

Project AtanasovaSprint

TITLE: Constructive news articles as an emerging genre

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr Dimitrinka Atanasova

DATES: Four weeks in June 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: Recent years have seen the rise of constructive journalism described as news about significant societal issues which report problems while also showing possible solutions. As journalism training programmes are increasingly looking to teach news writers the principles of constructive journalism, there is a significant lack of research and resources on the language and structure of constructive news. This study will start to identify the recurrent language and structure features of constructive news articles by analysing news articles published over a specific timeframe in the two early adopters of constructive journalism in the UK – Positive News and The Guardian’s ‘The Upside’. The analysis will be a mix of corpus linguistic and genre analysis. Your main duties will include:

- Collecting news articles from Positive News and the Guardian’s ‘The Upside’
- Conducting word frequency and keyword analyses using #LancsBox (or another tool)
- Analysing a selected sub-sample of constructive news articles for genre features (using a coding framework that will be provided)
- Presenting results to the supervisor

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Interest in learning how to conduct corpus linguistic and genre analysis
- Interest in the future of news and journalism
- Good overall time-management skills
- Having taken the module ‘Understanding media’ is desirable, but not essential and project-specific training will be provided

Project AthanasopoulosCasapsonaRebuschatSprint

TITLE: Can language boost the formation of abstract categorical boundaries?

SUPERVISOR(S): Panos Athanasopoulos Aina Casapsona, Patrick Rebuschat

DATE(S): Project will run in June-July, 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: This project provides you with the opportunity to work in the electroencephalography (EEG) lab at LAEL. The purpose of this project is to study the neural correlates of newly acquired categorical distinctions. We will record the brain activity of participants in the Electroencephalography (EEG) lab whilst they process objects before and after the training of new categorical boundaries. You will work alongside the main researchers, and your main duties are likely to include:

- Recruit and test participants (in our EEG lab)
- Enter participants' information in the database
- Code and analyse data

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Interest in learning how to run psycholinguistic experiments using brain activity recording tools (EEG)
- Excellent ability to recruit and test participants in a timely and efficient manner
- Good teamwork and collaborative skills
- A background in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, or psychology is desirable but not essential
- Knowledge or interest in learning basic statistical analysis (e.g., ANOVAs, t-test)

NOTE: Data collection should take place before mid-July 2020. Full training in brain activity acquisition techniques will be provided.

Project AthanasopoulosSprint

TITLE: Do bilinguals think differently?

SUPERVISORS: Prof Panos Athanasopoulos

DATE(S): Project will run in June-July, 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: The purpose of the experiment is to investigate how language influences the way we perceive the world, and whether bilinguals think differently in their different languages.

Specifically, we are interested in the processing of grammatical aspect and motion event cognition in second language users of English whose first language is German. For this reason, we will probably recruit German-English bilinguals as participants; data collection will take place on campus. Your main duties include:

- Recruit and test participants
- Code and analyse the data
- Present results to supervisors

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Interest in learning how to run psycholinguistic experiments
- Excellent ability to recruit and test participants in a timely and efficient manner
- Good overall time-management skills
- Knowledge and competent use of Excel and PowerPoint
- A background in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, or psychology is desirable but not essential
- Knowledge of German, either as a native speaker or as a second/foreign language speaker (upper intermediate – advanced) is essential.

NOTES: Data collection should take place before August 2020. Full training in data acquisition techniques will be provided.

Project BrownSprint

TITLE: EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF SPEAKER ANIMATION ON FORENSIC SPEECH ANALYSIS

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr George Brown (Lael) and Dr Christin Kirchhübel (*Soundscape Voice Evidence*)

DATE(S): Project will run in June 2020.

JOB DESCRIPTION: This is a collaborative research project between LAEL and a new forensic speech analysis business, *Soundscape Voice Evidence*. The project will seek to improve our understanding of intraspeaker variation in order to benefit the quality of future forensic phonetic analyses.

Specifically, the project will look into the effects of speaker animation on the task of identifying speakers from speech recordings that might arise as evidence in forensic casework. Speakers can sound more or less animated depending on whether they are excited, agitated or subdued, etc. We know that speaker animation affects our ability to identify speakers, but we do not fully understand the extent of its impact. Using a large corpus of speech recordings, the intern will assist our investigation into the effects of speaker animation on certain phonetic variables.

The main tasks of the intern will be to:

- Mine an appropriate speech data sample from a large corpus of speech recordings.
- Record and document data processing and organisation protocols.
- Take measurements that would typically be used in forensic phonetic analysis.
- Report findings and present visualisations of the results to the supervisors.

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Interest in forensic phonetics and forensic speech science more broadly
- Attention to detail
- Good overall time-management skills
- Good communication skills (both oral and written)
- Some previous training in phonetics through LAEL modules

NOTES: Training in the relevant type of speech analysis required will be provided by the supervisors.

