Simon J. Greenhill

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Appointments

2023–	Co-Director, Centre for Computational Evolution, University of Auckland.
2022–	Associate Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland.
2016–2022	Senior Scientist (W2 Professor), Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena.
2016–2021	Research Fellow, ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language, Australian National University.
2014–2016	Language Evolution Program Leader, ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language, Australian National University.
2012–2015	Discovery Early Career Research Fellow, School of Culture, History and Language, Australian National University.
2009–2012	Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Psychology, University of Auckland.

Qualifications

2009	PhD, Psychology, University of Auckland.
2005	MSc (Honors), Psychology, University of Auckland.
2002	BSc (Honors), Psychology, University of Auckland.

Distinctions and Awards

2021–2025	Executive Committee, Cultural Evolution Society.
2012	Hamilton Memorial Prize, Royal Society of New Zealand.
2011	Top Referee Award, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.
2010	BlueFern High Performance Computing "Grand Challenge" Development Award.
2006	Best Student Talk, Annual New Zealand Phylogenetics Meeting.
2005	Bright Futures Doctoral Scholarship, Royal Society of New Zealand.
2004	Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarship, University of Auckland.

Research Funding

2024 Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund, NZD 853,000. *Understanding the historical drivers and possible futures of global cultural and linguistic diversity.* PI: **Greenhill SJ** et al.

2024 SCORE Project for Advancing Research on Religion and Cooperation (SPARRC), USD 149,975. *Cultural phylogenetics and the long-run causal connection between religion and cooperation.* Atkinson QD & **Greenhill SJ**.

2022 Australian Research Council Discovery Project, AUD 503,363. *Languages of Barrier Islands, Sumatra: description, history and typology.* Arka IW, Nothofer B & **Greenhill SJ**.

2020 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, EUR 2,350. *SiLiProS: simulating linguistic processes through speakers.* Boissonneault M & **Greenhill SJ**.

2019 Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund, NZD 300,000. *Cross-cultural patterns in theory of mind.* Watts J et al.

2018 Research Council of Norway, SAMKUL programme. *People and plants: rediscovering and safeguarding Nordic botanical heritage.* Kool A et al.

2017 National Science Foundation, USD 160,000. *Discovering the processes shaping geographic patterns of language diversity.* Gavin M et al.

2017 Australian National University conference grant, AUD 13,000. *Support for ICHL 2019.* Hendriks J et al.

2013 Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence, AUD 28,000,000. *ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language.* Evans N et al.; Director of the Language Evolution subprogramme.

2013 ANU Research School of Asia and the Pacific Development and Incentive Grant, AUD 4,800. *Patterns and drivers of rate variation in language and culture in Polynesia.* **Greenhill SJ** & Bromham L.

2012 John Templeton Foundation, USD 302,477. *Testing the functional roles of religion in human society.* Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ**, Atkinson QD & Bulbulia J.

2011 ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award, AUD 375,000. *Discovering Trans-New Guinea: revealing the prehistory of New Guinea.* PI: **Greenhill SJ**.

2011 Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund, NZD 775,000. *The cultural evolution of religion.* Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ** & Bulbulia J.

Publications

Citations: 12,006, h-index 49 (Google Scholar); 10,973, h-index 50 (OpenAlex); 6,168, h-index 39 (Scopus).

