

LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

Language is what makes us distinctively human. It is a complex and fascinating topic of study which generates many intriguing questions. Why do New Zealanders speak differently from Americans and British people? What is the difference between a dialect and a language? Why does gay now mean 'stupid' when it once meant 'light-hearted' and more recently referred to homosexual people?

Why do the terms mama, papa, nana, dada appear in the 'baby talk' of so many languages? Do women and men speak differently? What goes on in an individual's mind when they make speech errors such as saying 'tip of the slongue' for 'slip of the tongue'?

Can we define characteristics of possible versus impossible languages? What might be the best way to learn a language? Are people who are good at music better language learners than other people? Has the internet contributed to language change? Is electronic communication more efficient than face-to-face interaction, or has it generated more problems than it has solved? How useful is technology for language learning and teaching? What are the problems and possibilities in getting computers to 'understand' speech? Can the Maori language survive? What are the implications for a country's education system if there is no one language that is a first language for all its pupils? What can a person's speech reveal about their social background?

The study of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies offers ways of addressing such questions and supplies tools to explore the structure of language and how it is used. If you have an interest in language and enjoy logical, analytical reasoning and debate, or if you are interested in what language tells us about people and society, then you will probably enjoy studying Linguistics or Applied Language Studies

WHY STUDY LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES?

Linguistics

The reason most typically given by graduates of Linguistics for why they studied the subject is that it is a fascinating, stimulating and useful subject that

has many applications in the "real world". Students also consider that Linguistics helps them to use both spoken and written language more effectively. Linguistics complements many other areas of study like Business Administration, Computer Science, Education, Mathematics, Management, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Social Science, and of course, Languages.

Applied Language Studies

The nature of Applied Language Studies is illustrated by activities in the School of Linguistics and Applied Languages such as the Applied Linguistics and Writing programmes, the Deaf Studies Research Unit, and the New Zealand Dictionary Centre. On Applied Linguistics courses students learn to describe language and language use in a way that helps second language learners to understand it. They will understand the psychological processes of learning and using a second language and know how to provide the best learning experiences for language learners. The Second Language Education major is useful for those who are considering a career in second language teaching.

WHAT SKILLS DO LINGUISTICS GRADUATES DEVELOP?

Graduates of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies have developed highly diverse and marketable skills and knowledge that may be used in many fields

Career View explores how degrees and courses relate to employment opportunities and to life/work planning. It includes graduate destination information and current employment issues. Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

Wellington Careers and Employment.
wgtn.ac.nz/careers

Research and Project Management Skills

Graduates have skills in the collection, interpretation and presentation of data from many sources, including electronic databases. They are able to offer a well-researched, considered opinion on topics relating to Linguistics and Applied Language Studies and are able to debate issues in this and related fields with confidence. Projects completed during the degree encourage the development of project design, co-ordination and management, and evaluation and presentation skills.

Critical Analysis, Written and Oral Communication Skills

Students develop excellence in written communication and are specifically taught skills in critical thinking and analytical writing. They prepare critical reviews and learn to present data in tables, graphs and reports. Graduates develop exceptional ability to pay attention to detail and accuracy, particularly with reference to listening, reading and writing. They develop sensitivity to the ways in which spoken and written information is communicated, awareness of the relationship between spoken and written language, and an understanding of how gender, culture and other social factors can and do influence communication styles.

Exceptional oral communication skills are developed through a number of strategies, for example, interviews with subjects where natural speech must be encouraged in order to understand the technicalities of spoken language. Students develop and practice interviewing skills, they learn how to structure an interview, how to establish rapport, as well as how to record and evaluate an interview through the use of linguistic tools and questionnaires.

Ethics, Tolerance and Interpersonal Skills

Students are encouraged to develop keen social and political awareness, and the ability and willingness to behave in ways that demonstrate understanding of politeness norms, and cross-cultural, cross-language and cross-gender communications and miscommunications. They develop an understanding of the role that language plays in expressing an opinion or point of view, and they learn to accept others' opinions, values and attitudes in a professional, objective way. Many students engage in research with human participants during their studies and so develop a sophisticated understanding of ethical issues relevant to collecting data from people.

WHERE DO LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES GRADUATES WORK?

Education

Many graduates become educators. Whilst the majority of graduates find work as teachers within the primary and secondary sectors, others work in tertiary or adult education as tutors and lecturers. There are some research opportunities available for those interested in working in areas like language policy, sign language, lip-reading and the acquisition of second language skills by children with learning disabilities. In a survey of graduates undertaken by the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, the specific skills and knowledge which were identified as being most useful for entry into this field were phonetics, and familiarity with processes of language change and language learning.

TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages)

Graduates move easily into careers involving TESOL and into language development roles. There are many opportunities in these areas including refugee resettlement work where refugees are assisted with setting up homes, getting linked up with government agencies, schools, English as a Second Language courses, local doctors and generally orientating them to their local community including local facilities and public transport.

Training

Training for the workplace is another area in which graduates are able to exploit their considerable versatility. Many organisations employ professional trainers to develop their staff's skills, including communication abilities, or to help resolve work problems. These training opportunities can range from training employees in strategies for dealing with verbal abuse from clients (particularly valuable in the medical, social and protective services sectors) to designing training programmes for individual employees. Linguistics is relevant for careers in speech and voice training, where there are two distinctive areas - performance arts and therapeutic work similar to that offered by speech therapists. However, opportunities in this field are relatively limited.

Research and Administration

Some graduates find work in educational institutions, including universities in New Zealand and overseas. Linguistics and Applied Language Studies graduates are also to be found in a number of government departments in a range of administrative

roles. Many graduates find work in the Ministry of Education, usually in research, policy analysis, or advisory positions. There is a steady demand for well-qualified graduates who demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject. Contract work is often the way in, with opportunities for more interesting, responsible and long-term work offered to those who prove themselves.

Information Technology and Computer Science

There is strong demand for graduates able to offer Linguistics with Computer Science or related degrees. Programming language, natural language acquisition, artificial intelligence and computer applications are all extremely fruitful areas to pursue, providing an excellent basis for a career in the Information and Communications Technology industry. Graduates have found work in programming, web-page design, systems analysis and training and new job roles are emerging within this exciting and buoyant industry.

Business Communication and the Public Sector

Excellence in communications is critical to business success. The Linguistics and Applied Language Studies graduate has a role to play, with the necessary skills to assess, evaluate and advise on the effectiveness of business communications at all levels including communications in the global environment. Interpersonal communication and electronic communications in the workplace are potential growth areas in which graduates have the opportunity to make a valuable contribution.

Linguistics and Applied Language graduates are employed in a number of government departments and in large organisations where information and communications specialists are required. These include: Government Communications Security Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Labour, Japanese Embassy, Immigration Department, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Parliamentary Select Committee, National Library of N.Z., Shell Company of Australia, and Energy Direct Corporation.

The Linguistics graduate is comfortable using research tools and has gained an understanding of information management issues. Many major topics in Linguistics are discussed and debated on an international, global basis, and the Linguistics graduate will have become familiar with some of the technology that facilitates this.

Advertising, Marketing, Market Research and Public Relations

Experience gained interviewing subjects and accurately recording speech and conversation provide a useful foundation for these careers, as will skills gained in analysing the relationship between written and spoken language, and the ability to use language accurately and persuasively. Linguistics and Applied Language Studies are very people oriented subjects and experience in observing and even predicting how language may be used or interpreted in various contexts, has particular relevance to jobs in these fields.

Media, Journalism and Publishing

A degree in Linguistics or Applied Language Studies is an excellent basis for many careers in which accomplished written and verbal communication skills are required. Graduates are often employed in compiling, writing, editing and publishing dictionaries, encyclopedias, grammars and other language reference materials for a wide range of languages. With the huge expansion of electronic media in New Zealand and overseas, employment opportunities are good. An Honours degree or conjoint degree may be required for many of these positions.

Interpreting and Translating

The combination of Linguistics and a modern language can lead to employment in interpretation and translation. Most work initially through an agency but there are opportunities to freelance for those with experience. To succeed in this area graduates must have excellent language skills, be able to use industry and business specific vocabularies, and have high levels of accuracy and reliability. It may take some years to become established in this work. An Honours or higher degree and membership of the NZ Association of Interpreters and Translators are usually required.

Academic Careers

Some graduates go on to further study and research leading to a career as an academic. The first stage of this is usually to gain a Master's and then a PhD, from a New Zealand or an overseas university. The world of academic research is very broad and exciting. Academics generally have a large amount of autonomy to pursue the questions about language that are most interesting to them and often work at the cutting edge of research. So, for example, you could be researching which areas of the brain are involved in particular kinds of language processing, or how different varieties of English differ from each

other, or documenting an endangered language, or exploring the relevance of language to social issues or educational policy. Academic life also tends to be very international and many graduates have gone on to do research and study all around the world.

