

Summary of Degree Programme 'Linguistic Theory and Language Description'

Field of Studies

45.04.03 Fundamental and Applied Linguistics

Approved by

Approved by HSE Academic Council, Minutes No. 17, dated 22.07.2025

HSE University Educational Standard

[HSE University Educational Standard: Master's Degree \(from 2022\)\(signature\)](#) (PDF, 1006 Kb)

Last Update

July 22, 2025 by the decision of the Academic Council of the programme

Network Programme

No

Length of Studies, Mode of Studies, Credit Load

2 года [□]

Full-time, 120

Language of instruction



Instruction in English

Qualification upon graduation

Master

Double-degree Programme

No

Use of online learning

With online tools

Tracks

Linguistic Theory and Language Description

Type: Research

Track Supervisor: [Ryzhova, Daria](#)

Language of instruction: English

Use of online learning: With online tools

Key learning outcomes:

KLO -1	Speaks English at least below the C1 level of the European Scale of Foreign Language Proficiency (CEFR) and is able to study at the Master's level or conduct professional communication in English
KLO-2	Knows the basic principles of working with data, possesses modern tools for data analysis at the basic level, including programming skills, algorithmization and mathematical methods in solving data analysis tasks
KLO-3	Knows the basic theoretical concepts of subject areas: phonology, morphology, syntax, discursive and semantic analysis.

Description of the professional field:

The Master's programme "Linguistic Theory and Language Description" focuses on interdisciplinary aspects in linguistic research and language description (instrumental phonetics, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, etc.) and develops students' skills in collecting, processing and analyzing language data, as well as its description and presentation, both in scientific and pedagogical purposes. In the process of mastering the programme, the students should develop the following professional competencies.

- Conducting research in the field of grammar, lexicon, and phonetics of a particular language using corpus, experimental, and elicitation methods;
- development of spelling and transcription systems for languages for languages with no established written tradition;
- preparation of systematic description of a particular language;
- development of linguistic resources: corpora, dictionaries, atlases, databases;
- preparation and editing of scientific publications;
- teaching in secondary and higher education, including linguistic courses;
- development of own educational products: offline and online courses, educational platforms, education programs;
- advising commissions on language policy, as well as language activists on the preservation and revitalization of minority languages;
- preparation of datasets for training and testing large language models.

List of professional competencies:

PC-1	Able to plan research activities, conduct independent research and obtain new scientific results in the field of professional activity
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PC-2	Able to conduct theoretical and practical classes in the disciplines of the subject field, create methodological manuals and prepare educational and scientific-methodical materials, i.e. interdisciplinary
PC-3	Able to perform in-depth analysis of problems, formulation and justification of design tasks related to linguistic issues, modelling and development of language components in interdisciplinary projects
PC-4	Able to independently develop the methodology and tools for carrying out research and project activities in the field of fundamental and applied linguistics
PC-5	Able to develop and manage projects (sub-projects), analyze risks
PC-6	Able to plan and implement projects in the field of intercultural communication, including aimed at learning language as a cultural object
PC-7	Able to perform quality analysis of language data, packages, systems used for automatic processing of natural language
PC-8	Able to provide analytical support for the formulation and decision-making in areas related to language policy, monitoring of text data, preservation of linguistic heritage
PC-9	Able to develop the structure and content of the educational process in the field of linguistics, create teaching materials and language learning applications in the system of general and secondary vocational education, additional education
PC-10	Able to translate various types of texts (including works of fiction) and accompany them with the necessary editorial commentary
PC-11	Able to carry out qualified translation support of international events of various types (including scientific) using modern information technologies and software
PC-12	Able to carry out the editing of scientific and popular literature on linguistics and related fields, including translations from Russian to foreign language and from foreign to Russian
PC-13	Able to carry out linguistic processing of texts for production and practical purposes
PC-14	Able to develop and improve electronic language resources, linguistic components of information systems, linguistic modules of computer learning systems
PC-15	Able to conduct expert analysis of different types of oral and written discourse for business-practical purposes
PC-16	Able to develop methods and algorithms of digitization of the humanitarian heritage, including special language markings of the bodies
PC-17	Able to conceptualize, prepare, conduct and organize an international scientific event

PC-18	Able to identify, translate common goals in professional and social activities
PC-19	Able to generate fundamentally new ideas and products, has creativity, initiative
PC-20	Able to create, describe and responsibly monitor the implementation of technological requirements and standards in professional activities

Description of educational modules:

The Major module includes a part of the curriculum, common for both educational tracks, and a block of elective courses. The general part of the curriculum includes an overview of functional-cognitive and formal approaches in linguistics, models and methods in language description, quantitative methods of linguistic data analysis, an overview of specific phenomena in some non-(Standard Average) European languages to broaden the students' general linguistic horizons, and an introduction to comparative linguistics.

A block of electives allows students to delve deeper into a particular area of linguistic research. The first year offers a choice of 2 courses out of 3: Typology, Sociolinguistics and Russian linguistics on the track "Linguistic Theory and Language Description" and Introduction to Typology, Introduction to Sociolinguistics and Language Description on the track "Introduction to linguistic theory and language description". In the second year, one more block of 2/3 electives is added: Experimental Linguistics, Linguistic Anthropology, and Language Contacts.