Refereed journal articles

84. Coelho MTP, Haynie HJ, Bowern C, Colwell RK, **Greenhill SJ**, Kirby KR, Rangel TF & Gavin MC 2026. Demographic shifts, inter-group contact and environmental conditions drive language extinction and diversification. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 293(2063). doi:10.1098/rspb.2024.2361.
83. **Greenhill SJ** 2026. rcldf: R library for reading CLDF files. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 11(125), 10811. doi:10.21105/joss.10811.
82. Blum F, List J-M, Barrientos C, Englisch J, Forkel R, **Greenhill SJ** & Rzymski C 2025. Lexibank 2: pre-computed features for large-scale lexical data. *Open Research Europe*, 5, 126. doi:10.12688/openreseurope.20216.2.
81. Boissonneault M, Tallman A, Gast V & **Greenhill SJ** 2025. Projected speaker numbers and dormancy risks of Canada's Indigenous languages. *Royal Society Open Science*, 12, 241091. doi:10.1098/rsos.241091.
80. Ejova A, Sheehan O, Bouckaert R, **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2025. Three evolutionary radiations shaped the evolution of global religious diversity. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*. doi:10.1017/ehs.2025.10027.
79. **Greenhill SJ** 2025. Next generation language phylogenies. *Diachronica*. doi:10.1075/dia.25023.bow.
78. Pelland JC, **Greenhill SJ**, Walworth M & Bender A 2025. A solid base for scaling up: the structure of numeration systems. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 380(1937). doi:10.1098/rstb.2024.0207.
77. Shcherbakova O, Gast V, **Greenhill SJ**, Blasi DE, Gray RD & Skirgård H 2025. Different models, different assumptions, different findings: commentary on 'Replication and methodological robustness in quantitative typology' by Becker and Guzmán Naranjo. *Linguistic Typology*, 29, 587–590. doi:10.1515/lingty-2025-0022.
76. Verkerk A, Shcherbakova O, Haynie HJ, Skirgård H, Rzymski C, Atkinson QD, **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2025. Enduring constraints on grammar revealed by Bayesian spatiophylogenetic analyses. *Nature Human Behaviour*. doi:10.1038/s41562-025-02325-z.
75. King B, **Greenhill SJ**, Reid LA, Ross M, Walworth M & Gray RD 2024. Bayesian phylogenetic analysis of Philippine languages supports a rapid migration of Malayo-Polynesian languages. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 14967. doi:10.1038/s41598-024-65810-x.
74. Shcherbakova O, Blasi DE, Gast V, Gray RD, Skirgård H & **Greenhill SJ** 2024. The evolutionary dynamics of how languages signal "who does what to whom". *Scientific Reports*, 14, 7259. doi:10.1038/s41598-024-51542-5.
73. Anderson C, Tresoldi T, **Greenhill SJ**, Forkel R, Gray RD & List J-M 2023. Variation in phoneme inventories: quantifying the problem and improving comparability. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 8(2), 149–168. doi:10.1093/jole/lzad011.
72. Auderset S, **Greenhill SJ**, DiCanio CT & Campbell EW 2023. Subgrouping in a 'dialect continuum': a Bayesian phylogenetic analysis of the Mixtecan language family. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 8(1), 33–63. doi:10.1093/jole/lzad004.
71. **Greenhill SJ**, Haynie HJ, Ross RM, Chira AM, List J-M, Campbell L, Botero CA & Gray RD 2023. A recent northern origin for the Uto-Aztecan language family. *Language*. doi:10.1353/lan.0.0276.
70. Heggarty P, Anderson C, Scarborough M, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2023. Language trees with sampled ancestors support a hybrid model for the origin of Indo-European languages. *Science*, 381, eabg0818. doi:10.1126/science.abg0818.
69. Hübler N & **Greenhill SJ** 2023. Modelling admixture across language levels to evaluate deep history claims. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 7(2), 166–183. doi:10.1093/jole/lzad002.
68. Passmore S, Barth W, **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2023. Kinbank: a global database of kinship terminology. *PLoS One*, 18(5), e0283218. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0283218.
67. Shcherbakova O, Michaelis SM, Haynie HJ, Passmore S, Gast V, Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ**, Blasi DE & Skirgård H 2023. Societies of strangers do not speak grammatically simpler languages. *Science Advances*, 9(33), eadf7704. doi:10.1126/sciadv.adf7704.
66. Skirgård H, Haynie HJ, Blasi DE, et al. 2023. Grambank reveals the importance of genealogical constraints on linguistic diversity and highlights the impact of language loss. *Science Advances*, 9(16), eadg6175. doi:10.1126/sciadv.adg6175.
65. Barbieri C, Blasi DE, Arango-Isaza E, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2022. A global analysis of matches and mismatches between human genetic and linguistic histories. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(47), e2122084119. doi:10.1073/pnas.2122084119.

