

# How do we learn to talk?

What does it take to make a computer speak and understand?

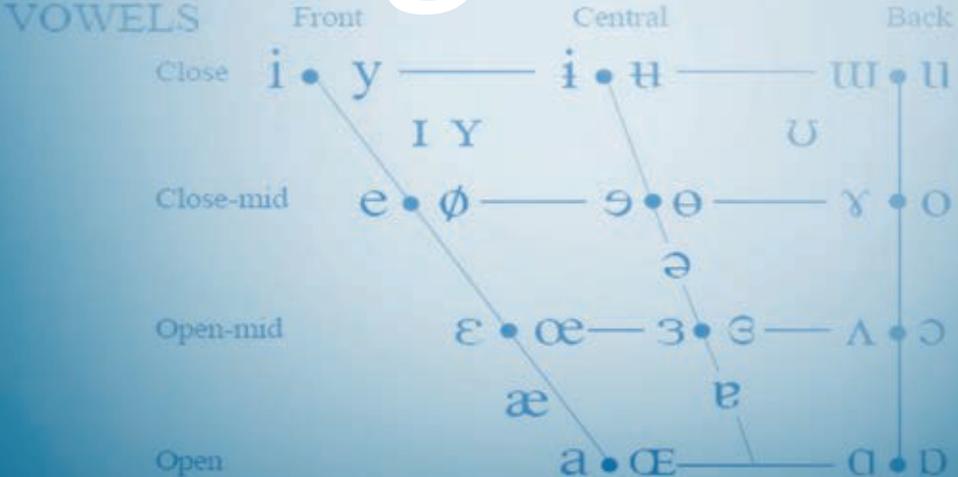
How diverse are the languages of the world?

What aspects of language are uniquely human?

# Where do accents come from?

How do people actually understand the meaning of what you say?

# Linguistics



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

## Hands-on Experience

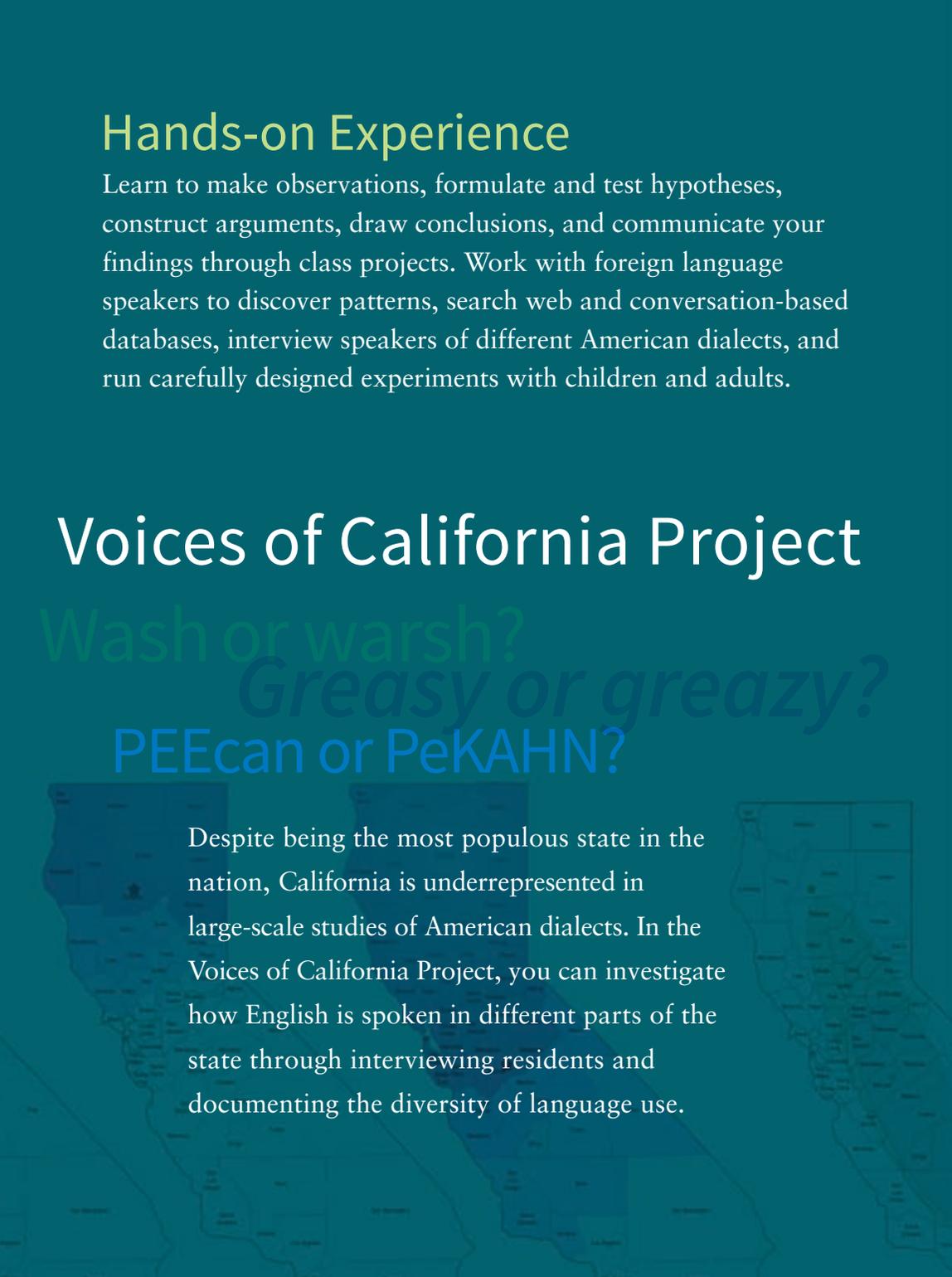
Learn to make observations, formulate and test hypotheses, construct arguments, draw conclusions, and communicate your findings through class projects. Work with foreign language speakers to discover patterns, search web and conversation-based databases, interview speakers of different American dialects, and run carefully designed experiments with children and adults.

