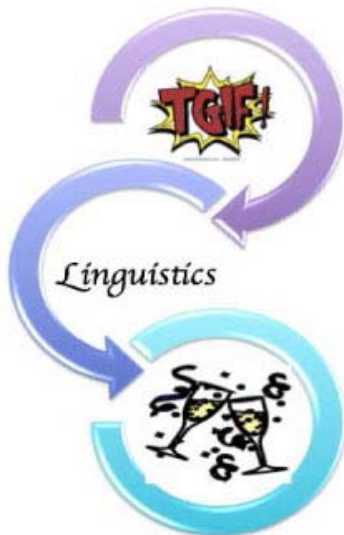


# TGIF: The NTU Linguist Chatroom

**Join us!**  
**Friday, 15 January 2016, 2.30pm**  
**@ HSS Conference Room (HSS-05-57)**

## Why Linguistics shouldn't be "the scientific study of language"



This talk will be a wide ranging discussion of issues brought up in a review I did of Vyvyan Evans' book *The Language Myth*, including rationalism vs. empiricism; the history, nature and goals of linguistics (and science more generally), the nature of communication, the nature of language, the nature of mind, cognition, and brain, animal communication, Whorfian relativism, the problem with formal models, and the hysterical reaction of the Chomskyan camp to Evans' book and what it means from a Kuhnian point of view of paradigm shift. Alternate titles that another linguist in the Division came up with for the talk include "The errant years: 10 reasons why this is a great millennium to study linguistics", "Universal fabrications and formal distress", "Theoretical implosion – the dying days of senseless linguistics", "On the vagueness of innateness", "Theorizing about language versus building theories about language" and my own "Forward to the Past: Now we can finally get back to doing real linguistics!".

### Speaker



Randy J. LaPolla (PhD 1990, UC Berkeley) is Professor of Linguistics in the Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. Before joining NTU he was Chair (Professor) of Linguistics at La Trobe University (2004-2012). He was selected by the Ministry of Education of the PRC to be a Cheung Kong Scholar (长江学者) 2005-2008, and he was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy for the Humanities in 2008, and President of the Australian Linguistic Society for 2007-2009.

Before moving to Australia he worked at the Academia Sinica (1990-1998) and City University of Hong Kong (1996-2004). His research focuses on the history and typology of Sino-Tibetan and Austronesian languages and issues related to the nature and development of communicative behaviour. He has authored or edited eleven books and special journal issues, including *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*, *A Grammar of Qiang*, and *Syntax: Structure, Meaning and Function*, as well as many academic articles and reviews. He is co-Editor of the *Journal of Sino-Tibetan Linguistics* and Associate Editor of *Language and Linguistics*, and on the editorial boards of eleven other journals, and member of the Advisory Committee of the Institute of Linguistics, Academia Sinica.

The TGIF seminar series is organised by  
the Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies, HSS

