videos and make notes;
- Complete the exams tasks (on your own!) on time;
- You can be absent three times;
- Participate in class discussions;
- Homework will not be graded.

# Course syllabus

	Date	Topic
1	5 November	Introduction
2	12 November	Speech and writing
3	19 November	Phonetics
4	26 November	Segmental phonology
5	3 December	From phonology to morphology
6	10 December	Morphology
7	17 December	Syntax I: Words and phrases
8	7 January	Syntax II: Grammatical relations and semantic roles
9	14 January	Semantics I: Sentences
10	21 January	Semantics II: Lexical Semantics
11	28 January	Pragmatics
12	4 February	Text linguistics
13	11 February	Special Topics: What we find interesting and/or what we work on
14	18 February	Outlook: Empirical methods
15	25 February	Exam

# Course textbook

**Bieswanger, Markus. 2017. *Introduction to English linguistics (UTB basics)*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Francke. [Bitte unbedingt die 4. Ausgabe verwenden!]**

<https://fu-berlin.eu.vbrickrev.com/#/videos/57eb0b76-dde7-485b-a577-cf31b85335e2>



# Course bibliography

**Bieswanger, Markus. 2017. *Introduction to English linguistics (UTB basics)*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Francke. [Bitte unbedingt die 4. Ausgabe verwenden!]**

Herbst, Thomas. 2010. *English linguistics: A coursebook for students of English* (De Gruyter Mouton textbook). De Gruyter Mouton.

Kortmann, Bernd. 2004. *Linguistik: Essentials: Anglistik, Amerikanistik ; Systemgebrauch*, 1st edn (Studium kompakt Anglistik, Amerikanistik). Cornelsen.

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Plag, Ingo. 2009. *Introduction to English linguistics*, 2nd edn (Mouton textbook). Mouton de Gruyter.

Roach, Peter. 2005. *English phonetics and phonology: A practical course*. Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, Henry. 2005. *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Approach*. Routledge.

Stefanowitsch, Anatol. 2019. *Phraseology*. [unpublished teaching material]

Stefanowitsch, Anatol. 2020. *Text linguistics*. [unpublished teaching material]

Stefanowitsch, Anatol, and Kirsten Middeke. 2019. *Syntax*. [unpublished teaching material]

**Any questions?**



# What is language and linguistics?

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# What is a language?

## Language as:

- “[...] a system of communication” (Burling 1992: 2, see also McArthur 1992: 571);
- “A particular instance of this system, such as Arabic, French, English, Kwakiutl, Sanskrit, Swahili” (McArthur 1992: 571);
- “[..] means of communicating”(ibid.);
- means of communication of a specific group (technical language, scientific language) (ibid.).

# The properties of language

A distinction between *natural* and *artificial language*.