64. Koile E, **Greenhill SJ**, Blasi DE, Bouckaert R & Gray RD 2022. Phylogeographic analysis of the Bantu language expansion supports a rainforest route. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(32), e2112853119. doi:10.1073/pnas.2112853119.
63. List J-M, Forkel R, **Greenhill SJ**, Rzymski C, Englisch J & Gray RD 2022. Lexibank, a public repository of standardized wordlists with computed phonological and lexical features. *Scientific Data*, 9, 316. doi:10.1038/s41597-022-01432-0.
62. Shcherbakova O, Gast V, Blasi DE, Skirgård H, Gray RD & **Greenhill SJ** 2022. A quantitative global test of the complexity trade-off hypothesis: the case of nominal and verbal grammatical marking. *Linguistics Vanguard*, 9(s1), 155–167. doi:10.1515/lingvan-2021-0011.
61. Zariquiey R, Vera J, **Greenhill SJ**, Valenzuela P, Gray RD & List J-M 2022. Untangling the evolution of body-part terminology in Pano: conservative versus innovative traits in body-part lexicalization. *Interface Focus*, 13, 20220053. doi:10.1098/rsfs.2022.0053.
60. Baird L, Evans N & **Greenhill SJ** 2021. Blowing in the wind: using 'North Wind and the Sun' texts to sample phoneme inventories. *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, 52(3), 453–494. doi:10.1017/S002510032000033X.
59. Bromham L, Dinnage R, Skirgård H, Ritchie A, Cardillo M, Meakins F, **Greenhill SJ** & Hua X 2021. Global predictors of language endangerment and the future of linguistic diversity. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 6, 163–173. doi:10.1038/s41559-021-01604-y.
58. Evans CL, **Greenhill SJ**, Watts J, List J-M, Botero CA, Gray RD & Kirby KR 2021. The uses and abuses of tree thinking in cultural evolution. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 376, 20200056. doi:10.1098/rstb.2020.0056.
57. Haynie HJ, Kavanagh PH, Jordan FM, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2021. Pathways to social inequality. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 3, e35. doi:10.1017/ehs.2021.32.
56. Hoffmann K, Bouckaert R, **Greenhill SJ** & Kühnert D 2021. Bayesian phylogenetic analysis of linguistic data using BEAST. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 6(2), 119–135. doi:10.1093/jole/lzab005.
55. Leisterer-Peoples SM, Hardecker S, Watts J, **Greenhill SJ**, Ross CT & Haun DBM 2021. The Austronesian game taxonomy: a cross-cultural dataset of historical games. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8, 113. doi:10.1057/s41599-021-00785-y.
54. Leisterer-Peoples SM, Ross CT, **Greenhill SJ**, Hardecker S & Haun DBM 2021. Games and enculturation: a cross-cultural analysis of cooperative goal structures in Austronesian games. *PLoS One*, 16(11), e0259746. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0259746.
53. Passmore S, Barth W, Quinn K, **Greenhill SJ**, Evans N & Jordan FM 2021. Kin against kin: internal co-selection and the coherence of kinship typologies. *Biological Theory*, 16(3), 176–193. doi:10.1007/s13752-021-00379-6.
52. Teixidor-Toneu I, Kool A, **Greenhill SJ**, Kjesrud K, Sandstedt JJ, Manzanilla V & Jordan FM 2021. Historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence test the phylogenetic inference of Viking-Age plant use. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 376, 20200086. doi:10.1098/rstb.2020.0086.
51. Roberts SG, Killin A, Deb A, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2020. CHIELD: the causal hypotheses in evolutionary linguistics database. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 5(2), 101–120. doi:10.1093/jole/lzaa001.
50. Rzymski C, Tresoldi T, **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2020. The Database of Cross-Linguistic Colexifications, reproducible analysis of cross-linguistic polysemies. *Scientific Data*, 7, 13. doi:10.1038/s41597-019-0341-x.
49. Coelho MTP, Pereira EB, Haynie HJ, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2019. Drivers of geographical patterns of North American language diversity. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 286, 20190242. doi:10.1098/rspb.2019.0242.
48. Hua X, **Greenhill SJ**, Cardillo M, Schneemann H & Bromham L 2019. The ecological drivers of variation in global language diversity. *Nature Communications*, 10, 2047. doi:10.1038/s41467-019-09842-2.
47. Jackson JC, Watts J, Henry TR, List J-M, Forkel R, Mucha PJ, **Greenhill SJ**, Gray RD & Lindquist KA 2019. Emotion semantics show both cultural variation and universal structure. *Science*, 366, 1517–1522. doi:10.1126/science.aaw8160.
46. Sagart L, Jacques G, Lai Y, Ryder RJ, Thouzeau V, **Greenhill SJ** & List J-M 2019. Dated language phylogenies shed light on the ancestry of Sino-Tibetan. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116, 10317–10322. doi:10.1073/pnas.1817972116.
45. Bromham L, Hua X, Cardillo M, Schneemann H & **Greenhill SJ** 2018. Parasites and politics: why cross-cultural studies must control for relatedness, proximity and covariation. *Royal Society Open Science*, 5, 181100. doi:10.1098/rsos.181100.
44. Forkel R, List J-M, **Greenhill SJ**, Rzymski C, Bank S, Cysouw M, Hammarström H, Haspelmath M, Kaiping GA & Gray RD 2018. Cross-Linguistic Data Formats, advancing data sharing and re-use in comparative linguistics. *Scientific Data*, 5, 180205. doi:10.1038/sdata.2018.205.

