Human language

is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is simultaneously a property of individual minds and of whole speech communities, and thus both internal and external to us. It both shapes and is shaped by our societies over time. It is a combination of sound (or sign), which has physical properties that can be measured, and meaning, which does not. Accordingly, becoming a linguist involves mastering a variety of methods, both quantitative and qualitative.

The PhD in Linguistics

at Boston University aims to produce scholars who are versatile enough to engage with both qualitative and quantitative aspects of linguistic inquiry, yet skilled enough to do cutting-edge research in a particular subfield of the discipline. We offer a solid grounding in a range of research methods, including field methods, quantitative methods, and computational methods.

Areas of specialization

- Experimental approaches to phonetics and phonology
- Fieldwork and language documentation
- First and second language acquisition in children and adults; bilingualism
- Language variation and change
- Morphology, syntax, and semantics

For more information, visit [http://ling.bu.edu](http://ling.bu.edu) or email linggrad@bu.edu.
Some of the labs and projects run by our Linguistics faculty

**Phonology Lab**

*Jon Barnes*

Investigation of pitch perception sensitivity in speakers of languages with tone systems differing in complexity (e.g., Mandarin, Cantonese), as well as whether and how pitch is processed differently in speech and music.

**Spanish in Boston**

*Daniel Erker*

Large-scale urban sociolinguistics initiative investigating outcomes of language and dialectal contact among Spanish-speaking Bostonians and the possibility of the emergence of a Boston Spanish speech community.

**Linguistic Semantics Lab (LiSLab)**

*Elizabeth Coppock*

Study of foundational questions in semantic/pragmatic theory using a variety of methods, including targeted comparative fieldwork across a broad sample of languages, in-depth field studies on particular languages, and experimental techniques. Areas of focus include reference, quantification, and comparison.

**Phonetics, Acquisition, and Multilingualism Lab (PAMLab), Charles Chang**

Focus on phonetics, acquisition, and multilingualism, examining developments in speech production and perception over the lifetime of language learners and bi-/multilinguals via primarily behavioral methods.

**American Sign Language Linguistic Research Project (ASLLRP)**

*Carol Neidle*

Focus on ASL syntax; development of publicly shared annotation tools and linguistically annotated video corpora for ASL that serve as a basis for collaborative research in linguistics and in computer-based sign language recognition from video.

**Language Documentation & Revitalization**

*Catherine O’Connor*

Current focus on linguistic documentation of Northern Pomo, a dormant indigenous language of California, and creation of web-based materials to support revitalization efforts by community members.

**Fieldwork & Morphosyntax Lab, Neil Myler**

Study of morphosyntactic variation, with emphasis on fieldwork (particularly on Quechua languages and non-standard English varieties). Special focus on argument structure, micro-comparative syntax, and the morphosyntax and semantics of possession.