

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

COMMUNICATING COMMUNICATION

“ Language has no independent existence apart from the people who use it. It is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end of understanding who you are and what society is like. ”

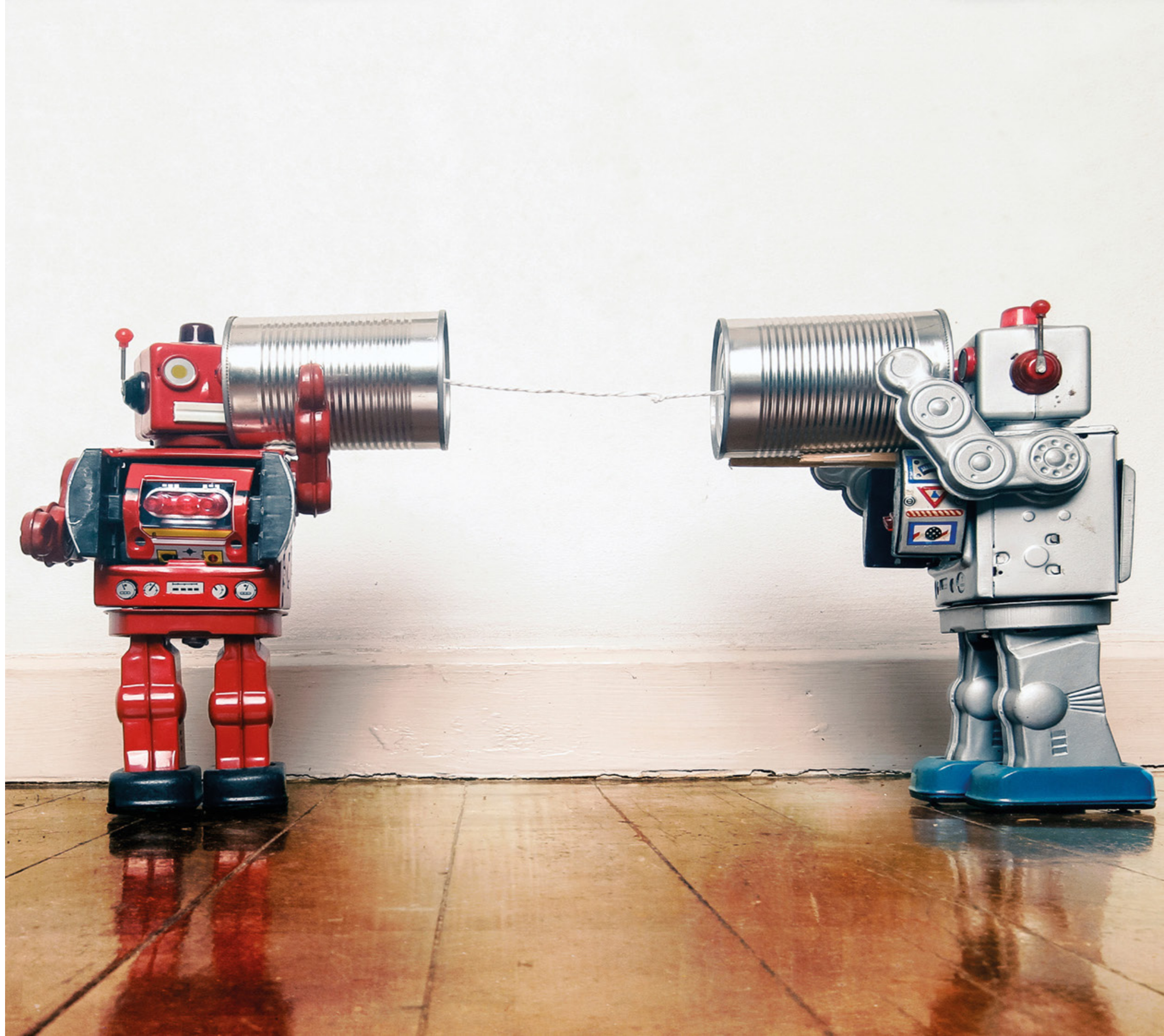
David Crystal OBE

Every day it is more important for professionals in the modern world to understand how language is used in different contexts, such as education, migration, politics, digital media and health. We are exploring theories of language in the contemporary world and applying this knowledge to the solution of real-world problems at work, at play, in relationships, in the media, in education, in health, in politics.