43. **Greenhill SJ** 2018. Comment on Pigoli et al. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series C (Applied Statistics)*, 67(5), 1135–1136. doi:10.1111/rssc.12258.
42. **Greenhill SJ** 2018. treemaker: a Python tool for constructing a Newick formatted tree from a set of classifications. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 3(31), 1040. doi:10.21105/joss.01040.
41. **Greenhill SJ**, Hua X, Welsh CF, Schneemann H & Bromham L 2018. Population size and the rate of language evolution: a test across Indo-European, Austronesian, and Bantu languages. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 576. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00576.
40. Kolipakam V, Jordan FM, Dunn M, **Greenhill SJ**, Bouckaert R, Gray RD & Verkerk A 2018. A Bayesian phylogenetic study of the Dravidian language family. *Royal Society Open Science*, 5, 171504. doi:10.1098/rsos.171504.
39. List J-M, **Greenhill SJ**, Anderson C, Mayer T, Tresoldi T & Forkel R 2018. CLICS^2: an improved database of cross-linguistic colexifications assembling lexical data with help of cross-linguistic data formats. *Linguistic Typology*, 22, 277–306. doi:10.1515/lingty-2018-0010.
38. List J-M, Walworth M, **Greenhill SJ**, Tresoldi T & Forkel R 2018. Sequence comparison in computational historical linguistics. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 3(2), 130–144. doi:10.1093/jole/lzy006.
37. Moravec JC, Atkinson QD, Bowern C, **Greenhill SJ**, Jordan FM, Ross RM, Gray RD, Marsland S & Cox MP 2018. Post-marital residence patterns show lineage-specific evolution. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 39, 594–601. doi:10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2018.06.002.
36. Morin O, Winters J, Müller TF, Morisseau T, Etter C & **Greenhill SJ** 2018. What smartphone apps may contribute to language evolution research. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 3(2), 91–93. doi:10.1093/jole/lzy005.
35. **Greenhill SJ**, Wu C-H, Hua X, Dunn M, Levinson SC & Gray RD 2017. Evolutionary dynamics of language systems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(42), E8822–E8829. doi:10.1073/pnas.1700388114.
34. List J-M, **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2017. The potential of automatic word comparison for historical linguistics. *PLoS One*, 12, e0170046. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0170046.
33. Atkinson QD, Coomber T, Passmore S, **Greenhill SJ** & Kushnick G 2016. Cultural and environmental predictors of pre-European deforestation on Pacific islands. *PLoS One*, 11(5), e0156340. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0156340.
32. Birchall J, Dunn M & **Greenhill SJ** 2016. A combined comparative and phylogenetic analysis of the Chapacuran language family. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 82(3), 255–284. doi:10.1086/687383.
31. **Greenhill SJ** 2016. Overview: debating the effect of environment on language. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 1(1), 30–32. doi:10.1093/jole/lzv007.
30. **Greenhill SJ** 2016. Phylogemetric: a Python library for calculating phylogenetic network metrics. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 1, 28. doi:10.21105/joss.00028.
29. Kirby KR, Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2016. D-PLACE: a global database of cultural, linguistic and environmental diversity. *PLoS One*, 11(7), e0158391. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0158391.
28. Bromham L, Hua X, Fitzpatrick TG & **Greenhill SJ** 2015. Rate of language evolution is affected by population size. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112, 2097–2102. doi:10.1073/pnas.1419704112.
27. Cardillo M, Bromham L & **Greenhill SJ** 2015. Links between language diversity and species richness can be confounded by spatial autocorrelation. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 282, 20142986. doi:10.1098/rspb.2014.2986.
26. **Greenhill SJ** 2015. TransNewGuinea.org: an online database of New Guinea languages. *PLoS One*, 10(10), e0141563. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0141563.
25. Watts J, **Greenhill SJ**, Atkinson QD, Currie TE, Bulbulia J & Gray RD 2015. Broad supernatural punishment but not moralizing high gods precede the evolution of political complexity in Austronesia. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 282, 20142556. doi:10.1098/rspb.2014.2556.
24. Watts J, Sheehan O, **Greenhill SJ**, Gomes-Ng S, Atkinson QD, Bulbulia J & Gray RD 2015. Pulotu: database of Austronesian supernatural beliefs and practices. *PLoS One*, 10(9), e0136783. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136783.
23. Koch H, Mailhammer R, Blust R, … **Greenhill SJ**, et al. 2014. Research priorities in historical-comparative linguistics: a view from Asia, Australia and the Pacific. *Diachronica*, 31(2), 267–278. doi:10.1075/dia.31.2.04koc.
22. Saslis-Lagoudakis CH, Hawkins JA, **Greenhill SJ**, Pendry CA, Watson MF, Tuladhar-Douglas W, Baral SR & Savolainen V 2014. The evolution of traditional knowledge: environment shapes medicinal plant use in Nepal. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 281, 20132768. doi:10.1098/rspb.2013.2768.
21. Bulbulia J, Atkinson QD, **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2013. First shots fired for the phylogenetic revolution in religious studies. *Cliodynamics*, 4(1), 128–133.
20. Nagaraja KS, Sidwell P & **Greenhill SJ** 2013. A lexicostatistical study of the Khasian languages: Khasi, Pnar, Lyngngam, and War. *Mon-Khmer Studies*, 42, 1–11.

