

A SCIENTIST just like me



Dr Morgan Macleod
Quantitative Linguist



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Hi there! I am Dr Morgan Macleod – A quantitative linguist



Where do I work?

I work at Ulster University in Belfast, where I have been involved with several different research projects that use computers in the study of language.

What did I like doing when I was at school?

I always liked science subjects and I enjoyed computers and coding. I really liked languages too, though. What I do now lets me combine all these interests.

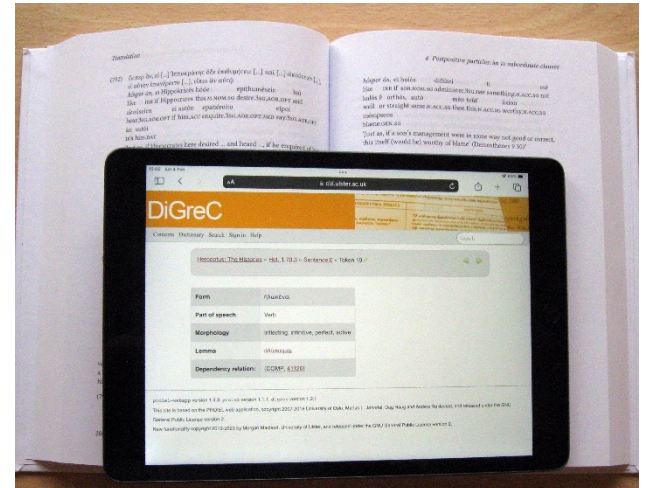
What do I like doing in my spare time?

I like reading, music, and going for hikes in the country. As a student I also did a lot of fencing, but it's not always easy to find the time.

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What do I do as a quantitative linguist?

I create and use digital tools for the study of language. In order to see the changes that take place in languages over space and time, you need to collect, search, and analyse large quantities of data. All these tasks depend on the right tools.



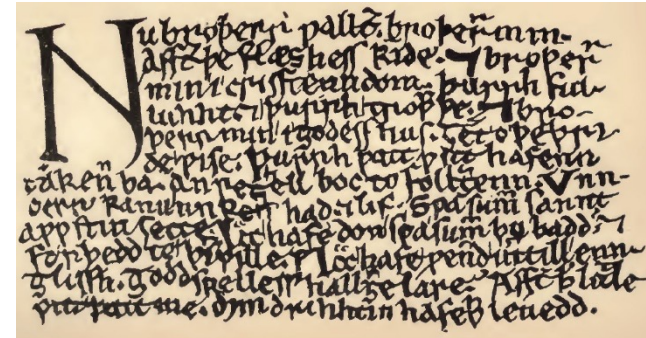
How does what I do make the world a better place?

It's hard put into words what you do when you speak a language. Whether you're trying to teach someone a new language or decipher an ancient manuscript, clear explanations make it easier to understand what you see and hear. Linguistics can help us communicate with people past and present.

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What I like about my job

I like seeing how the languages we take for granted are the product of thousands of years of evolution. The more time you spend with different languages, the more you see that things that look quite different on the surface are often the same underneath. I enjoy seeing these connections.



Challenges I have faced

Compared to subjects like biology and chemistry, there are fewer resources for linguists at school and even at university. A lot of people aren't even aware of linguistics as a possible career; they don't get the chance to find out that language can also be studied scientifically.

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If you want to be a quantitative linguist, you need:

- ✱ **to be patient** and good at detail work
- ✱ **to be curious** about language, e.g., wondering where a word comes from or why people say one thing instead of another
- ✱ **to enjoy using computers** and finding new things to do with them
- ✱ **to be good at finding patterns** in the facts you see

πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς
ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τ
οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτ
ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτη
Ἄτρεϊδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν κ
τίς τ' ἄρ' σφωε θεῶν ἑριδιξ
Ἄητιος κινί Λιέξ, εἰῶξ: ἦ γὰρ

03BF 1F55 03BD 03B5 03BA 03E
03A7 03C1 03CD 03C3 03B7 03E
03B1 03C3 03B5 03BD 0020 1F0
03B1 000A 1F08 03C4 03C1 03E
0020 1F43 0020 03B3 1F70 03C
0020 03B8 03BF 1F70 03C2 002
1FC6 03B1 03C2 0020 1F08 03C
03BB 03C5 03C3 03CC 03BC 03E
03B5 0020 03B8 03CD 03B3 03E

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Discussion time

✴ Would you like to be a quantitative linguist like Dr Morgan Macleod?

Why? Why not?

- ✴ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become a quantitative linguist?
- ✴ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?



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Dr Morgan Macleod is a STEM ambassador. Click [here](#) to access free STEM Ambassador support and resources.

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