## Properties of language:

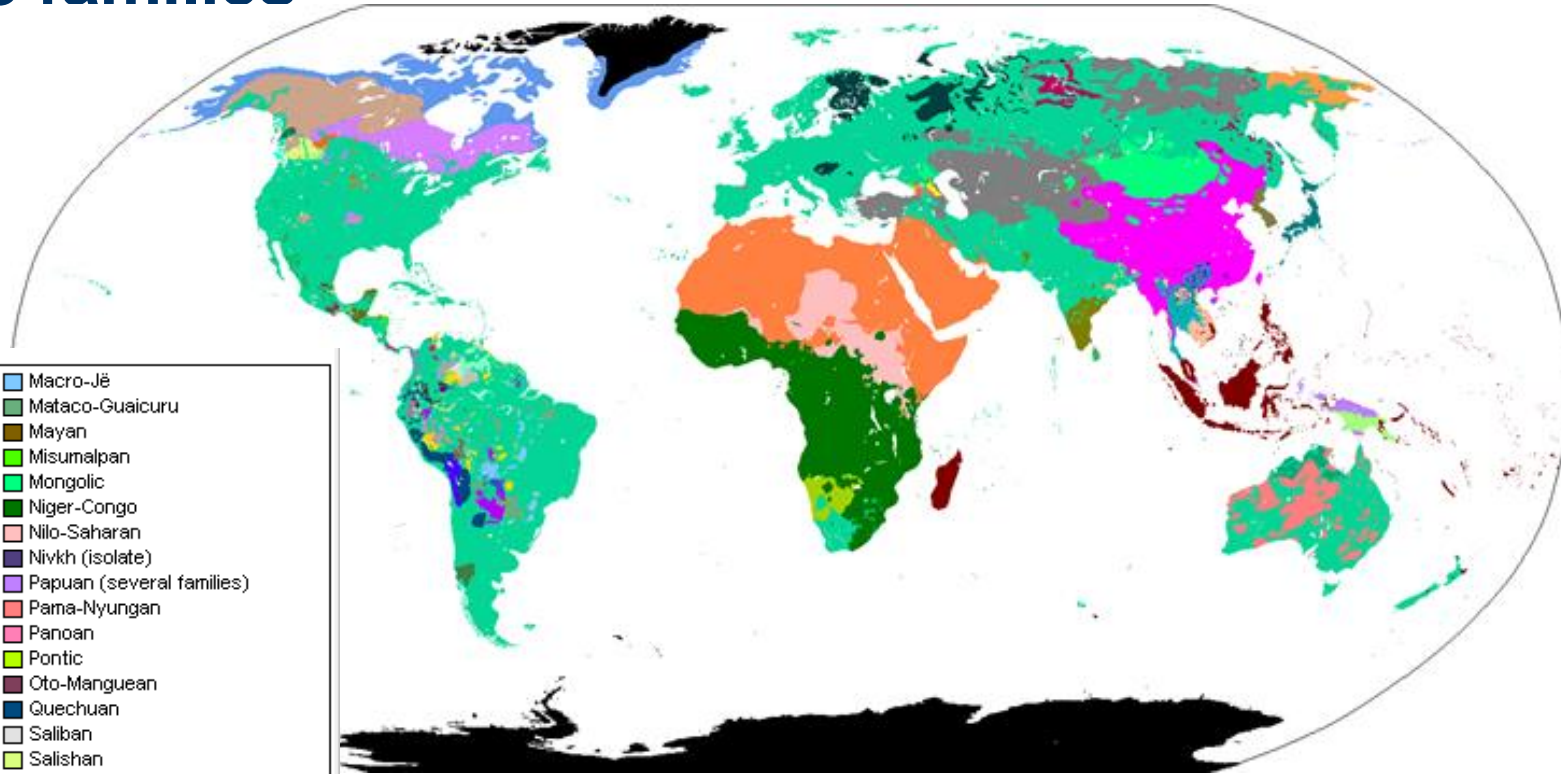
- **”A vocal-auditory channel”**: phonemic medium; sounds which are produced by vocal organs”
- **”Convertability to other media”**: writing, Braille, sign language;
- **”Duality/double articulation ”**: sounds that combine into meaning;
- **”Open-endedness ”**: an indefinite number of utterances that can be produced;
- **”Displacement ”**: refers to events happening in different time and place or to imaginative ones;
- **”Continual change”**;
- **”Turn-taking ”**: in spoken language (McArthur 1992: 571).

# Languages in numbers

Area	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	Count	Percent	Total	Percent	Mean	Median
Africa	2,146	30.2	810,209,997	12.9	377,544	27,000
Americas	1,060	14.9	51,456,819	0.8	48,544	1,150
Asia	2,303	32.4	3,770,496,032	59.9	1,637,211	12,000
Europe	285	4.0	1,656,808,477	26.3	5,813,363	50,000
Pacific	1,312	18.5	6,740,866	0.1	5,138	950
Totals	7,106	100.0	6,295,712,191	100.0	885,971	7,000

Source: (Ethnologue 2020b)