The module "Key Seminars" includes an adaptive course of Introduction to Linguistics, as well as practically oriented mentor's seminar and the research and design seminar "Theory and Practice of Linguistic Research", designed to help students formulate their own research objectives and organize their research.

The MagoLego module offers a wide pool of courses on various topics from different research areas and allows students to choose an individual trajectory for obtaining additional knowledge.

Finally, the "Practice" module includes educational internship, which involves working with empirical data (their collection, processing, analysis, and visualization), as well as conducting an individual research: writing a term paper, writing and publicly defending a master's thesis.

Introduction to Linguistic Theory and Language Description

Type: Research

Track Supervisor: [Ryzhova, Daria](#)

Language of instruction: English

Use of online learning: With online tools

Qualification upon graduation: Магистр

Key learning outcomes:

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List of professional competencies:

PC-1	Able to plan research activities, conduct independent research and obtain new scientific results in the field of professional activity
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2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

Linguistic Theory and Language Description

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KLO-4	Knows the basic parameters of diversity of natural languages and their areal, typologic and genealogical classification.
KLO-5	Collects, documents and analyses linguistic data using various methodologies.
KLO-6	Competent to design and present the results of scientific research; owns the genres of academic writing and can use them in the fields of research and practice.

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Competitive Advantages

In Russia, the HSE MA programme Linguistic Theory and Language Description is the only MA programme with an almost complete dedication to teaching the principles of the empirical study of language. While other similar programs are in one or another way focused on language theory, our programme has a very conscious accent on fieldwork-related courses and interdisciplinary approaches. Our courses include linguistic typology, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, the domains that are strongly dependent on, or advancing through, field linguistics. A heavy focus on statistical analysis of language data is another competitive component of the programme, without similar skills being taught in any MA programmes in linguistics (to our knowledge). Thirdly, the fact that the programme is hosted by School of Linguistics, HSE, potentially diversifies academic agenda of MA students because of the many research groups and centers, big and small, that are affiliated with School of Linguistics or sister departments, such as Linguistic Convergence Laboratory or Center for Language and Brain, all very active in attracting students to research activities. Finally, the programme is delivered in English, which ensures a smooth integration of its students into the international linguistic community.

Professional Activities and Competencies of Programme Graduates

Our graduates are earmarked for Academia. Many of our ex-MA students [entered various PhD programs](#), in Russia or abroad. Some graduates continue at HSE, combining teaching and research activities. They have established research skills, including fieldwork organization and minority language documentation, experimental design, acoustic studies, computer assisted processing of linguistic data, statistical analysis as well as more generally project management, team working, critical academic reading. They have expertise in various research domains, first of all typology and sociolinguistics; and methodologies, first of all quantitative and corpus-driven approaches to the study of language.

Programme Modules

The structure of the programme is as follows. In the first module and partly the second module, we provide introductory and adaptation courses, specifically designed for students lacking background in theoretical linguistics and foreign students, but also brush-up courses for students with the profile BA. Adaptation courses include Introduction to linguistics and basic programming skills. To fully integrate, students with no previous expertise in linguistics are supposed to read additional materials. The two brush-up courses are Introduction to functional and cognitive methods and Introduction to formal linguistics. Also, in the first and second modules, we provide selectives (2/3) taught jointly to first and second year students, with a new topic each year, or topics alternating once in two years, so as to avoid overlap. Selectives include typology, sociolinguistics and Russian linguistics for Linguistic Theory track, and Introduction to Sociolinguistics and Basic principles of a language description for Introduction to Linguistic Theory and Language Description track. In the third module, the students start studying quantitative methods and models and methods of theoretical linguistics. Both courses span over two years of education. In Modules 2, 3 and 4 we provide lectures by language experts introducing our students to the languages of their expertise (grammar of a non-(Standard Average) European language). Module 4 provides more room to deal with term papers. Module 5 starts with the courses of experimental and anthropological linguistics, and the 2/3 selectives including typology, sociolinguistics and Russian linguistics, as explained above. Modules 5, 6 and 7 offer additional selectives (2/3): experimental linguistics, anthropological linguistics and language contacts,

and the 2/3 selectives including typology, sociolinguistics and Russian linguistics for the LTLD track, as explained above, and typology, sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics, for the ILTD track. Across the whole time of education, the students attend a seminar in which they discuss their research or have guest lectures on various topics delivered both by HSE researchers and the experts we invite in the academic community. The last two modules, 7 and 8, are almost fully dedicated to diploma: data collection, analysis and writing the research paper.

Options for Students with Disabilities

This degree programme of HSE University is adapted for students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. Special assistive technology and teaching aids are used for collective and individual learning of students with SEN and disabilities. The specific adaptive features of the programme are listed in each subject's full syllabus and are available to students through the online Learning Management System.

Programme Documentation

All documents of the degree programme are stored electronically on this website. Curricula, calendar plans, and syllabi are developed and approved electronically in corporate information systems. Their current versions are automatically published on the website of the degree programme. Up-to-date teaching and learning guides, assessment tools, and other relevant documents are stored on the website of the degree programme in accordance with the local regulatory acts of HSE University.

I hereby confirm that the degree programme documents posted on this website are fully up-to-date.

Vice Rector Sergey Yu. Roshchin

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