

University of Manchester Q-Step Summer Project 2018:

Ref: #33 UoMQStep Lancaster University Analysing Big Data

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Organisation name: Lancaster

Team/Department: Phonetics Laboratory

Address: Dep of Linguistics and English Language, County South, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YL

Provisional title for project: Analysing Big Data to study the evolution of UK dialects

Abstract:

These two internships are linked to a project where we analyze data from the *English Dialects App* corpus - audio recordings from more than 3700 speakers from across the UK. The purpose of this project is to explore how phonetic features (e.g. the vowel in 'cup' or intonation such as 'uptalk') vary across the UK and how they have evolved over time. Our findings will inform and advance theories of language change and will feed into research on speaker identification: experts who do forensic casework (e.g. analyzing threat calls) typically need regional distributions of phonetic features to narrow down the set of potential perpetrators involved in a crime

Data Sources: *English Dialect App* corpus – speech data of more than 3700 speakers from more than 1200 localities across the UK

Key words: Big data, phonetics, language variation and change, mobile app

Essential and desirable skills:

Essential: Contribution to the project (particularly in its planning stages), Coding and analysis of phonetic data, Potential contribution to the write-up of a research article

Desirable: An interest in phonetics, speech sciences - working with a cutting-edge corpus, Ability to annotate data using phonetic software or willingness to learn, Interest in learning new data analysis skills, Good communication skills and the ability of working in a team

Where the work will be carried out: At the Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University (LAEL) and/or remotely from Manchester

Preferred selection method: On-site interview in Manchester or interview via Skype

Support and training offered by the organisation:

The two interns will be provided a space to work at LAEL and will be supervised by Georgina Brown during the 8 week period. An initial training of 1-2 days will be provided by Adrian Leemann / Georgina Brown at the end of June, either on site in Manchester or at Lancaster

Supporting information: Georgina Brown will be the principle point of contact for the duration of the 8 week project

Financial assistance offered by the organisation: Lancaster University will provide space for the interns and a computer