JOB TITLES

A sample of job titles reported in graduate destination surveys. Some roles may require additional qualifications and training.

Advertising consultant • Arts administrator • Assistant policy analyst • Broadcaster • Communications officer • Customs adviser • Editor • Education researcher • EEO adviser • ESOL teacher • Forensic linguist • Information officer • Interpreter • Language teacher • Language therapist • Lecturer • Legal drafter • Lexicographer • Linguist • Literacy adviser • Market analyst • Market researcher • Patent examiner • Policy adviser • Publisher • Teacher • Technical writer • Translator • Tutor • Voice coach

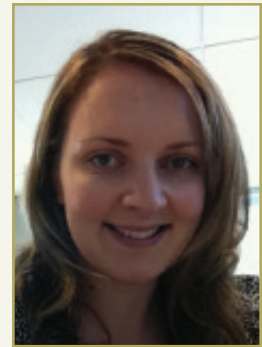


Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

GRADUATE PROFILES

Charlotte Williams

Executive Coordinator
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)



I've always had a fascination with language but my original plan when I started at Victoria was to study Geology and Earth Science. I did one semester and decided it wasn't for me. I then took up Italian and Religious Studies; I enjoyed both but thought I'd give Linguistics a try as well. I supplemented my degree with French, Italian, Spanish and Religious Studies papers and several years later I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics!

I loved learning about language. I enjoyed comparing languages and seeing similarities where you wouldn't expect them, learning how sentences are constructed and discovering why you trip over tongue twisters or blend words together. I like to find patterns and trends so I found the historical linguistics course particularly interesting as we broke words down and compared them to a similar language to see how they evolved. I also thoroughly enjoyed Psycholinguistics where we learned about how the brain stores, remembers and accesses words when we need them. The example from the Syntax course which I will always remember was 'the purple people eater'. Is it something that is purple and eats people or is it something that eats people who are purple?

The main skills I gained while studying were in self-discipline and planning. They are valuable skills no matter what you choose to do. Planning the content of your essay and how you're going to use your time means saving yourself a lot of stress later on. I worked full time in the last year of my degree and there's nothing quite like it to teach you how to manage your time and your priorities. I also learnt independence as I had to tell myself to study, to go to the library to get books for my essay, to harass myself to sit down and brainstorm. All important life skills!

My studies didn't lead me to a specific career but the skills I learned while studying definitely helped. All the jobs I've had since university have required good writing, research and communication skills and having a degree in Linguistics means I have proven that I am competent in these. I'm able to get the message across in the way I want, adapting it to the situation or context.

People are always interested and curious when they hear you have a degree in Linguistics and I enjoy explaining what it is and passing on interesting facts and examples.

Everyone uses language to get their message across so there's always something they'll find fascinating. The Linguistics department is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the classes are relatively small so you get to know your teachers and your fellow students well. The teachers are all passionate about Linguistics and are willing to help out whenever you need it. Also, I'd recommend taking a language paper alongside Linguistics as it helps you to grasp the practical side of the theories and ideas introduced.

Laura Dimock

Student Finance Advisor
Financial Support & Advice,
Victoria University

I had always loved languages. I started off my university studies majoring in German. I was excited to study a different language from what I had studied in high school.



But I realised that I liked German for completely different reasons from the other students. They were there for history, culture, travel or ancestry – but they hated the grammar. I was really only interested in the grammar. My father recognised my area of interest and gave me an introduction to Linguistics book. Before then, I didn't know what Linguistics was. After that, I was hooked. I ended up transferring to Victoria University and majoring in Linguistics.

I really loved the subject. I especially loved figuring out patterns about sounds or word patterns – it's like solving a puzzle. And it was interesting to learn about how complex and systematic languages can be. It has always astounded me that people can express the same idea in ways that are completely incomprehensible to outsiders. I eventually went on to do a PhD thesis which described a language in Vanuatu that had previously never been described in depth. It was so much fun to learn a language through asking questions and making observations rather than through classes and books, and I was privileged to see a culture that is so different from my own.

I wasn't very aware of the skills that I was developing through my studies, but looking back, I can see that I became much more comfortable reading very long texts – and writing them too. And I became a more advanced user of office software in the process. Learning about how people learn languages and use language for social interaction has helped me to understand and sympathise better with people who do not come from the dominant language background in our society.

