

Linguistics Mātauranga Wete Reo

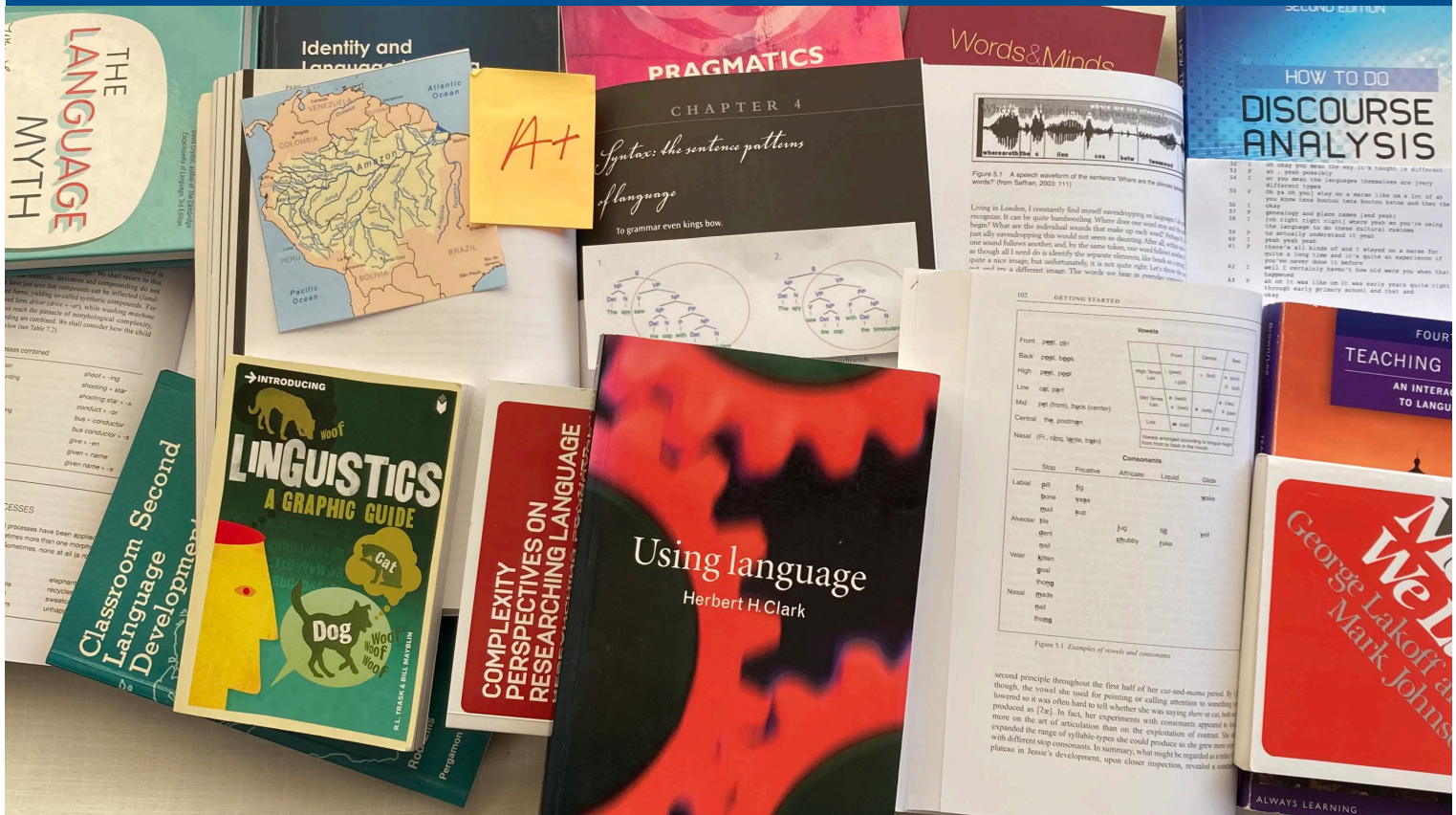
“Linguistics has a really cool mix of history, social sciences and specific linguistic theory, and I think that was the interesting part for me: you don’t just learn about the sounds and sentences, but also the human world that language helps to create.”

Allie Hawksworth
BA, Language and Linguistics

Think language! Think linguistics!

Linguistics is the scientific and systematic study of language. Language is probably unique to human experience, and so it has interested people throughout history. You’ve probably thought about it, too. Have you ever wondered why languages are similar and different, how they develop, why people misunderstand each other or what is the best way to learn another language? Linguistics is about finding answers to those questions. All you need to study linguistics is your curiosity!