19. Ross RM, **Greenhill SJ** & Atkinson QD 2013. Population structure and cultural geography of a folktale in Europe. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 280, 20123065. doi:10.1098/rspb.2012.3065.
18. Bouckaert R, Lemey P, Dunn M, **Greenhill SJ**, Alekseyenko AV, Drummond AJ, Gray RD, Suchard MA & Atkinson QD 2012. Mapping the origins and expansion of the Indo-European language family. *Science*, 337, 957–960. doi:10.1126/science.1219669.
17. **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2012. Basic vocabulary and Bayesian phylolinguistics: issues of understanding and representation. *Diachronica*, 29(4), 523–537. doi:10.1075/dia.29.4.05gre.
16. Dunn M, **Greenhill SJ**, Levinson SC & Gray RD 2011. Evolved structure of language shows lineage-specific trends in word-order universals. *Nature*, 473, 79–82. doi:10.1038/nature09923.
15. Gray RD, Atkinson QD & **Greenhill SJ** 2011. Language evolution and human history: what a difference a date makes. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 366, 1090–1100. doi:10.1098/rstb.2010.0378.
14. **Greenhill SJ** 2011. Levenshtein distances fail to identify language relationships accurately. *Computational Linguistics*, 37, 689–698. doi:10.1162/COLI_a_00073.
13. **Greenhill SJ** & Clark R 2011. POLLEX-Online: the Polynesian Lexicon Project Online. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 50, 551–559. doi:10.1353/ol.2011.0014.
12. Levinson SC, **Greenhill SJ**, Gray RD & Dunn M 2011. Universal typological dependencies should be detectable in the history of language families. *Linguistic Typology*, 15, 509–534. doi:10.1515/LITY.2011.034.
11. Currie TE, **Greenhill SJ**, Gray RD, Hasegawa T & Mace R 2010. Rise and fall of political complexity in island South-East Asia and the Pacific. *Nature*, 467, 801–804. doi:10.1038/nature09461.
10. Currie TE, **Greenhill SJ** & Mace R 2010. Is horizontal transmission really a problem for phylogenetic comparative methods? A simulation study using continuous cultural traits. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 365, 3903–3912. doi:10.1098/rstb.2010.0014.
9. Gray RD, Bryant D & **Greenhill SJ** 2010. On the shape and fabric of human history. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 365, 3923–3933. doi:10.1098/rstb.2010.0162.
8. **Greenhill SJ**, Atkinson QD, Meade A & Gray RD 2010. The shape and tempo of language evolution. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 277, 2443–2450. doi:10.1098/rspb.2010.0051.
7. **Greenhill SJ**, Drummond AJ & Gray RD 2010. How accurate and robust are the phylogenetic estimates of Austronesian language relationships? *PLoS One*, 5(3), e9573. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0009573.
6. Gray RD, Drummond AJ & **Greenhill SJ** 2009. Language phylogenies reveal expansion pulses and pauses in Pacific settlement. *Science*, 323, 479–483. doi:10.1126/science.1166858.
5. **Greenhill SJ**, Currie TE & Gray RD 2009. Does horizontal transmission invalidate cultural phylogenies? *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 276, 2299–2306. doi:10.1098/rspb.2008.1944.
4. Jordan FM, Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ** & Mace R 2009. Matrilocal residence is ancestral in Austronesian societies. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 276, 1957–1964. doi:10.1098/rspb.2009.0088.
3. Atkinson QD, Meade A, Venditti C, **Greenhill SJ** & Pagel M 2008. Languages evolve in punctuational bursts. *Science*, 319, 588. doi:10.1126/science.1149683.
2. **Greenhill SJ**, Blust R & Gray RD 2008. The Austronesian Basic Vocabulary Database: from bioinformatics to lexomics. *Evolutionary Bioinformatics*, 4, 271–283. doi:10.4137/EBO.S893.
1. Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ** & Ross RM 2007. The pleasures and perils of Darwinizing culture (with phylogenies). *Biological Theory*, 2, 360–375. doi:10.1162/biot.2007.2.4.360.

Book chapters

12. Evans N, Barth W, **Greenhill SJ**, Olsen B & Passmore S in press. Kinship terminology. In: *The Oxford Guide to the Papuan Languages*. Edited by Evans N & Fedden S. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
11. **Greenhill SJ** in press. Tentatively tracing Trans-New Guinea: a phylogenetic evaluation of potential deeper relationships. In: *The Oxford Guide to the Papuan Languages*. Edited by Evans N & Fedden S. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
10. Ross MD & **Greenhill SJ** 2024. Methods in Malayo-Polynesian comparative-historical linguistics. In: *The Oxford Guide to the Malayo-Polynesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar*. Edited by Adelaar A & Schapper A. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. **Greenhill SJ** 2023. Language phylogenies: modelling the evolution of language. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Cultural Evolution*. Edited by Tehrani J, Kendal J & Kendal R. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198869252.013.61.
8. Tresoldi T, Rzymski C, Forkel R, **Greenhill SJ**, List J-M & Gray RD 2022. Managing historical linguistic data for computational phylogenetics and computer-assisted language comparison. In: *The Open Handbook of Linguistic*

Data Management. Edited by Berez-Kroeker AL, McDonnell B, Koller E & Collister LB. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 345–354. doi:10.7551/mitpress/12200.003.0033.

