Bachelor's 2019-2020

Linguistics

uva.nl/ba-linguistics
Language is present in all aspects of our daily lives and our capacity to use it makes human beings unique as a species. In the Bachelor's programme in Linguistics, you will explore both the structure and acquisition of language as well as the diversity of language around the world.

Linguistics focuses on our uniquely human capacity to use language, something indispensable in our daily life. As a linguist you are interested in how language and speech is structured, how we acquire it, how it can be impaired, how it is represented in the brain, how it functions in society, how it changes, and how we deal with 2, 3, or 4 languages at the same time. Linguists are interested in questions like:

• How do languages resemble each other or differ, and how do sign languages compare to spoken languages?
• How do children acquire their mother tongue(s) and how is this similar or different from second language acquisition later on?
• How do language impairments arise and how is language represented in our brains?
• Why and how do languages change over time?

Top 5 reasons to study Linguistics at the University of Amsterdam:

• According to the QS World University Rankings by Subject, the University of Amsterdam has the best programme in Linguistics in Continental Europe.
• As a student of linguistics at the University of Amsterdam, you have the
opportunity to study a new language during the first year, and you are offered the possibility to follow up on this in the second year if you would like to acquire a secondary specialisation in this language.

• As one of very few universities in the world, the University of Amsterdam offers a fully-fledged track in sign linguistics as an option for those who are especially interested in linguistics of sign languages.

• The Linguistics Programme offered by the University of Amsterdam is very broad: you will be familiarised with all subfield of linguistics, such that later on you can make your own choices as regards your future trajectory.

• The programme offers you the opportunity to familiarise yourself with various theoretical frameworks, and you are explicitly encouraged and invited to choose the one that you feel most comfortable with.

Programme structure

In this programme you are introduced to a number of mandatory subjects, including the study of a modern language of your choice. You can either opt to dedicate your studies to general linguistic subjects or continue to study the language of your choice in combination with a range of linguistics courses. Alongside the core programme, you specialise by selecting a minor in one of your fields of interest. You can also decide to study abroad for a semester or do an internship.

Sinja Stentoft, Student

‘I grew up moving from country to country every three years, so learning a new language and being in a new cultural environment has always been a very dominant theme in my life. I chose Amsterdam, because so many people come together here and choose to build their life here. No matter what language you’re observing, you will always find someone in Amsterdam speaking that language. No matter what test group you’re studying, you can always find someone here belonging to that group. But for me, more important than the city was the study programme: the courses, the degree, the professors and the students.’

‘I also work for the programme committee of linguistics and I’m a student ambassador. If there are future students that want to check out the course, I’ll guide them and be their contact person.’
Internship

An internship allows you to gain some experience in an organization working in the field of linguistics and gives you an impression of the job opportunities they offer. Students in Linguistics have found internships at for instance:

- institutions that develop strategies and materials for second language acquisition programmes
- the Meertens Instituut for dialectology
- speech clinics / organizations for people with language impairments

Another possibility is to do a research-oriented internship with a teacher of the programme or another linguist at the UvA. This gives you an opportunity to get an idea of what it means to be a linguistics researcher.

Master’s

The Bachelor’s degree certificate Linguistics allows you to apply for Master’s programmes such as:

- General Linguistics
- Linguistics (Research Master’s)
- Brain and Cognitive Sciences
- Logic (interdisciplinary)
- Nederlands als tweede taal en meertaligheid
- Redacteur/editor
- Cultural Analysis
- Communication and Information Studies

Students who follow language courses as part of their Bachelor’s programme are qualified for possible admission to the Master’s programmes of that language. Please visit: uva.nl/master
The job market

A completed Bachelor's programme in Linguistics offers a wide range of career possibilities. You may apply for jobs in the narrower field of linguistics, but also in other positions that require a critical, independent, and analytical mind in combination with good language skills. Jobs that our alumni have found their way to include positions in:

• Scientific research into language, language teaching, language development
• School advisory service
• Institutions for foreign language teaching
• Hospitals with a clinical linguistics department
• Software companies
• Publishing houses
• Libraries and Archives
• Information management

Bart Nijsten, Student

'The language you speak determines the way you look at the world. You can never completely step out of your native tongue, you can’t live outside of your own language! I think Phonetics was my favourite course in the first year of the programme. I also found Semantics to be incredibly interesting. You are essentially exploring the ways in which the language you speak influences your view of the world. There are, for example, languages that don’t have a word for “future”. In one of our classes we were recently discussing an African language that only has the numerals ‘one’ and ‘two’. Everything else is ‘many’. So 1, 2 and many. I wonder how differently you’d look at the world. How can you measure anything? Maybe it results in surprising insights, maybe our language holds us hostage with its overwhelming amount of numbers and figures.'
Visit us

Make sure you are well-prepared before the start of your studies at the University of Amsterdam. Visit an Open Day, schedule a Campus Visit, and make sure you are well-informed about the programme. Please see: uva.nl/international