We explore the growth of English as an international language, and are at the forefront of current developments in English language teaching and learning.

Professor Sylvia Jaworska
Head of the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics
reading.ac.uk/elal





Professor
Rodney Jones

Professor Rodney Jones focuses on how digital media are changing the way we communicate online by using language and other forms such as GIFs, memes and images.

When we go online, we are no longer just communicating with each other. We are also communicating with algorithms – computer code which is gathering our information, processing it, feeding back advertisements, determining who appears on our TikTok For You page, and what movies or songs are recommended to us by Netflix and Spotify. These algorithms also determine the results we get on Google.

“The real trick in teaching digital literacies is helping my students to understand how to communicate with algorithms and how to use algorithms to talk to other people, when algorithms are actually the ‘people’ you are talking to.”

Rodney’s research investigates how people view algorithms. He aims to

develop critical literacies by helping people to understand how algorithms work - why they are getting ‘fake news’ on Facebook, or why they are faced with particular advertisements.

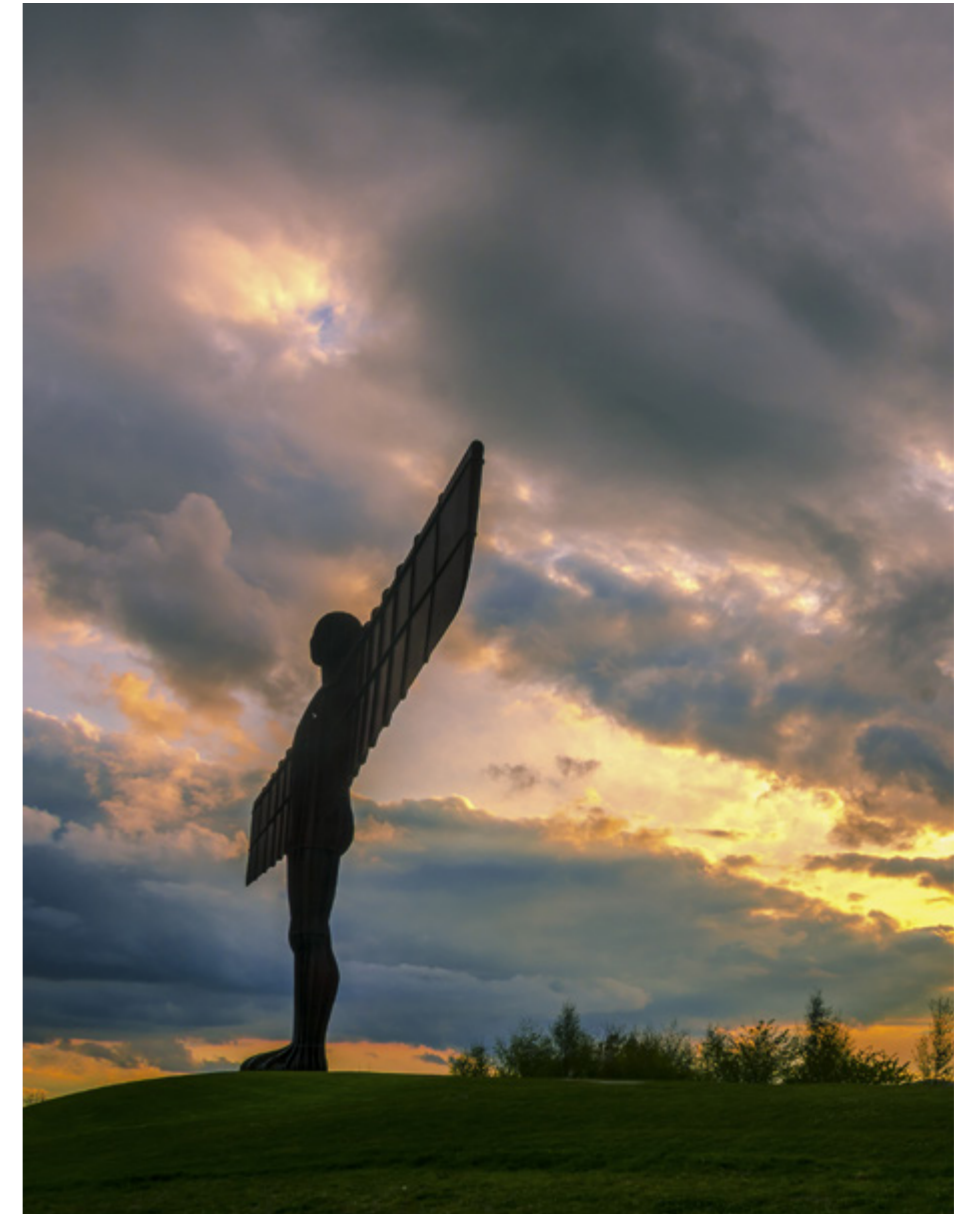
For a project called ‘Folk Algorithmics’, Rodney has been asking students to think about how their results on Tinder, TikTok and other platforms are chosen for them. He has extended out his research into his teaching by getting students to interview their friends about different social media programmes. Rodney’s teaching connects to a book he is currently writing about digital surveillance.