7. **Greenhill SJ**, Heggarty P & Gray RD 2020. Bayesian phylolinguistics. In: *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Edited by Janda RD, Joseph BD & Vance BS. Vol. 2. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 226–253.
6. **Greenhill SJ** 2015. Evolution and language: phylogenetic analyses. In: *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Edited by Wright JD. 2nd ed. Vol. 8. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 370–377.
5. **Greenhill SJ** 2014. Demographic correlates of language diversity. In: *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Edited by Bowern C & Evans B. London: Routledge, pp. 555–578.
4. Bulbulia J, Atkinson QD, Gray RD & **Greenhill SJ** 2013. Why do religious cultures evolve slowly? The cultural evolution of cooperative calling and the historical study of religions. In: *Mind, Morality and Magic: Cognitive Science Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Edited by Czachesz I & Uro R. Sheffield: Equinox, pp. 197–212.
3. Gray RD, **Greenhill SJ** & Atkinson QD 2013. Phylogenetic models of language change: three new questions. In: *Cultural Evolution: Society, Technology, Language, and Religion*. Edited by Richerson PJ & Christiansen MH. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 285–300.
2. **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2009. Austronesian language phylogenies: myths and misconceptions about Bayesian computational methods. In: *Austronesian Historical Linguistics and Culture History: A Festschrift for Robert Blust*. Edited by Adelaar A & Pawley A. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, pp. 375–397.
1. **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2005. Testing population dispersal hypotheses: Pacific settlement, phylogenetic trees and Austronesian languages. In: *The Evolution of Cultural Diversity: A Phylogenetic Approach*. Edited by Mace R, Holden CJ & Shennan S. London: UCL Press, pp. 31–52.

Refereed conference proceedings

5. Haynie HJ, Blasi DE, Skirgård H, **Greenhill SJ**, Atkinson QD & Gray RD 2023. Grambank's typological advances support computational research on diverse languages. In: *Proceedings of the 5th Workshop on Research in Computational Linguistic Typology and Multilingual NLP (SIGTYP)*. Edited by Beinborn L, Goswami K, Muradoğlu S, Sorokin A, Kumar R, Shcherbakov A, Ponti EM, Cotterell R & Vylomova E. Dubrovnik: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 147–149.
4. King B, Walworth M, Hermann A, **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2022. Pots versus clocks: integrating archaeological evidence with Bayesian estimates of divergence times in Oceanic languages. In: *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the Joint Conference on Language Evolution (JCoLE)*. Edited by Ravignani A, Asano R, Valente D, et al. Kanazawa.
3. Koile E, **Greenhill SJ**, Blasi DE, Bouckaert R & Gray RD 2022. Ecological and socio-cultural constraints on linguistic diversification: new insights from the Bantu expansion. In: *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the Joint Conference on Language Evolution (JCoLE)*. Edited by Ravignani A, Asano R, Valente D, et al. Kanazawa.
2. Shcherbakova O, Michaelis SM, Haynie HJ, **Greenhill SJ**, Blasi DE, Gray RD, Gast V & Skirgård H 2022. Grammatical complexity is only weakly influenced by the sociolinguistic environment. In: *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the Joint Conference on Language Evolution (JCoLE)*. Edited by Ravignani A, Asano R, Valente D, et al. Kanazawa, pp. 669–671.
1. Shcherbakova O, Skirgård H & **Greenhill SJ** 2020. Phylogenetic exploration of language complexity in Austronesian, Bantu, and Indo-European language families. In: *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the 13th International Conference (Evolang13)*. Edited by Ravignani A, Barbieri C, Flaherty M, Jadoul Y, Lattenkamp E, Little H, Martins M, Mudd K & Verhoef T. Nijmegen, pp. 411–413.

Edited special issues

2. Bender A, Pelland JC, **Greenhill SJ** & Walworth M (Eds) 2025. A solid base for scaling up: the structure of numeration systems. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 380(1937). https://royalsocietypublishing.org/toc/rstb/2025/380/1937.
1. **Greenhill SJ** (Ed) 2016. Debating the effect of environment on language. *Journal of Language Evolution*, 1(1). https://academic.oup.com/jole/issue/1/1.

Online databases

7. Skirgård H, et al. 2023–. Grambank. https://grambank.clld.org/.
6. List J-M, et al. 2022–. Lexibank. https://lexibank.clld.org/.
5. Rzymski C, et al. 2019–. CLICS: Database of Cross-Linguistic Colexifications. https://clics.clld.org/.

4. Kirby KR, et al. 2015–. D-PLACE: Database of Places, Language, Culture and Environment. https://d-place.org.
3. **Greenhill SJ** 2013–. TransNewGuinea.org. https://transnewguinea.org.
2. **Greenhill SJ** 2010–. POLLEX-Online: the Polynesian Lexicon Database Online. https://pollex.org.nz.
1. **Greenhill SJ**, Blust RA & Gray RD 2008–. The Austronesian Basic Vocabulary Database. https://abvd.shh.mpg.de.

Scientific software

8. **Greenhill SJ** 2025–. rcldf: an R library for reading Cross-Linguistic Data Format files. https://github.com/SimonGreenhill/rcldf.
7. **Greenhill SJ** 2018–. RateCounter: a Python library for counting gains and losses in binary matrix data. https://github.com/SimonGreenhill/RateCounter.
6. **Greenhill SJ** 2018–. treemaker: a Python library for creating a Newick formatted tree from a set of classification strings. https://github.com/SimonGreenhill/treemaker.
5. List J-M, Cysouw M, **Greenhill SJ** & Forkel R, (Eds) 2018. Concepticon: a resource for the linking of concept lists. Jena. https://concepticon.clld.org.
4. **Greenhill SJ** 2015–. phylogemetric: a Python library for calculating the delta score and Q-residual. https://github.com/SimonGreenhill/phylogemetric.
3. **Greenhill SJ** 2011. genbank-download: download nucleotide sequences from GenBank using an accession number. http://code.simon.net.nz/genbank-download.
2. **Greenhill SJ** 2010–. python-nexus: a Python library for reading nexus (.nex, .trees) files. http://code.simon.net.nz/python-nexus.
1. **Greenhill SJ** 2009. r8spermute: a tool to assess how robust divergence times are to the calibrations given to r8s. http://code.simon.net.nz/r8spermute.

