

TITLE: Rhoticity in historic north Lancashire dialect

SUPERVISOR: Claire Nance

DATE: June/July 2021 (exact dates negotiable)

JOB DESCRIPTION: You will be working with a corpus of oral history recordings stored in this archive: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/library/resources/special-collections/archives/elizabeth-roberts-archive/>

The data were collected from working class speakers who were born in the late 19th or early 20th century in the 1970s. The speakers are from Barrow, Lancaster or Preston so the dataset is an amazing resource for speech in north Lancashire 120 years ago. The project is investigating the extent of rhoticity in north Lancashire and will use a combination of auditory phonetics and acoustic analysis. The aim is to investigate the historic dialect of north Lancashire and eventually examine the extent to which this has changed over the past 120 years. Your role will involve working with existing transcripts and producing a corrected, time-aligned transcript of the audio data; then extracting relevant tokens of words containing potential rhoticity; conducting auditory and acoustic analysis; writing up results. Full training will be provided.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

The ideal candidate would

- Be interested in sociophonetic analysis
- Be interested in Lancashire dialect
- Be able to work independently and also discuss results with the supervisor
- Have good attention to detail
- Have an interest in learning new quantitative analysis skills

NOTES: Full training will be provided!

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

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr Claire Hardaker

DATE(S): Project will run in June 2021.

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: 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.

TITLE: Sociophonetic variation in Lancashire accent perception and production

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr Danielle Turton

DATE(S): Project will run in Summer 2021

JOB DESCRIPTION: A sociophonetic research assistant is required to assist on a new project looking at the loss of rhoticity and vowel mergers in Blackburn, Lancashire. The purpose of the project is to analyse speech from local people, both in interviews and in lab speech, as well as administering surveys to listeners online. You will be trained in the latest cutting-edge transcription, survey and forced-alignment/automatic speech recognition software.

Your main duties may include:

- Designing and recruiting for dialect surveys
- Transcribing and coding interviews
- Analysing ultrasound tongue imaging videos
- Conducting auditory analysis of consonants such as t-glottaling, h-dropping
- [optional] interviewing local speakers
- Presenting results to supervisor

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

- Interest in accents and dialects
- A background in phonetics is desirable but not essential
- A background in sociolinguistics is desirable but not essential
- Willingness to use new software
- Excellent attention to detail

NOTES: Full training in transcription and coding of phonetic data will be provided at the beginning of the project.

TITLE: Edwardian Postcard Project

SUPERVISOR: Professor Julia Gillen

DATE(S): A four week period in June/July

JOB DESCRIPTION: You will work with the Edwardian Postcard Project, a long term research project investigating the everyday literacy practices of postcard writers in the early twentieth century. You will be involved in enhancing the opportunities the project offers to members of the public through donating scans or postcards, categorising and transcribing cards. You will also be involved in data organisation, transcription and analysis and project communications.

Your work will include:

- encouraging new donations through the project's website,
- data organisation
- publicising the project through existing social media ie. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter;
- monitoring the quality of inputs;
- responding to enquiries and proactively communicating with members of the public through the site, email and social media;
- drafting posts and short articles for specified audiences beyond the project;
- transcribing and categorising cards.

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

- Good communication skills in diverse modes;
- Understanding of databases or experience of social media communications;
- Good self organisation and time-management skills;
- Attention to detail.

NOTES: There is considerable opportunity to customise the role according to the postholder's abilities and ambitions. For example, if you are most interested in databases and data organisation more of your time could be devoted to this. Alternatively your time could be more weighted towards transcription, analysis and historical literacy studies or indeed developing professional communication skills. This is an ideal multi-faceted project to give an overall taster of a long-term, sustained research endeavour, with the opportunity for some development of your preferred area of expertise.

TITLE: How is Covid-19 affecting public views about vaccinations?

SUPERVISOR(S): Professor Elena Semino

DATE(S): The project will run in June or July 2021.

JOB DESCRIPTION: According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), one of the 10 top threats to global health is vaccine hesitancy - 'a delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services'. Due to vaccine hesitancy, for example, the UK has recently lost its WHO measles-free status.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the development of vaccines has received enormous attention in the media and social media. On the one hand, effective vaccines are often presented as the main way in which the pandemic can be brought under control. On the other hand, anti-vaccination movements around the world are targeting Covid-19 and any future vaccine, and surveys suggest that a substantial proportion of the population in the UK and other countries would hesitate to get vaccinated.

You will join the team of a new government-funded [project](#) (Questioning Vaccination Discourse: A Corpus-based Study) and carry out a corpus-based discourse analysis of discourses around vaccinations in a dataset collected from the mainstream media or social media since early 2020. The specific focus of the project will be decided based on priority areas at the relevant point. However, the goal will be to use linguistic analysis to explore vaccine-related representations and views during the pandemic. As part of the larger project, the findings have the potential to inform public health campaigns about vaccinations.

Your main duties include:

- Collect and prepare a relevant corpus or corpora;
- Use corpus-based discourse analysis to investigate representations of vaccines and views about vaccinations in the corpus/corpora;
- Present the results of your findings to the project supervisor and the larger project team.

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

TITLE: Do bilinguals think differently?

SUPERVISORS: Prof Panos Athanasopoulos

DATES: Summer 2021

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 recruit German-English bilinguals as participants; Data collection will take place online via Teams, Skype, or other suitable platforms. 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
- Knowledge and competent use of online communication tools such as Teams, Zoom, or Skype.
- 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: Full training in data acquisition techniques will be provided.