What is the difference between the way algorithms and people process information? What impact does this have on our understanding of privacy? Algorithms see information in a very different way, and if we are going to protect our privacy we need to understand that by ‘liking’ something, we are giving away personal information.

WEB OF INTRIGUE

DIALECTABLE





Professor Jane Setter

Professor Jane Setter teaches four modules in phonetics and pronunciation, and feeds her research into the teaching of all of them.

'Sounds, Grammar and Meaning' is a basic introduction covering phonetics and speech science, and 'Analysing Speech' teaches students acoustic and auditory speech analysis.

Jane is also co-editor of the Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary and she researches new words for inclusion. For example, in the 2011 edition, words added included 'pwn' and 'noob'. These come from online gaming but are now frequently used by non-gamers.

In her book *Your Voice Speaks Volumes: it's not what you say, but how you say it* (2021, OUP), she writes about how our voices represent us, why we have ended up with all the accents we have in Britain, why it is so tribal, and why people react to accents differently.

Recently, the Guardian newspaper asked Jane to determine why people pronounce the word 'scone' so differently.

"It is not a matter of being posh, or thinking you are posh, if you pronounce scone as in cone," says Jane. "It is more a matter of where you grew up. But by and large, the pronunciation that rhymes with gone is more common."

"Our language continually reshapes itself," she adds. "New words appear. In addition, pronunciations of existing words alter. These changes have been tracked in our dictionary for over a century now – though very often when we detect changes, we are yet to understand why they have taken place."

Jane's book also includes a chapter on how forensic phoneticians can help solve crime by looking at features of individuals' voices.

"When you speak you are revealing so much about yourself. It is part of your identity, and you are unique when you speak."

Today, people are communicating with others from all over the world in English, and this is affecting the way our language is evolving further still and creating even more unique accents.

Looking at how a word is pronounced in varieties of English around the world, Jane searches for where there is a difference, what that difference is, and how a way of saying a word is dependent on your upbringing, your social networks, education, or other factors.

"People find things like this important enough to argue about – that's what makes the English language so interesting."

LANGUAGE ON THE MOVE



Dr Tony Capstick

Dr Tony Capstick is a lecturer in Applied Linguistics. His main areas of interest are teacher education, multilingualism and migration. Before becoming an academic, Tony was an English language teacher trainer in developing countries and spent most of his career working in Asia and the Middle East. He is interested in language education and the political contexts in which that occurs, and his PhD research project was on migration between Pakistan and Britain. Much research has been carried out on the outcomes of migration, whereas Tony is more interested in what happens in the country of origin as well as the destination. His research focuses on grassroots migration working with families that use local languages and non-standard varieties of English.