Other works

4. **Greenhill SJ** 2023. Shared foundation of language change. *Science*, 381, 374–375. doi:10.1126/science.adj2154.
3. **Greenhill SJ** 2021. Do languages and genes share cultural evolutionary history? *Science Advances*, 7, eabm2472. doi:10.1126/sciadv.abm2472.
2. Good J & **Greenhill SJ** 2020. Editorial note: ten years of Language Dynamics and Change. *Language Dynamics and Change*, 10, 1–2. doi:10.1163/22105832-01001001.
1. **Greenhill SJ** & Gray RD 2009. Darwin, language, and two great Pacific voyages. *New Zealand Science Review*, 66, 97–101.

Research Impact

Databases	I have built or co-built much of the open comparative data infrastructure the field now runs on. The Austronesian Basic Vocabulary Database (2008) was among the first open linguistic databases and has supplied data for c. 340 subsequent studies by other researchers. With POLLEX-Online, TransNewGuinea.org, Pulotu, D-PLACE, CLICS, Lexibank and Grambank, these resources cover a large fraction of the world's documented languages and cultures, receive on the order of 150,000 visits per year, and are linked from Wikipedia and the Open Language Archives Community. Citations to the accompanying data papers include D-PLACE 365, Grambank 183, Lexibank 160, POLLEX 124, Pulotu 101, TransNewGuinea.org 41.
Standards	Co-author of Cross-Linguistic Data Formats (CLDF), now the common interchange standard for comparative linguistic data, and of the Concepticon and CLICS resources on which much of the field's downstream tooling depends.
Wider reuse	These data are used in genetics, anthropology and archaeology, and increasingly as training and evaluation material for machine learning on languages that have almost no other digital footprint.
Policy	Findings on the drivers of language endangerment have been incorporated into UNESCO's *Languages Matter: Global Guidance on Multilingual Education*, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's *Forests for a Better World*, and the OECD's *Not Lost in Translation: The Implications of Machine Translation Technologies for Language Professionals and for Broader Society*.
Communities	The databases document Pacific and other Indigenous languages directly, and speakers use the structured data for teaching, dictionary work and revitalisation; I am regularly contacted with requests for materials. Data governance follows Indigenous data-sovereignty (CARE) principles, and the resources support the deposit and retrieval of endangered-language materials held in archives.

Selected media coverage

2026	*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: Hinter dem babylonischen Sprachgewirr.
2025	*Scientific American*: Genetics can track how languages mixed in the past.
2023	*The Conversation*: Do languages become less complex with more new adult speakers?
2023	*Cosmos*: Largest ever grammar database warns Australian Indigenous languages at risk.
2023	*The Conversation*: Research on 2,400 languages shows nearly half the world's language diversity is at risk.
2023	*Science*: New language database narrows search for first speakers of Indo-European.
2022	*Deutschlandfunk*: Datenbank für Sprach-Evolution.
2021	*New Scientist*: Languages could go extinct at a rate of one per month this century.
2021	*Science*: Sunlight affects whether languages have a word for blue.
2020	*Science*: World's largest linguistics database getting too expensive.
2019	*The Guardian*: True meanings of words of emotion get lost in translation.
2019	*Cosmos*: Sino-Tibetan languages began with Chinese millet farmers.
2019	*SBS*: Links between climate and language diversity.
2017	*Nature Human Behaviour*: Understanding language change.
2015	*Science*: One thousand different words for water.
2015	*Popular Science*: Language evolution may depend on population size.

Invited Talks

2024	Functionally tracing linguistic diversity, disparity, and loss. ETH Zürich.
2023	The evolutionary dynamics of language. Complexity in Language Variation and Change (COMPILA), Tokyo.
2023	Quantifying the evolutionary dynamics of language. Computational Phylogenetics & Language (Pre)history Workshop, Rethymnon, Crete.
2020	A cross-linguistic comparison of the evolved complexity of numeral systems. Unravelling Past Cognition symposium, 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (virtual).
2017	The evolutionary dynamics of language. Key Questions and New Methods in the Language Sciences, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen.
2015	Language evolution, time and human prehistory in the Pacific. Annual Conference of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Sydney.
2014	Gathering and organising big data: the history of the Pacific. E-Research Skills Seminar, University of Sydney.
2013	Quantifying the patterns of language diversification. KNAW workshop on Patterns of Macro- and Micro-diversity in the Languages of Europe and the Middle East, Groningen.
2013	Language phylogenies and cultural evolution. Phyloseminar.org (online).
2011	Phylolinguistics: tackling old questions with new methods. School of Culture, History and Language, Australian National University.