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What is linguistics?

Linguistics is the discipline that directly addresses what language is, why languages are similar and different, how languages develop, how languages work and how languages are taught and learned.

Why study linguistics?

Language involves everything we do every day, so studying what language is and how language works provides insights into everyday life. It is a useful and rewarding subject for anyone who is interested in languages of any kind, including computer and "invented" languages, as well as anyone interested in teaching and learning second/foreign languages. Linguistics complements other disciplines in the arts, such as English, communication studies, sociology, anthropology, education, languages and law, and other disciplines in the sciences, such as psychology, neuroscience, computer and information science, and maths. You will be taught how to identify and provide analyses of linguistic phenomena and how to construct and justify arguments for particular analyses. Although many students of Linguistics study another language, Linguistics at Otago does not assume any prior knowledge of linguistics or of any languages other than English.

Careers for Linguistics graduates

Linguistics is useful in any area in which language and communication are important – and that's everything! It is particularly useful for language teaching, interpreting/translation, editing and writing, computer programming and speech therapy. Past linguistics graduates are now government ministry officials, lawyers, editors, copywriters, technical writers, journalists, film directors and producers, translators, interpreters, speech therapists, and lecturers, teachers, and curriculum and materials developers. The TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) minor specifically equips you to teach English abroad and at home in language schools and other non-state institutions.

Linguistics at Otago

The Linguistics staff members at Otago teach and research a variety of areas you can learn, including:

- phonetics and phonology (the study of speech sounds and systems)
- morphology and syntax (the study of word and sentence structures)
- semantics and pragmatics (the study of meaning and use)
- linguistic typology (the study of language comparison and classification)
- discourse and narrative analysis
- teaching English (TESOL) or other second languages
- child first and adult second language development
- family language policy and heritage language learning
- pragmatics in second language teaching and learning
- field linguistics (the study of little-known languages through primary data collection)
- psycholinguistics (the study of language processing in the brain).

Learning Linguistics

Linguistics is a small, friendly programme. We get to know our students and our students get to know each other. Many papers have activities that enable students to collaboratively explore their ideas and communicate their learning, and students have consistently ranked Linguistics very highly for teamwork. Students develop critical thinking and communication skills by working with linguistic data and concepts to identify underlying language patterns, evaluate and justify linguistic arguments and analyse conversational choices. Individual and collaborative assessments involve planning, researching and presenting skills that are necessary in most workplaces. TESOL classes address instructed language learning and develop language teaching practices.

Degree options

At the undergraduate level, this work can lead to a BA (Bachelor of Arts) in Linguistics, English and Linguistics, or Language and Linguistics, or a BAsC (Bachelor of Arts and Science) or BACom (Bachelor of Arts and Commerce). It also offers a minor in Linguistics and a minor in teaching English as a second language.

The Linguistics Programme offers a full undergraduate programme, honours, MA and PhD, and also a Graduate Diploma in Second Language Teaching, with a view to meeting the demand for teachers of English in New Zealand and overseas.

For questions about
Linguistics
Email linguistics@otago.ac.nz
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PROFILE

Allie Hawsworth BA, Language and Linguistics

"Linguistics has a really cool mix of history, social sciences and specific linguistic theory, and I think that was the interesting part for me: you don't just learn about the sounds and sentences, but also the human world that language helps to create. Linguistics (especially at Otago) also has such a wide range of content, as it ranges from the nitty gritty science of producing speech to the theories behind how we learn language ... you're never bored!

"I'd describe my Otago experience as really 'full' – full of great people, full of interesting learning and full of a really real Otago experience. A particularly chilly day heading to a Linguistics lecture with my mates, to sit and learn about whether animals can use language or not, was probably my favourite memory. The beautiful campus and Ōtepoti scenery only add to positives of the supportive studying environment and the warm staff in

the Linguistics department, who never fail to be passionate and interested in the subject.

"The 100-level papers were some of the highlights of my degree, as they were my first glimpse of what Linguistics is and how it fits into the world. This felt especially meaningful coming out of high school where language feels often glossed over as merely a necessary part of an English essay.

"I particularly enjoyed the group work aspect of Linguistics, with such a great group of classmates. I remember one class in which I was paired with some students I didn't know, who eventually became some of my best mates, working on analysing the grammar of Hungarian with zero prior knowledge. This experience was so strange, challenging and unique that it really made our classroom environment an enjoyable way to spend time."