“As a Sociolinguist, I’m less interested in proficiency in Standard British English, and more interested in the kind of non-standard English that migrants use to cope in certain situations. A lot of the migrants who I work with would not be able to pass exams or score highly on an IELTS test, but they are able to do what they need to do in order to migrate.”

Tony teaches a third year module called ‘Language and Migration’. This gives students a vivid account of how languages are used in different parts of the world and how political decisions are made regarding the medium of instruction: for example in Jordan you need English to go to university, in Lebanon you need French or English to go to school, in Turkey you need Turkish, and in Iraq you’ll probably need Kurdish or Arabic depending on the region. Also,

Tony is interested in how migrants use a mixture of languages. Displaced people often tell me: ‘We are learning English to get to Germany. Then we will learn German when we are there.’ English is the global language. In the ‘Language and Migration’ module, students also get to study what we mean by ‘power’. Refugee camps are run by international agencies who often speak English, so speaking some English might give migrants access to more resources, i.e. jumping to the front of the queue simply because they can fill in an English form. He also explores other grassroots type of power: a migrant might not speak English but he or she might have developed the ability to read English online. When people go online they are mixing registers and genres and grammar, very complex things are

going on and this is very different to standard British English. Students get to explore these different forms of language expression through their studies.

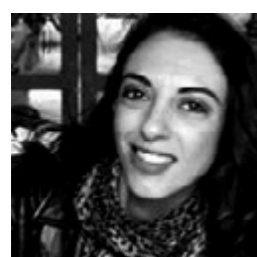
“It can be difficult to understand how we research power, but by looking at the language use of migrants and giving students the tools and the skills to analyse this rigorously, it gives them the skills to build evidence to show how access to certain languages is shaped by power relations. Studying at Reading, students develop a knowledge of the use of language mixing and how English fits in.”

Tony also teaches on Reading’s postgraduate course: MA Migration and Intercultural Studies. Please [see our website](#) for more information.

BRICK LANE E.I.

ब्रिक लाने

**LINGUISTIC
LANDSCAPES**



Dr Christiana Themistocleous

"I think students are very excited about sociolinguistics because they can investigate how language is used in society by exploring aspects that directly relate to them in real life; from how language is used in the media to how people speak differently from one another in different areas, generations and genders."

Dr Christiana Themistocleous currently investigates the presence of publicly visible multilingual signs in the UK and Cyprus. Using the Linguistic Landscape approach, she explores how multilingualism is evident through public signs produced by the government and citizens - street signs, billboards, posters, advertisements and even graffiti. Christiana investigates which

languages are included or excluded in public signs and identifies ideologies, which may relate to migration, conflict, tolerance and social cohesion. She recently published a paper looking at conflict and peace in Nicosia, the only divided capital in Europe.

Christiana is also interested in the representation of multilingualism in the media. She published a paper with Sylvia Jaworska (University of Reading) looking at how newspapers in the UK talk about multilingualism. Their research showed that newspapers project positive and negative ideologies, which influence the general public's views towards living in a multilingual community.

"I was always interested in multilingualism, being multilingual myself and living in a multilingual community. In Britain, it is particularly interesting because there are more and more people coming from diverse places. I noticed an increase of crimes against ethnic minorities reported in newspapers during Brexit and that made me think: 'What is going on with people who speak other languages? What are people's attitudes towards living in a multilingual community?'"

Christiana's research feeds directly into her teaching through the Sociolinguistics module in year 2. She asks students to collect their own data in groups and to create their own website presenting their

findings. Through this process students gain valuable research, collaboration and presentation skills, which are essential for future employment.

"I want students to go out into the community and talk to people who speak different languages, to conduct interviews, or take photos of multilingual signs and then develop and present this work in creative ways through the web. This helps students develop knowledge and insight into multilingualism as well as valuable skills for the future."