Project CasapsonaAthanasopoulosSprint

TITLE: Does language context shapes how we see the world?

SUPERVISOR(S): Aina Casapsona, Panos Athanasopoulos

DATE(S): Projects will run in June-July, 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: This project provides you with the opportunity to work in the electroencephalography (EEG) lab at LAEL. The purpose of this project is to study the neural correlates of object perception that arise from differences in terminology across languages (e.g., *taza* in Spanish refers to both 'cup' and 'mug' in English). We will record the brain activity of bilingual participants in our new Electroencephalography (EEG) lab whilst they process objects in different languages contexts. You will work alongside the main researchers, and your main duties are likely to include:

- Recruit and test participants (in our EEG lab)
- Enter participants' information in the database
- Code and analyse data

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Interest in learning how to run psycholinguistic experiments using brain activity recording tools (EEG)
- Excellent ability to recruit and test participants in a timely and efficient manner
- Good teamwork and collaborative skills
- A background in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, or psychology is desirable but not essential
- Knowledge or interest in learning basic statistical analysis (e.g., ANOVAs, t-test)
- Knowledge of Spanish is desirable but not essential

NOTE: Data collection should take place before mid-July 2020. Full training in brain activity acquisition techniques will be provided.

Project CulpeperSprint

TITLE: Shakespeare: The infrequent words

SUPERVISOR(S): Prof. Jonathan Culpeper

DATE(S): Project will run for four weeks during June or July

JOB DESCRIPTION: This project focuses on early modern words that occur rarely in Shakespeare, and attempts to pin down what they mean. One source of evidence is what other dictionaries say they mean. Our systems suck in definitions from an array of dictionaries and display them on the screen. You can then look for similarities. But the next, and most important, step is to check whether those meanings actually fit how these words are used, both in Shakespeare and in the writings of his contemporaries. This step is facilitated by corpus methods (our systems line up the examples used in Shakespeare and his contemporaries). Finally comes the most creative part of the process: you propose your own definition for the word. Generally then, you will:

- engage with lexicography, Shakespeare and corpus methods;
- consider what scholars think about these words;
- work closely with your supervisor in searching the data; and
- contribute to the *Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's Language* project (<http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/shakespearelang/>) (and be listed in the acknowledgements).

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Full training in methods will be provided, so you do *not* need to have extensive knowledge of any particular area. However, you will need:

- strong ability to work independently and as part of a team; and
- an interest in (or at least sympathy with!) unfamiliar words and corpus-methods.

Project GillenSprint

TITLE: DEAF MULTILITERACIES

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr Julia Gillen

DATE(S): Project will run in June, July or August at the student's convenience.

JOB DESCRIPTION: You will be engaged in data organisation and analysis. You will join an international project team as part of this ESRC/DFID funded project. We have been working to support deaf peer tutors and deaf research assistants in teaching deaf young children and adults in India, Ghana and Uganda since 2017. The project is known as deaf multiliteracies since participants are engaged in reading and writing English, improving their sign language skills, sometimes developing IT skills, playing serious games and much else. Our data is in various forms including written reports, subtitled videos, photos and samples of students' work.

Your main duties include:

- Data organisation
- Coding data
- Analysing data
- Writing up, including contributing to reports

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Good skills in working with Microsoft Onedrive
- Good overall time-management skills
- An interest in learning and teaching
- Excellent attention to detail

NOTES: Full training in data organisation, coding, etc will be given.

TITLE: EN CLAIR: FORENSIC LINGUISTICS, LITERARY DETECTION, AND LANGUAGE MYSTERIES PODCAST – SEASON TWO

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr Claire Hardaker

DATE(S): Project will run in June 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: The overall purpose of this project is to investigate cases that involve forensic linguistics (e.g. the Derek Bentley case), literary detection (e.g. the Belle de Jour case), and/or language mysteries (e.g. the Somerton Man case). The successful intern will undertake the research necessary to create engaging scripts for several podcast episodes. Specifically, your duties will include:

- Agreeing on a number of cases from a long-list that you will focus your efforts on
- Undertaking substantial open source intelligence gathering, including finding, reading, and saving media articles/broadcasts, court documents, case data, individual biographies, and so forth
- Creating a thoroughly well-evidenced timeline of events from the inception of the case to its conclusion
- Exceptional interns with a gift for writing will have the opportunity to write scripts for the podcast in question

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- A very keen eye for details, inconsistencies, and alternative perspectives
- The tenacity to investigate complex cases far beyond simple media reports. this will include, e.g. reading legal documents, analysing data, listening to police interviews, etc.
- A high standard of evidence-collecting, sifting, and presenting
- A willingness and ability to work unsupervised
- Excellent discretion. The successful candidate will be asked to maintain a sensible degree of confidentiality about all aspects of the upcoming second season until its formal launch

NOTE 1: This position will involve looking in fine detail at one or more cases. It's likely that some of those cases will involve murder, suicide, serious assault, or other subjects that some will find distressing. The cases will be agreed between supervisor and intern at the start of the project, and not all the cases on the long-list are on distressing topics, but overall, **this post is unlikely to be suitable for anyone who does not wish to deal with sensitive topics.**

NOTE 2: If this runs as a SPRINT (summertime) project, the successful candidate is welcome to work for the entire duration remotely. All meetings and contact can be carried out via Skype, phone, email, or other agreed-upon means.