I currently work as a Student Finance Adviser and Researcher at Victoria. I was qualified for this position, not only by the research background of my postgraduate studies, but also by my extensive experience of negotiating the financial challenges of being a student. But the thing that set me apart from other candidates was my understanding and empathetic manner of interviewing students one-on-one. I am sure that my awareness of communication and language has helped me to develop this skill.

My advice to students thinking of studying Linguistics: if you are passionate about the subject, you will enjoy studying it – otherwise there is probably no point. If you are not sure whether you would like it, find an introductory book or read "Language Myths" (edited by Peter Trudgill and Laurie Bauer). If you find yourself craving more, sign up for a Linguistics class.

Tina Chiles

Data Analyst
Human Rights Commission



I came to university after just over a decade of working and travelling. I did my BA in Linguistics at the University of Canterbury, and came to Victoria to do Honours because of the excellent reputation Victoria had for sociolinguistics. After Honours I did a postgraduate Certificate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), then a Master's in Applied Linguistics and a PhD, all at Victoria. I didn't start out with the intention of studying to PhD level. I just enjoyed it so much and after each milestone thought 'why not?' to giving the next one a go.

Initially, I took Linguistics after reading a book about the quirkiness of language, and was excited to find that it was actually possible to study Linguistics at university, something that seemed like so much fun. I chose it as my major mainly due to enjoying it so much, but also because at the time I had a vague idea of continuing to travel after study, and thought that Linguistics and an English teaching qualification would go well with travel.

I particularly enjoyed Sociolinguistics, and really love that it's such an accessible subject – we all communicate, and there are so many interesting features in the language we use that it's a subject everyone can talk about on some level whether they've studied it or not. I loved that I could talk with my non-student friends about sociolinguistics and we could actually have really

interesting conversations about it; it wasn't limited to the lofty heights of academia.

I gained a wide range of skills from my studies, and it was great to be able to do that while learning about something I found fascinating. While I didn't end up following the English teaching route or anything directly to do with Linguistics, the skills that I gained were highly transferrable.

It was postgraduate study in particular that really refined my research and analysis skills, and it's those skills that enabled me to take on my current Data Analyst role. A sociolinguistics thesis allows you to consider qualitative data in a range of ways, rather than analysing numbers alone, and I've been able to apply these skills directly to the kind of data I work with now which largely requires qualitative analysis.

Even though there is a language learning requirement to majoring in Linguistics, don't let that scare you off if you don't think you have a particular aptitude to learning languages. I have never managed to commit to another language beyond beginner level, but I have found that studying Linguistics has given me a greater understanding of other languages. The language learning requirement is also a great help in getting to grips with linguistic concepts, so it's a great benefit to give another language a go, even if you don't end up being a fluent speaker.

Ifah Abbott

Programme Coordinator
Telecom

I have been surrounded by different languages all my life and grew up in the Netherlands speaking Dutch and Indonesian. From a young age I learned English and written Arabic. My multilingual background and love of learning naturally led to a keen interest in language education.

I started at Victoria in 2006, majoring in Second Language Education but I was also eager to learn new languages so I included Spanish, Mandarin and Linguistics in my degree. However as a mature student 'life happened' and my studies were interrupted by the demands of a young family and a period in the UK. When we returned to New Zealand, I realised that staying at home full time was not for me and I took the opportunity to renew my study at Victoria. After completing my BA, I was very tempted to stay on and do Honours in Sociolinguistics as I really enjoyed my



studies but first I need to earn some money. When I have balanced my sheet I would definitely love to go back!

During the course of my degree, I developed many different skills which I have carried on using in the workplace. The most important of these is in the area of communication, especially the ability to be sympathetic to the needs of the speaker and aware of the context and background that a non-native speaker brings to a conversation. I have had lots of experiences of miscommunication, some of them very funny, when people have meant quite different things to what they actually said. In my current role as a Programme Coordinator at Telecom I work with very multicultural teams which include people from the Philippines, Russia and India, and I often find myself acting as a 'translator' between them and management although everyone is communicating in English. I am even picking up Hindi! My studies in Second Language Education enabled me to gain my first job after graduation in Immigration at the Department of Labour. As a project coordinator I was able to apply my learning and address the needs of immigrants to the project team who were developing a career development framework for staff at Immigration.