BILINGUALISM

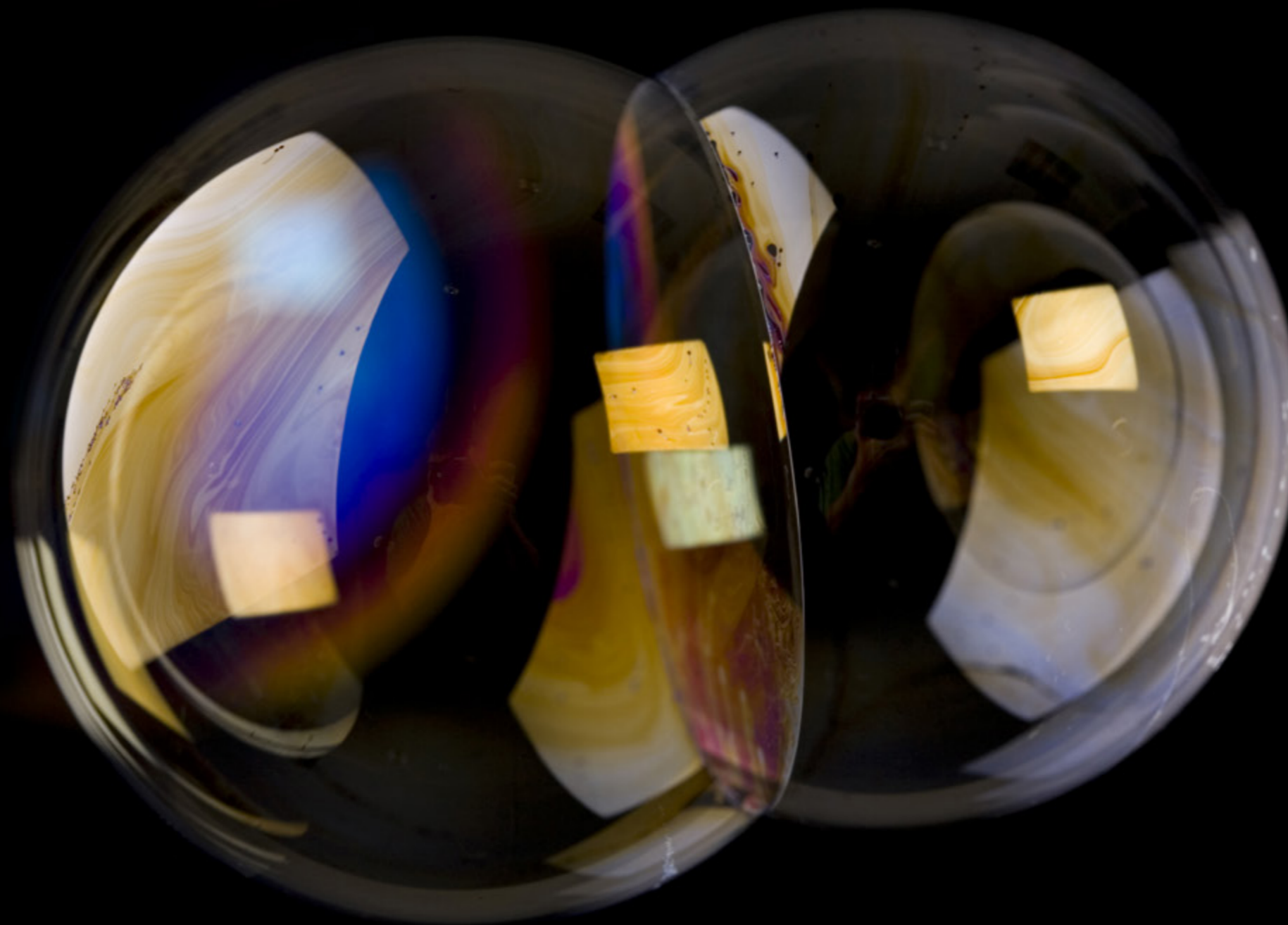


Dr Fraibet
Aveledo

Dr Fraibet Aveledo is a researcher in psycholinguistics and a lecturer in Child language development and Bilingualism.

Her first steps in child language development started while studying for her master's and she progressed to undertaking her PhD in Bilingual First Language Acquisition. Fraibet is mainly interested in analysing how language works and interacts with other cognitive functions in the brain, as well as how children acquire language, and how multilingual people process languages.