# Language families



Human Language Families	
■ Uninhabited	■ Macro-Jè
■ Afro-Asiatic	■ Mataco-Guaicuru
■ Algic	■ Mayan
■ American Indian (several families)	■ Misumalpan
■ Araucanian	■ Mongolic
■ Arawakan	■ Niger-Congo
■ Arawan	■ Nilo-Saharan
■ Australian (several families)	■ Nivkh (isolate)
■ Austro-Asiatic	■ Papuan (several families)
■ Austronesian	■ Pama-Nyungan
■ Aymaran	■ Panoan
■ Barbacoan	■ Pontic
■ Basque (isolate)	■ Oto-Manguean
■ Bora-Witoto	■ Quechuan
■ Cariban	■ Saliban
■ Caspian	■ Salishan
■ Chibchan	■ Sino-Tibetan
■ Choco	■ Siouan
■ Chukotko-Kamchatkan	■ Tacanan
■ Dené-Yeniseian	■ Tai-Kadai
■ Dravidian	■ Trans-New Guinea
■ Eskimo-Aleut	■ Tsimshianic
■ Guajibooan	■ Tucanoan
■ Hmong-Mien	■ Tungusic
■ Indo-European	■ Tupian
■ Japonic	■ Turkic
■ Jivaroan	■ Uralic
■ Kartvelian	■ Uto-Aztecan
■ Koreanic	■ Wakashan
■ Khoisan	■ Yanomaman
	■ Yukaghir
	■ Zamucoan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17a8eSA2ku0>

Source: (Upload.wikimedia.org 2020)

# Language families

Language family	Area	Languages
<b>Indo-European</b>	Europe to India; all the continents	More than 400 languages spoken by almost 3 billion people. They include the Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, French...), Germanic languages (English, German, Swedish...), Baltic and Slavic languages (Russian, Polish...), Indo-Aryan languages (Persian, Hindi, Kurdish, Bengali and many languages spoken from Turkey to Northern India) as well as some other languages such as Greek and Armenian.
<b>Sino-Tibetan</b>	Asia	Chinese languages, Tibetan and Burmese
<b>Niger-Congo</b>	Sub-Saharan Africa	Swahili, Yoruba, Shona, Zulu
<b>Afroasiatic</b>	Middle East, North Africa	Semitic languages (Arabic, Hebrew...), Somali
<b>Austronesian</b>	Southeast Asia, Taiwan, Pacific, Madagascar	More than 1,000 languages, including Indonesian, Filipino, Malagasy, Hawaiian, Fijian...
<b>Uralic</b>	Central, Eastern and Northern Europe, North Asia	Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian, Sami languages, some languages of Russia (Udmurt, Mari, Komi...)
<b>Altaic (controversial)</b>	Turkey to Siberia	Turkic languages (Turkish, Kazakh...), Mongolic languages (Mongolian...), Tungusic languages (Manchu...), some proponents even include Japanese and Korean
<b>Dravidian</b>	South India	Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu
<b>Tai-Kadai</b>	Southeast Asia	Thai, Lao
<b>Austroasiatic</b>	Southeast Asia	Vietnamese, Khmer
<b>Na-Dene</b>	North America	Tlingit, Navajo
<b>Tupian</b>	South America	Guarani
<b>Caucasian (disputed)</b>	Caucasus	Three families. The most spoken Caucas

Source: (Lingvo.info: 2020).



