

# POSTGRADUATE PERSONAL STATEMENT EXAMPLE

## ENGLISH

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### Postgraduate Personal Statement Example: English

When I first started learning English, my goal was to become a native speaker with a clear understanding of its forms and functions. However, watching “The Adventure of English”, a documentary written by Melvyn Bragg and produced by the BBC, I began to develop a more scholarly interest in the historical origins, development and current state of the English language. It gave me an insight into how vast and valuable the world of language is, dramatically changing my perception and ambition. Instead of merely becoming a native speaker, I am now determined to develop my skills and knowledge of English as a linguist. I am confident that this MA in English Studies is the next step in my academic journey.

As an English major, I was rigorously trained in numerous aspects of the language through courses such as Introduction to English Linguistics, American Literature and Contrastive Linguistics. I have realised that linguistics is a ‘big picture’ discipline and that language is a carrier of culture, both as a tool of expression and a worldview. I developed a depth of knowledge and confidence in language analysis and contextual understanding as a result of my undergraduate studies, laying strong academic and practical foundations for this graduate course.

My interest led me to take Applied Linguistics, and I was particularly impressed by Selinker's interlanguage hypothesis and the related process of fossilisation. Selinker uses this term, which refers to the tendency of many learners to stop developing their interlanguage grammar in the direction of the target language when analysing the phenomenon of a permanent halt in L2-learning progress. Through my studies of Selinker's work, I understood that the concept of fossilisation is helpful when analysing the challenges faced by learners of English as a second language. As a result, I undertook independent research on second language acquisition, analysing the research experiments and methodologies applied by numerous scholars.

My research revealed the relationship between musical talent and foreign language learning outcomes and argued that language learning and music are inextricably linked in three ways.

First, language and music have similar structural sequences, and musical ability is predictive of language ability. Second, musical ability determines listening ability and affects pronunciation. Third, the development of musical ability contributes to the development of oral skills, and therefore music can be used to underpin learning in foreign language classroom instruction. In addition to learning about scientific experiments and methods during research and group work, I also learned that linguistics has a wide range of applications. Consequently, gaining a greater understanding of the scope and potential of the English language is a motivating factor behind this application.

Studying phonetics and phonological systematics, I focused my attention on studying pronunciation, vowel consonants, phonemes and suprasegmental features. During a group project, I explored the phonological features of English variants in eleven countries along the Belt and Road. Using Standard English pronunciation and the formation of English variants in each country, I compared and analysed the phonological features of each variant at the phonetic and suprasegmental levels. After researching and examining various literature, I found that a common feature of the suprasegmental segment in English spoken by people in Southeast Asian countries is that they do not distinguish between accents. For example, Thai English pronounces each syllable heavily, with any stress frequently placed on the last syllable of the word or sentence. By contrast, Vietnamese uses tones to distinguish meaning, but there is no distinction between accents.

The varied accents of people from countries along the Belt and Road make it more difficult to hear and understand them, which often makes oral communication and interpretation a complex task. However, language interchange is the foundation of Belt and Road interconnection. Through this project, I realised that categorising and summarising the phonetic features of English in the countries along the route would help enhance the sensitivity of Chinese English learners. This has deepened my appreciation of the power of language analysis to reduce barriers to comprehensibility and improve cross-cultural communication skills. Furthering my theoretical and practical understanding of this valuable analysis will be critical to my MA studies.

The study of linguistics offers us an advanced, systematic approach to decoding language, helping us explore its mysteries and our social and cultural relationships. Linguistics also allows us to make new advances in fields that add significant value to local communities and global societies alike, such as artificial intelligence, healthcare and cultural preservation. The MA in English Studies program offered at Slater University will allow me to participate in an innovative programme that explores the latest developments in literary, cultural and linguistic theory. Studying rigorous courses such as Analysing Speech and New Media, I intend to participate in discourse and research which examines the ideas, languages and literature of cross-cultural exchange. I am excited to complete these studies at Slater and eager to develop further my English expertise in this platform of academic convergence.

After graduation, I plan to enter a research institution or continue my studies to the doctoral level. Ultimately, I aspire to become a linguist and undertake research into areas such as phonetics, vocabulary and syntax. Different uses of vocabulary, grammar and phonology combine to create new linguistic perspectives. I aspire to apply my newly-found linguistics knowledge as a powerful tool for exploring these magical worlds. My long-term academic ambition is to use Foucault's approach to analyse how discourse production affects our world from a philosophical perspective whilst, influenced by Chomsky, studying human nature and

politics from a philosophical perspective. I look forward to achieving these goals at Slater and playing an active and positive role as a valuable member of your learning community.