"The majority of people in the world today are bilingual and yet we are just learning how we process languages when we speak more than one. One hot issue today is how being bilingual can affect other cognitive aspects in the person's mind. Particularly, there has been an important number of studies analysing the controversial hypothesis of whether bilingualism can enhance cognitive capacities and could even delay the onset of neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's."



Fraibet has been undertaking research into Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and whether being bilingual improves some cognitive tasks in people with MS. This research project is conducted in Madrid together with professionals from the University of Reading and neuropsychologists from the Gregorio Marañón Hospital.

"As far as we know this is the first time that the effect of bilingualism in MS has been analysed. We are hoping to increase our knowledge on the subject and be able to help to improve psycholinguistics aspects on evaluations and therapies for these patients."

All these up-to-date research problems are taught and discussed in Fraibet's modules. She makes sure that students learn beyond the textbook from those who are researching, and graduate well-informed about the very recent topics of research in the field.

"Students find it fascinating that bilingual speakers seem to have an advantage over monolinguals in some cognitive tasks: learning a second language is not only useful for finding jobs – some researchers are finding that it can delay the onset of Alzheimer's and Dementia."

Fraibet teaches modules in Language and the Mind and Child Language Development in Year 2 and Year 3.

GO YOUR OWN WAY

The Reading BA in English Language and Linguistics allows you to chart your own pathway through the fascinating field of English language studies. The first year is designed to give you a strong foundation. In your second year, you can start to specialise. You might choose a pathway that focuses more on the social aspects of language use, choosing modules that explore

how language is related to issues of gender, culture, and media. You might want to focus more on the psychological and developmental aspects of language, choosing modules about language and the mind and child language development. Alternatively, you might be interested in building a suite of modules that prepares you for a particular career in, for example, English

language teaching, professional communication, language policy, or language and the law.

We aim to provide our students with a fully rounded education in a supportive environment through academic tutors and course and study advisors, enabling you to achieve your full potential.

“I can honestly say that I thoroughly enjoyed all my time studying English Language, mainly due to all the great staff in the Department, who would often go above and beyond the call of duty to help their students. I would recommend the Reading English Language department – where students really are given the best chance to achieve great things – to anyone wishing to pursue higher education in linguistics.”

Lloyd Hartman, Marketing Planner, The Sun
BA English Language



LET'S TALK ABROAD

If you are interested in gaining an international dimension to your degree, then there is also the chance to study abroad for six months or one year, at universities in great locations in Europe, Australia, Asia and North America, or to undertake a year working abroad.

We offer you flexibility throughout your degree that also allows you to sample other subjects of interest during your first year. Our Institution-Wide Language Programme allows you to develop further language skills in addition to your degree, offering modules in Arabic, French, German, Italian,

Spanish, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and Modern Greek, at a variety of language levels.

Find out more at reading.ac.uk/iwlp

“I can say whole-heartedly that studying English Language at the University of Reading is one of the best things I've ever done. A highlight of my degree was choosing to study abroad in Tokyo for a year, allowing me to experience the fascinating culture, language and people that Japan has to offer. My time in Japan has also helped shaped my career path of teaching English abroad.”

Daniel Bentley
BA English Language and Linguistics with a Year Abroad





DESTINATION ANYWHERE

At Reading, degrees are designed to enable our students to develop crucial transferable skills in addition to in-depth subject knowledge. We work closely with industry and employers to ensure that our degrees are highly regarded in the employment market.

Our graduates have gone on to a wide range of careers including:

- Teaching (both in the UK and abroad)
- Speech therapy
- Publishing and journalism
- Events co-ordinating
- The Civil Service
- The media (including advertising, marketing and public relations)
- Information technology

Recent graduate destinations include:

- Aviva
- Barclays PR
- The Courtauld Institute of Art
- Cambridge Education Group
- Cancer Research UK
- Cap Gemini PLC
- Reading Borough Council
- News International
- NHS
- QinetiQ
- Yahoo
- Yell Group

Placement opportunities

Through the Academic Placements Scheme available through some of our modules, you will have the option of replacing one assignment with a real-world experience in the form of a short placement in a workplace. There are also opportunities for longer placements in the form of a year-long module, and you may also choose to do a workplace oriented project in your third year in lieu of writing a dissertation.