# The Indo-European language family

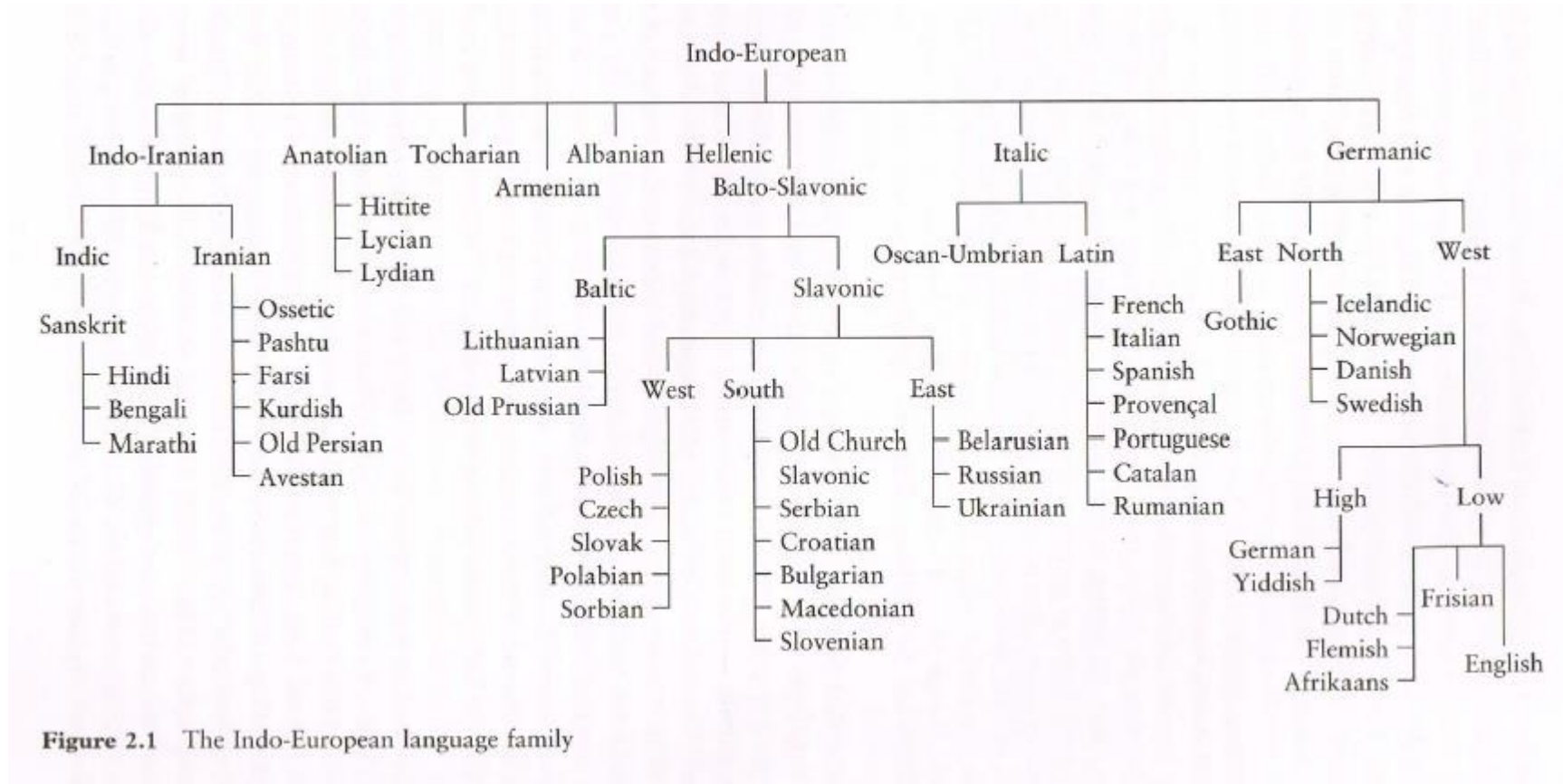


Figure 2.1 The Indo-European language family

Source: (Fennell 2001: 22)

