

UNE University of  
New England

 Ōtākou  
Whakaihu Waka  
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO



# The Future of Languages

DASSH Conference 2024

Geoffrey Miller, University of Otago  
Dr Miriam Neigert, University of New England



## **Acknowledgment of Country**

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.

And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

# About us

---



Dr Miriam Neigert  
German Discipline  
Convenor at University  
of New England  
PhD in TESOL  
Languages: German,  
English, Arabic, French,  
Spanish



Geoffrey Miller  
PhD Candidate at  
Otago University  
Geopolitical Analyst  
Certified Translator  
(English/German)  
Languages: English,  
German, Arabic,  
Russian, Spanish,  
Swedish



March 15, 2024

## **Lost in translation: the geopolitical risks of declining foreign language learning in Australia and NZ**

Geoffrey Miller, *University of Otago* and Miriam Neigert, *University of New England*

Diplomacy and national security rely on expertise in foreign languages and cultures. Australia and New Zealand need to address the looming deficit in university foreign language courses.



August 22, 2024

## **US voters speak many languages, but non-English campaigning remains risky for Harris and Trump**

Geoffrey Miller, *University of Otago* and Miriam Neigert, *University of New England*

In theory, appealing to voters in their own languages makes good political sense. So why don't more candidates do it on the campaign trail?

[insidehighered.com](https://insidehighered.com)

## Foreign language enrollment sees steepest decline on record

Ryan Quinn

9–11 minutes

Enrollment in courses in languages other than English plummeted an unprecedented 16.6 percent between fall 2016 and fall 2021, the Modern Language Association's [latest census](#) found—a roughly 236,000-student drop that diminished head count in these classes to about what it was in 1998.

THE CONVERSATION  
Academic rigour, journalistic flair



While government-level relations are important, nothing beats personal contacts for building strong ties between Australia and India. AP/AAP

### 6 unis had Hindi programs. Soon there could be only 1, and that's not in Australia's best interests

Published: December 3, 2020 3.33pm AEDT • Updated: February 8, 2021 2.40pm AEDT

**Christopher L. Diamond**  
Lecturer in Hindi, Australian National University

**Trent Brown**  
DECRA Research Fellow, School of Geography, The University of Melbourne

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair



There are 1,113 Confucius Classrooms in 146 countries and regions across the world. UniversityofMemphis/flickr, CC BY-NC-ND

### Why the NSW government is reviewing its Confucius Classrooms program

Published: May 18, 2018 10.27am AEST

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair



Diego Azubel/EPA/AAP

### Axing protection for national strategic languages is no way to build ties with Asia

Published: February 9, 2021 6.06am AEDT

**Melissa Crouch**  
Professor and Associate Dean Research, Law School, UNSW Sydney



**Times Higher Education**

The magazine for higher education

No. 2,559  
25 April-8 May 2024  
[www.timeshighereducation.com](http://www.timeshighereducation.com)



**Falling silent**

Will AI hasten the demise of modern language courses?

- 'No going back' Are UK job cuts going too hard, too fast? 6
- Market monopolisation Australian visa changes sabotage diversity aim 6
- No trust, no change Staff-admin tensions are spoiling campus life 24
- Learned laughter PhDs breathing life into *Horrible Histories* 38



**Is AI the final nail in the coffin for modern languages?**

Anglophone scepticism about the value of language study had been rising for many years before anyone had heard of Duolingo or ChatGPT. But while some academics believe technology will kill off universities' remaining language departments, others dare to hope it will be their saviour. **Patrick Jack** reports

2 Times Higher Education 25 April 2024

# Silent Talk

---

1. Take a pen, walk from table to table and comment on the statements or questions on the posters. Do this silently without talking to others.
2. You can also comment on what others have written (text, emoticons, drawings...).

## Group activity

---

1. Ice-breaker:
  - Who has the shortest first name?
2. Read the fictional case study and discuss
3. After 10 minutes: report back



## Action Plan 2030 - turning pessimism into optimism

---

Complete the Action Plan 2030 worksheet in the context of your institution.

- Walk around and take another look at the Silent Talk posters
- Think about what you discussed in relation to the case studies

### ***Food for thought:***

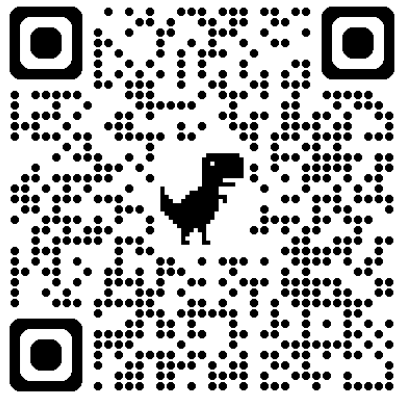
- What is your goal for languages by 2030?
- What do we need to do to achieve this goal?
- Objections and obstacles?
- What support/resources are needed from both within the institution and from outside it?

## Questions? Get in touch:

---



Dr Miriam Neigert  
[mneigert@une.edu.au](mailto:mneigert@une.edu.au)



Geoffrey Miller  
[geoffreymiller@gmail.com](mailto:geoffreymiller@gmail.com)