TITLE: SICK (BECAUSE) OF EXPERTS? VACCINATIONS IN UK PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES OVER TIME

SUPERVISOR(S): Prof Elena Semino & Dr Claire Hardaker

DATE(S): Project will run in June or July 2020.

JOB DESCRIPTION: Vaccine hesitancy is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as 'a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services', and is currently listed as one of the WHO's ten global health threats. Due to vaccine hesitancy, for example, the UK has recently lost its WHO measles-free status. However, concerns about vaccinations are not new.

You will carry out a comparative analysis of vaccination debates in the UK Parliament at different points in history, and particularly in the periods 1830-45 (i.e. before and after the first Vaccination Act of 1840) and 1991-present (i.e. since the most recent rise in anti-vaccination views). This project will help lay the foundations of a larger research programme on the language use to discuss vaccinations in public discourse, particularly in the UK. The ultimate goal of the project is to provide a better understanding of pro- and anti-vaccination views, which will inform future public health campaigns.

Your main duties include:

- Familiarise yourself with the different existing searchable online versions of the Hansard records of UK Parliamentary debates;
- Provide an overview of the frequency and main collocates of vaccine-related terms since 1830;
- Carry out a comparison of the language used to discuss vaccinations in the period 1830-45 and 1991-present;
- Present the results of your findings to the project supervisors.

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have:

- an interest in language and (public) health
- an ability to carry out both quantitative and qualitative linguistic analyses
- good overall time-management skills
- some familiarity with corpus linguistic methods – this is desirable but not essential

Project VanOlmenSprint

TITLE: *Don't just look at English! – Imperative negation in the world's languages*

SUPERVISOR: Dr Daniel Van Olmen

DATE: Project will run in June 2020.

JOB DESCRIPTION: Negating *he is quiet* seems straightforward. You just insert the negator *not* and get *he is not quiet*. Simply adding the negator to *she reads books* does not work, though. *She reads not books* is not grammatical (but its Dutch equivalent is!). The auxiliary *do*, used for emphasis in affirmative *she does read books*, needs to be included: *she does not read books*. Extensive research has shown that, like in English, this “standard” type of negation often involves more than just inserting a negator in the world's languages. Imperative negation, by contrast, has not received much attention. Yet, even in English, it differs from standard negation. *Do*, for instance, is used not only for verbs such as *read*, like in *do not read books*, but also for verbs such as *be*, like in *do not be quiet* rather than **be not quiet*. Preliminary typological data suggests that imperative negation can do things unheard of in standard negation. In some languages, for example, there is a negative imperative construction but no corresponding positive one. The purpose of the present project is to provide the first systematic and comprehensive description and explanation of the cross-linguistic variation in imperative negation. Your role in the project will include:

- Assistance in constructing a typological sample with sufficiently well-documented languages
- Locating the secondary sources and extracting the relevant data from them
- Analyzing the data and comparing the results across languages

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- An interest in cross-linguistic variation
- A good understanding of grammar
- An ability to read and analyze descriptions of other languages
- A willingness to learn basic sampling methods

NOTE: Full training in methods of data collection and analysis will be provided.

Project PapenSprint

TITLE: Why is the government so sure about phonics? Critically analysing literacy policy and how a specific teaching method and test are justified.

SUPERVISOR(S): Uta Papen

DATE(S): Project will run in June 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION: You would be involved in ongoing research that examines current literacy policy in England, specifically at primary school level. This research seeks to understand how policy-makers justify (legitimize) the use of a specific approach – phonics – to teach reading to children. Specifically, we will look at how a very controversial test for 5 to 6 year olds, the Phonics Screening Check, is justified. A variety of policy documents will be included, for example white papers but also government reports or a Minister's speech. There is the option to include media reports.

Your main duties include:

- Search for policy texts
- Work on the analysis of selected policy texts (in collaboration with the supervisor)
- Present and discuss results of this analysis with supervisor
- Contribute to a conference presentation and possibly the writing of a journal article

PERSON SPECIFICATION: The ideal candidate would have the following characteristics:

- Knowledge of critical discourse analysis; knowledge of literacy policies is desirable but not essential
- Interest in literacy teaching for children; interest in policy and policy discourse
- Ability/willingness to search for and analyse policy documents (content and discourse)
- Good overall writing skills
- Good time-management skills