

As a native speaker of Hungarian, a Finno-Ugric language, I have long been intrigued by complex agglutinating conjugation and the relationship between word order and information structure. Having also learnt three foreign languages, I enjoy finding similarities and differences between them, and using the properties of one language to understand the other better. For instance, Hungarian only has one grammatical way to express the past tense, whereas German and French have multiple past tenses similar in use. I believe that linguistic analysis can be informed by my appreciation and knowledge of Mathematics, the subject I specialise in at school. Linguistics is an important field of science that unites my interests well, and allows us to understand language, a fundamental yet complex tool, and through that, humans, cultures and thoughts.

Two years ago I joined the talent programme of Milestone Institute, where I could explore numerous academic fields, and develop my linguistic problem solving and statistical analysis skills. I have become familiar with the main areas of linguistics, and immersed myself in specialised topics. I have found studying word order typology especially interesting, because even though the elements of a sentence have meanings in and of themselves, not all combinations are considered grammatical and some can barely be understood. For instance, in declarative sentences, English, German, French and Hungarian all use SVO order. However, with a pronominal object, word order stays the same only in English and German, whereas the French order becomes SOV, and Hungarian either uses OSV or omits the object. Word order typology is thus one area where I have greatly enjoyed drawing on the languages I speak to understand linguistic phenomena.

Sociolinguistics is another field I have done independent study in, reading about language and gender in Mooney and Evans' "Language, Society and Power". It was thought-provoking to see how social conventions put pressure on speakers to perform their gender, an example of which is how women use tag questions and hedging out of respect for conversational partners much more than men. The dynamics and structure of male and female gossiping also reflect stereotypes. Women use a shared floor where more than one person is speaking at once, to express involvement and support. In contrast, men tend to use a one-at-a-time floor and have more hierarchically organized conversations. Studying such phenomena informs us about the perception of gender and its relation to language in society.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to work as a linguistics research assistant at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The aim of the project, led by Beata Gyuris, is to find out what factors (e.g. epistemic bias) determine whether Hungarian speakers, when uttering a question, choose the interrogative containing the '-e' ('whether') particle, the one with a final rise-fall intonation, their counterparts containing the 'nem' ('no') negative particle, or an alternative question containing 'vagy' ('or'). During my time at the Research Institute, I assisted with survey-based experiments, as well as collecting and analysing naturalistic data from corpora containing radio recordings. This opportunity gave me a chance to familiarise myself with the process of a research project, as well as several linguistic concepts.

In my free time I enjoy doing sports and creating music. After dancing for 8 years, I started playing volleyball as part of my school's team. I have played the violin for 12 years in my school's chamber orchestra, and have also taken on key organisational roles in our annual charity concerts.

In the future I aspire to learn more languages and pursue a career in language education or linguistic research. I believe that the UK and its open-minded approach

towards education provide the best opportunities for me: a challenging and inspiring intellectual environment I would love to be a part of.