I have also taught Dutch at the Dutch Language School. Ideally I would like to work more directly in language education, implementing language programmes in schools or workplaces. As well as being passionate about languages, I also strongly recommend Linguistics. The teaching staff are absolutely great, really helpful and encourage you to extend yourself. The skills learned are highly transferable; while looking at language you learn to be very detailed and accurate, and the analytical skills gained by using comparative methods can apply to any research in any other field. Plus I found studying both the technicalities and origins of language incredibly interesting and heaps of fun - not nearly as dry as ordinary statistics!

Marianna Kennedy

Analyst, National Infrastructure
Unit
The Treasury

I chose to study Linguistics when I discovered the subject at an open day at Otago University. As is often the case for students studying Linguistics, it was a revelation to me that the subject existed at all! I was attracted to Linguistics because it represented a good mix of the subjects I had enjoyed at school - English, Maths and sciences - and I was inspired



by the subject's systematic approach to something we use every day. I chose to study a whole range of introductory papers in other subjects, but Linguistics was always most interesting to me. I transferred to Victoria in my third year. Many of the textbooks I was using were written by Victoria professors and I felt that Victoria was the place to be.

I am passionate about Linguistics and took nearly every Linguistics class on offer. My favourite subject was Sociolinguistics, which is a way of looking at and learning about society and people, using language variation to discover patterns. I especially enjoyed the discovery element of Linguistics; by revealing the hidden variation in speech you can begin to understand how different parts of society interact and identify with one another, and how connections are formed across groups of people. This formed the basis of my MA thesis (Variation in the Speech of New Zealand School Children) which looked for regional, socio-economic and ethnicity-related speech variation among children from across New Zealand.

At Victoria, I also appreciated being able to work in a small department. By the time I began Honours, each class had just a handful of students. I shared office space with MA and PhD students who were on hand and willing to talk about the work I was doing. The lecturers were very accessible too, and keen to find and discuss research topics for me to consider.

From a skills perspective I believe that postgraduate study in any subject will give you the ability to manage large projects and to structure complex ideas. With Linguistics as a major I developed skills common to many social sciences: a scientific method for investigating society, and the ability to interpret and communicate findings clearly and with accuracy.

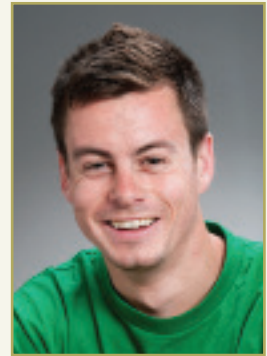
After I graduated, I tutored Linguistics and worked as a research assistant in the department, before finding full time work at economic and public policy research institute, Motu. While there I took some economics courses at Victoria and developed an interest in public policy, and after three years, applied for a job at the New Zealand Treasury. I am able to apply the knowledge and analytical skills I developed in my linguistic studies to my current role. Rather than considering the distribution of a particular speech sound, I look at how a change in government policy might affect distributions of wealth and wellbeing in New Zealand. It's challenging and interesting work.

I definitely recommend Linguistics as a major if you are passionate about it. Linguistics complements many other subjects – both arts and sciences – and offers a range of

pathways according to your interests, particularly for research assignments. This is important: it's much easier to achieve highly when you enjoy what you're doing, and much more satisfying too. I'm very happy to have discovered Linguistics.

Jesse Norman

Postgraduate Student Graduate Certificate in TESOL



I have a passion for meeting and interacting with people of various cultures and backgrounds. The Second Language Education major offered me the best chance to study with and develop relationships with people from a wide variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Learning about other cultures, languages, different ways of life and participating in various cultural festivals was the most enjoyable aspect of my studies. In addition, the Second Language Education major offered me increased job opportunities around the world. I saw it as the first step towards my goal of establishing my own language school.

I have no doubt that the skills gained from Second Language Education will serve me well into the future. My studies provided me with several opportunities to develop excellent communication skills such as public speaking, academic writing and strategies for efficient group work within a team environment. I developed critical interpersonal skills, so important when interacting with people who hold attitudes and ideals very different to me.

My decision to complete the Second Language Education major has benefitted me in a number of ways. Firstly, it provided me with the educational background to take part in further postgraduate studies such as the Graduate Certificate in TESOL. Secondly, it created a lot of interest from potential employers in various countries around the world.

The Second Language Education major is an exciting experience within university life and I highly recommend this major to anyone who is interested in expanding their cultural horizons and exploring different cultures. Students of Second Language Education must be open-minded and willing to accept a variety of different cultures and attitudes. If you want to work in a challenging environment with people from all over the world, then consider the study of Second Language Education.