# Languages in numbers

Rank	Language	Primary Country	Total Countries	Speakers (millions)
1	Chinese [ <a href="#">zho</a> ]	China	33	1,197
2	Spanish [ <a href="#">spa</a> ]	Spain	31	414
3	English [ <a href="#">eng</a> ]	United Kingdom	99	335
4	Hindi [ <a href="#">hin</a> ]	India	4	260
5	Arabic [ <a href="#">ara</a> ]	Saudi Arabia	60	237
6	Portuguese [ <a href="#">por</a> ]	Portugal	12	203
7	Bengali [ <a href="#">ben</a> ]	Bangladesh	4	193
8	Russian [ <a href="#">rus</a> ]	Russian Federation	16	167
9	Japanese [ <a href="#">jpn</a> ]	Japan	3	122
10	Javanese [ <a href="#">jav</a> ]	Indonesia	3	84.3
11	Lahnda [ <a href="#">lah</a> ]	Pakistan	6	82.6
12	German, Standard [ <a href="#">deu</a> ]	Germany	18	78.2
13	Korean [ <a href="#">kor</a> ]	South Korea	5	77.2
14	French [ <a href="#">fra</a> ]	France	51	75.0
15	Telugu [ <a href="#">tel</a> ]	India	2	74.0
16	Marathi [ <a href="#">mar</a> ]	India	1	71.8
17	Turkish [ <a href="#">tur</a> ]	Turkey	8	70.8
18	Tamil [ <a href="#">tam</a> ]	India	6	68.8
19	Vietnamese [ <a href="#">vie</a> ]	Viet Nam	3	67.8
20	Urdu [ <a href="#">urd</a> ]	Pakistan	6	63.9
21	Italian [ <a href="#">ita</a> ]	Italy	10	63.7
22	Malay [ <a href="#">msa</a> ]	Malay sia	13	59.5
23	Persian [ <a href="#">fas</a> ]	Iran	29	56.6

Adapted from: (Ethnologue 2020a)

# Linguistic varieties: Dialect and Accent

## ACCENT

- “[...] features of pronunciation” (Crystal 1997: 298);
- “[...] a way of speaking that indicates a person’s place of origin and/or social class [...]” (McArthur : 1992: 9);
- refers to differences in pronunciation (Crystal 1997: 298).

## DIALECT

- “a general and technical term for a form of a language: [...] *the dialects of the United States*” (McArthur 1992: 289); it can also refer to class or profession: *urban dialect, class dialect* (ibid., p. 290);
- “a variety of a language that is distinct from other varieties in grammar, vocabulary and accent” (Aarts 2014);
- refers to differences on all levels of vocabulary, morphology, syntax (Crystal 1997: 298; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 174).

# What is linguistics?

- “Linguistics is the rational and systematic scientific study of language, usually based in institutions of higher learning such as colleges or universities” (Mair 2012: 1).
- “Linguistics [...] is primarily concerned with the human capacity to express ideas and feelings” (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 2)
- “Linguistics can be broadly defined as the scientific study of language or of particular languages (ibid.).

# Core branches of linguistics

- **Phonetics**: speech sounds;
- **Phonology**: sound system of individual languages;
- **Morphology**: structure and forms of words;
- **Syntax**: phrases and sentences;
- **Semantics**: word and sentence meaning

Some scholars also include

- **Sociolinguistics**: language and society
- **Pragmatics**: meaning in context

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 3).

# Core branches of linguistics

<i>branch</i>	phonetics	phonology	morphology	syntax	semantics
<i>concerned with</i>	speech sounds in general	sound systems of languages	words and their components	phrases and sentences	word and sentence meaning

*Traditional core branches of linguistics (simplified)*

(Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 3).

# Chosen branches of linguistics

## Interdisciplinary approaches:

- **anthropological linguistics:** anthropology and linguistics
- **biolinguistics:** biology and linguistics;
- **psycholinguistics:** psychology and linguistics;
- **clinical linguistics:** medicine and linguistics;
- **computational linguistics:** computer science and linguistics;
- **philosophical linguistics:** philosophy and linguistics (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 3).