For more information on our Careers Advisory Service, visit reading.ac.uk/careers

STUDY

In your first year, your course provides you with the skills to describe the sounds, structures and meanings of English. You will also learn a wide range of up-to-date techniques for data collection and analysis. You then apply this knowledge to the study of real-world problems in a wide range of contexts. With this degree you will enhance your English language skills and develop your understanding of communication.

Key areas include the relationship of language to:

- Varieties of English
- Sociolinguistics
- Child language development
- Literacy and education
- Cross-cultural communication and multilingualism
- Power and identity (including gender and ethnicity)
- Teaching English as a foreign or second language (TEFL.TESL)
- Persuasion (for example advertising, propaganda, political rhetoric and the press)
- Information technology and multimedia communication
- Language use in media, including social media

DEGREES

OUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS DEGREES

BA English Language and Linguistics

BA English Language and Linguistics with Placement Experience

BA English Language and Linguistics with Foundation

OUR JOINT DEGREES

BA English Language and Literature

BA Modern Languages and English Language





YEAR 1

Compulsory modules include:

Sounds, Grammar and Meaning

English Language and Society

Techniques and Skills for Applied Linguistics

Globalization and Language

YEAR 2

Compulsory modules include:

English Grammar and Phonology

Sociolinguistics

Discourse Analysis

Optional modules include:

Introduction to English Language Teaching

Language and Gender

Language and New Media

Analysing Speech

Language and the Mind

YEAR 3

Compulsory modules include:

Dissertation OR Professional Communication Project

Language in Professional Communication

Optional modules include:

Corpus-based Approaches to Language Description

Intercultural Communication

Child Language Development

Teaching the Language Skills

Language and Migration

Important Information

This brochure was issued in 2023 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2024. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (May 2023). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check reading.ac.uk/study

The University undertakes to take all reasonable steps to provide the services (including the courses) described in this brochure. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the University interfere with its ability to provide the services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption to the services.

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Modules

Sample modules are provided as a taster of some of the modules that may be available on each course. The sample modules listed may be compulsory (core) or optional modules and have been approved in principle for delivery in 2024/25. Please note that as part of our current curriculum improvement process, all modules require final University approval and the University cannot guarantee that a module appearing in this list will definitely run. Teaching staff on specific courses or modules mentioned in this brochure may be subject to change. For the most up to date module information, please check reading.ac.uk

For optional modules, the University cannot guarantee that all optional modules will be available to all students who may wish to take them, although the University will try to ensure that students are able to take optional modules in which they have expressed interest at the appropriate time during their course. Optional modules vary from year to year and entry to them will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

Joint courses

Our joint courses may have extra requirements, including English language requirements. Please check the individual course pages on our website for further details.

Year abroad and placement fees

Some courses include an optional or compulsory year abroad or placement year. During this year you will only pay a partial fee which is currently set at 15% of the normal tuition fee. Check the website for the latest information: reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding

Placements

Programmes with a Professional Placement Year (also known as 'Year in Industry' or 'Placement Year') are fully dependent on students securing their own placement opportunity, normally through a competitive recruitment process. The University provides dedicated career and application support for placement year students. Students who do not secure a placement or who are unable to complete the placement year due to extenuating circumstances, have the option to transfer to a three year variant of their programme with agreement from their School/Department.

Study abroad

The partnerships listed are correct at the time of publication (May 2023). For up to date information on the University's partnerships contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk

Where Study Abroad is not a compulsory part of the degree programme, the University of Reading cannot guarantee that every applicant who applies for the scheme will be successful. Whilst efforts are made to secure sufficient places at partner institutions, the number of places available and the University's partners can vary year-on-year. In all cases, the University cannot guarantee that it will be possible for applicants to choose to study abroad at a particular institution.

Further, certain courses and/or institutions may require you to satisfy specific eligibility criteria. It can be a competitive process. For further information on the University's Study Abroad Scheme please contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk



Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics

reading.ac.uk/elal

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Ask us a question

reading.ac.uk/question