# Voices of California Project

Wash or warsh?

Greasy or greazy?

PEEcan or PeKAHN?



Despite being the most populous state in the nation, California is underrepresented in large-scale studies of American dialects. In the Voices of California Project, you can investigate how English is spoken in different parts of the state through interviewing residents and documenting the diversity of language use.

“ Studying linguistics forces you to address preconceived notions and turn them on their heads. In the tech industry, where disruption is the norm and not the exception, being able to critically examine—and challenge—established standards is crucial. This skill has benefited me time and time again. ”

Kat Li, '09

Growth team for Stripe, a payment-processing company for businesses

“ One of the best parts of being a linguistics major is the exposure you get to so many other disciplines, ranging from philosophy to computer science. This experience has served me well as I handle disputes for an array of technology companies. Whether dealing with government officials in Mongolia or counseling executives in Silicon Valley, the topics I studied in linguistics often inform a fundamental part of the cases I work on as a lawyer representing cutting-edge businesses in criminal and regulatory investigations. ”

Leo Cunningham, '82

Lawyer, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati



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# Language permeates our lives.

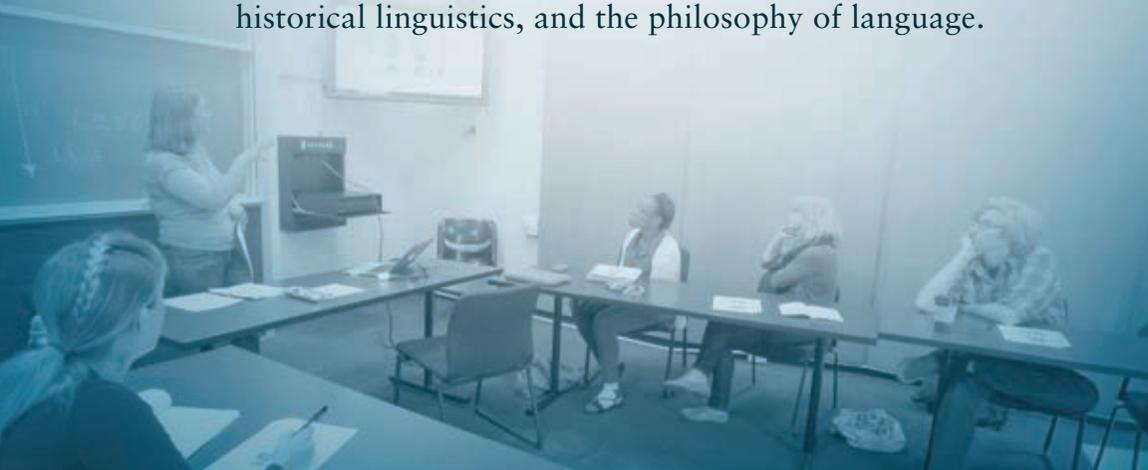
We live through language. But because language is a skill we take for granted, like walking, most of us are unaware of its inner workings.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language.  
Study linguistics and...

Learn to uncover the features of individual languages, and explore the principles common to all languages.

Examine the components that make up language: sounds, meanings, words, sentences, and discourse.

Analyze the interaction between linguistic structure and other phenomena through fields such as language acquisition, computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, and the philosophy of language.





# Strong Connections

Language is a cultural, social, and psychological phenomenon. Because language is central to human interaction, linguistics is situated at the intersection of the humanities and the social, biological, and behavioral sciences.

Join this exciting, expanding field that has an increasingly important impact on areas such as language teaching and artificial intelligence. Courses in the major involve interdisciplinary work with other departments, including computer science, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and foreign languages.

## Compelling Courses

- *From Languages to Information*
- *Language and Gender*
- *African American Vernacular English*
- *Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*
- *Language and Society*
- *Languages of the World*

# A Successful Future

*Analytical reasoning. Thoughtful observation. Empirical rigor.*

Studying linguistics will teach you to detect subtle details, to solve problems, and to recognize language patterns in the world around you. Through qualitative and quantitative coursework, you will develop scientific reasoning skills—and also cultivate a deeper understanding of culture and society.

Demand for linguistic experts is high. With its emphasis on critical skills from both the sciences and humanities, linguistics has many practical applications in fields ranging from computer science and business to education and social service. Alumni include lawyers, programmers, speech therapists, teachers, authors, and more.

“I cannot put a value on the lessons I learned outside of the classroom, working alongside professors and doctoral candidates on publishable experiments and projects. Even though I’ve moved on from academia into industry, that research experience informs how I break apart the everyday issues I encounter today.”

J.W. Tsu, '11

Voice user interface designer at Nuance,  
a speech technology company