## Branches distinguished on the basis of other criteria:

- **applied linguistics:** practical approaches of linguistics, for instance in the foreign language teaching and translation;
- **corpus linguistics:** investigation of linguistic phenomena on the basis of corpora (ibid., p. 4)

# Ferdinand de Saussure

- 1857-1911; a Swiss linguist, founder of modern linguistics;
- His lectures published post-mortem as *Cours de linguistique générale*, and were translated into English as *Course in General Linguistics* (Oxfordreference.com, 2020; Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 5);

## Main assumptions:

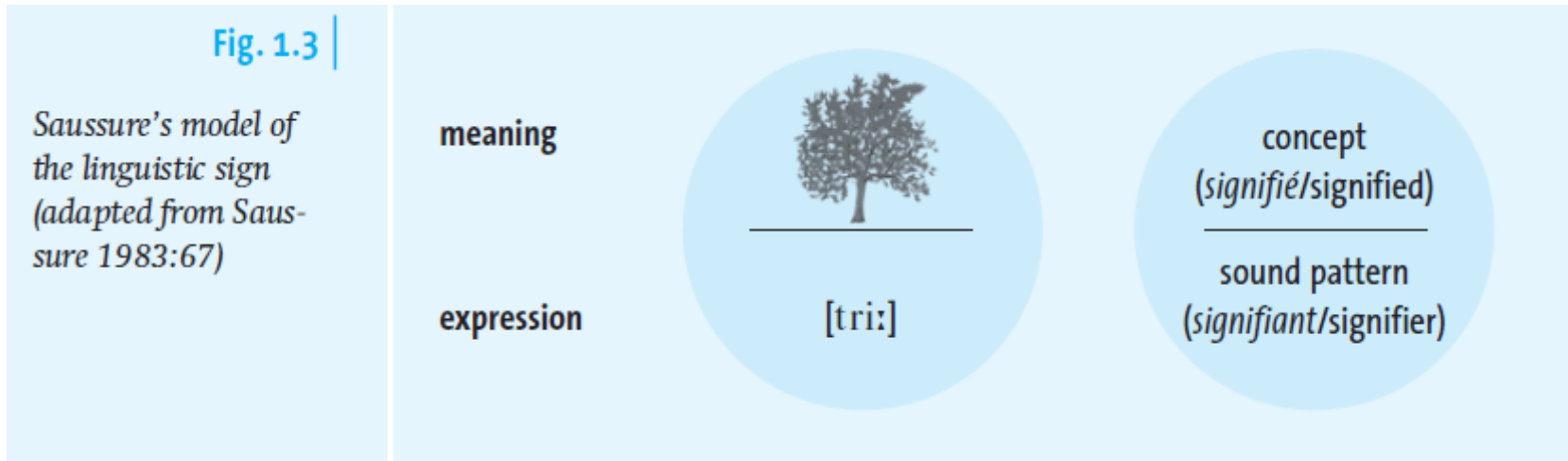
- Language system (*langue*);
- Individual language use (*parole*);

## de Saussure's model of linguistic sign:

- *Signified/signifié* (concept);
- *Signifier/signifiant* (sound pattern) (Oxfordreference.com, 2020).



# Saussure's model of linguistic sign



Arbitrariness of the linguistic sign: no connection between the concept and sound pattern (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 6).

# Synchronic & diachronic linguistics

Distinction between:

- Synchronic linguistics: the study of language at a certain time (primary for Saussure);
- Diachronic linguistics: the study of language change
- Spoken language as the most important one (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 5-6);

# Prescriptive & descriptive approach

- Prescriptive approach: prescribing rules
- Descriptive approach: description of phenomena as they are (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 5);

# Approaches in linguistics

- **Structuralism** (structural linguistics: language as a system; Saussure);
- **Functionalism** (Prague school of functionalism): focus on the function of language (i.e. expressive, representative and appellative function in the organon model of Karl Bühler);
- **Generative linguistics** (formalism): competence and performance, grammar (Bieswanger & Becker 2017: 6-8).

# References

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14. Upload.wikimedia.org. 2020. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Primary\\_Human\\_Language\\_Families\\_Map.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ed/Primary_Human_Language_Families_Map.png) [October 30, 2020].