Teaching

2025–	Lecturer, BIOSCI 739 Dialogues in Biology, University of Auckland.
2024	Course Director, BIOSCI 322 Evolution of Genes, Populations and Species, University of Auckland.
2022–	Lecturer, BIOSCI 210 Evolution and the Biological Origin of Life. University of Auckland.
2022–	Lecturer, BIOSCI 322 Evolution of Genes, Populations and Species. University of Auckland.
2021	Spring School on Methods for the Study of Culture and Mind, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2019	Guest Lecturer, IMPRS for the Science of Human History.
2016–2017	Quantitative Methods in Social Sciences Spring School and Masterclass, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2014–2015	Guest Lecturer, Biology 3206, Evolution of Biodiversity. Australian National University.
2013–2015	Guest Lecturer, Linguistics 2005, Language Change and Linguistic Reconstruction. Australian National University.
2013–2015	Guest Lecturer, Linguistics 8025, Tools & Resources for Language Analysis. Australian National University.
2013–2015	Guest Lecturer, Linguistics 2020/6020, An introduction to the languages of the Pacific. Australian National University.
2011	Guest Lecturer, Anthropology 750, Biological Anthropology.
2007	Guest Lecturer, Psychology 725, Evolutionary Psychology.
2005-2007	Lecturer, Psychology 317, Evolution Behaviour and Cognition.
2002-2007	Tutor, Psychology 317, Evolution Behaviour and Cognition.

Higher Degree Supervision

PhD (primary)	Ian Connolly (Auckland, 2025–); Olena Shcherbakova (MPI-SHH, 2019–2023); Nataliia Hübler (MPI-SHH, 2019–2022); Kyla Quinn (ANU, 2015–2024).
PhD (advisory)	Sandra Auderset (MPI-SHH, 2019–2022); Kirsten Helgeson (University of Hawai'i, 2019–2022); Luis Esquivel Gomez (MPI-SHH, 2019–); Eri Kashima (ANU, 2016–2019); Hedvig Skirgård (ANU, 2016–2020); Jayden Macklin-Cordes (University of Queensland, 2016–2020); Kwang-Ju Cho (ANU, 2013–2020); Charlotte van Tongeren (ANU, 2013–2022); Adam Bode (ANU, 2021-2025).
Masters	Jinyong Zhang (Auckland, 2023); Yiming Ma (Auckland, 2024), Zhixiao Zhang (Auckland, 2024), Jiaxin Liu (Auckland, 2025)
Honours	Puja Singh (Auckland, 2009); Caela Walsh (ANU, 2015); Joseph Watts (Auckland, 2012)

Professional Service

Editorial	Editor, *Language Dynamics and Change* (2018–). Editorial boards: *Science* (2023–), *Open Mind* (2025–), *Journal of Language Evolution* (2016–), *Asia-Pacific Linguistics* (2012–2018).
Committees	Cultural Evolution Society Executive Committee (2021–2025); NOMIS & *Science* Young Explorer Award Committee (2024–2025); SAPIENS Science Communicator Award Committee (2024); Cultural Evolution Society Awards Committee Chair (2023–2024).
Organisation	New Zealand Phylogenomics Meeting (2024); Desenredando el Pasado Lingüístico de las Américas (2020); 24th International Conference on Historical Linguistics (2019) and its workshop on Computational and Phylogenetic Historical Linguistics; panel "Languages as Keys to Our Past", Deutscher Orientalistentag (2017); "Austronesian and Friends 2.0", Jena (2015); workshop "Computational Historical Linguistics", 20th ICHL (2011).
Institutional	SBS Showcase organiser (2023); SBS Awards Committee Chair (2023); Departmental Staffing Advisory Committee (2023); Research Committee, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU (2015–2016); ARC CoEDL Executive Committee (2014–2016); ARC CoEDL Transdisciplinary and New Initiatives Grant Committee (2015–2016).
Grant review	(>50) Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR); Australian Research Council (ARC); European Research Council (ERC); Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG); National Science Foundation (NSF); Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW); Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ); Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF); Velux Fonden etc.
Referee	(>250) *Nature*, *Science*, *Science Advances*, *Nature Human Behaviour*, *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, *PNAS*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *Philosophical Transactions B*, *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*, *Psychological Science*, *Current Anthropology*, *Language*, *Journal of Language Evolution*, *Language Dynamics and Change*, *Oceanic Linguistics*, *Scientific Data*, *Scientific Reports*, *PLoS One*, and c. 20 further journals and conferences.
Memberships	Royal Society of New Zealand (2020–); Human Behavior and Evolution Society (2020–); SIGTYP (2019–); Cultural Evolution Society (2017–); New Zealand Linguistic Society (2017–); Societas Linguistica Europaea (2017–); Australian Linguistic Society (2013–2017); Association for Linguistic Typology (2013–2017); The Polynesian Society (2009–2021).