

Research Role Profile

Job Title:	Research Fellow A
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Responsible to:	Head of research group, or principal investigator
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Responsible for:	Not applicable
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Job Summary and Purpose:
To undertake research in accordance with the specified research project(s) under the supervision of the principal investigator.

Main Responsibilities/Activities
<p>To undertake a range of research activities within a specified research area, assuming responsibility for specific areas of projects and making use of new research techniques and methods, in consultation with the research award holder or supervisor. This may include fieldwork, interviews, laboratory experimentation, critical evaluation and interpretation, computer-based data analysis and evaluation or library research.</p> <p>Using initiative and creativity to identify areas for research develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio. Analysing and interpreting results of own research. Write up results and prepare papers for submission to appropriate journals and conferences, and other outputs as required and/or appropriate. Attend appropriate conferences for the purpose of disseminating research results of personal development. The post holder may also contribute to writing bids for research grants and will contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues in areas of research.</p> <p>Continually to update knowledge and develop skills, and translate knowledge of advances in the area into research activity.</p> <p>To plan and manage own research activity in collaboration with others. To carry out administrative tasks associated with specified research funding, for example risk assessment of research activities, organisation of project meetings and documentation. Implementation of procedures required to ensure accurate and timely formal reporting and financial control.</p> <p>To contribute to teaching in the Faculty by carrying out student supervision and/or demonstrating within the post holder's area of expertise and under the direct guidance of a member of departmental academic staff, as appropriate.</p> <p>The post holder may occasionally be required to supervise more junior research staff.</p>

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Person Specification

The post holder must have:

A doctoral degree in a relevant discipline (although individuals who have almost completed a doctoral degree may be appointed). Consideration may also be given to individuals who do not hold a doctoral degree but have required skills based on a number of years experience in specified / relevant fields

The post holder will have authority over some aspects of project work and must be capable of providing academic judgement, offering original and creative thoughts and be able to interpret and analyse results.

Relationships and Contacts

Direct responsibility to the principal investigator or academic supervisor. The post holder may be asked to serve on a relevant Faculty committee. There may be additional reporting and liaison responsibilities to external funding bodies or sponsors. The post holder may work on original research tasks with colleagues in other institutions.

Special Requirements

To be available to participate in fieldwork as required by the specified research project

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity and equity of treatment to colleagues and students in accordance with the University of Surrey Equal Opportunities policy.
- Help maintain a safe working environment by:
 - Attending training in Health and Safety requirements as necessary, both on appointment and as changes in duties and techniques demand
 - Following local codes of safe working practices and the University of Surrey Health and Safety Policy
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of the post as may be requested by your Manager.

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Addendum

This document provides additional information relating to both specific aspects of the post/faculty and any post specific person specification criteria. The information contained within this document should always be read in conjunction with the accompanying generic Role Profile.

Job Title: Research Fellow

Background Information/Relationships

The position is connected with the Leverhulme Trust-funded project "Declining Case: Inflectional Loss in Progress" – specifically, to study patterns of case marking in the dialects of eastern Serbia.

The decline of grammatical case over the last two millennia has profoundly affected the linguistic landscape of Europe, transforming the grammar of languages such as English, Swedish or French. But we know surprisingly little about how or why it came about. Our only evidence comes from written texts, which are patchy in coverage and do not directly reflect the spoken language. But there is a largely untapped source of information in the border region between Serbia and Bulgaria, where these changes over TIME unroll as changes over SPACE, across a range of currently spoken closely related dialectal varieties, providing us with examples of the different historical stages that we can investigate directly.

At one end we have Serbian, which retains the original six-case system. At the other end we have Bulgarian, which has entirely lost case marking on nouns. For example, where Serbian has a genitive case ending (Kipr-A 'of Cyprus) or instrumental case ending (Kipr-OM 'by Cyprus'), Bulgarian just uses the unmarked (plain) form of the noun without any endings. This loss of morphology is compensated for by more complex syntax, involving the increased use of prepositions and restrictions on word order.

Between these two extremes there is a dialect continuum from East Serbia and West Bulgaria, where the number of cases gradually reduces, and the use of syntactic alternatives increases. Much the same must have happened in many European languages much earlier. The unique linguistic situation in the Balkans gives us an exciting opportunity to investigate directly what processes of change are involved, how they are transmitted, and how they relate to the grammatical and discourse context. Comprehensive research into the factors underlying this variation will shed light on its causes, and on the long-standing and unresolved problem of case loss. Specifically, we will address the following research questions:

- (i) How do morphological properties of words affect case loss?
- (ii) How do morphological and syntactic change interact?
- (iii) What changes in usage do cases undergo prior to their being lost?

We will address these questions through computational analysis of grammatical variation across individual speakers, age groups and dialectal communities. This will help explain what factors condition variation and why speakers ultimately shift from one variant to another. The methodology is divided into four work packages.

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1. Fieldwork and empirical analysis. Existing dialectal data is insufficient to allow for the proposed multidimensional research. Fieldwork in the three major dialectal types using parallel methodology (interviews, questionnaires and elicitation with dialectal speakers) will allow us to obtain representative datasets enabling the close description and analysis of the relevant grammatical, semantic and pragmatic factors.
2. Statistical modelling will uncover robust statistical patterns in our datasets, enabling us to test different mechanisms of how new language forms are adopted. Regression-like models will rank conditioning factors in the order of influence. A dynamic probabilistic model of form evolution (similar to models of social contagion or opinion dynamics) will inform the linguistic analysis of mechanisms behind the rise and spread of new language forms.
3. Visualisation. Statistical models will be represented in charts and animations visualising the spread of innovative forms, as an aid to linguistic analysis. Maps created using Geographic Information System software will show the spatial distribution of linguistic patterns.
4. A data management system (DMS) will be developed to underlie all proposed analytic procedures. It will host the datasets resulting from fieldwork, multi-level metadata and outcomes of the analysis. The DMS will therefore be a key instrument in preparing fieldwork data for analysis and will ensure the compatibility of the data with analytic software tools. The DMS will ensure the accessibility and re-usability of language data and of all analytic outcomes.

Person Specification

This section describes the sum total of knowledge, experience & competence required by the post holder that is necessary for standard acceptable performance in carrying out this role. This is in addition to the criteria contained within the accompanying generic Role Profile.

	Essential/ Desirable
PhD in a relevant topic area	E
Prior experience in language description, and the elicitation and analysis of spoken language data	E
Ability to work independently and as part of a research team	E
Good command of spoken Serbo-Croatian	E
A collaborative attitude to research, including a willingness to comment constructively on drafts and dry runs by all members of the SMG, and to undertake joint research and publication with different combinations of colleagues	E
Background in one or more of the following areas of linguistics: syntax, typology, morphology, historical linguistics	D

Key Responsibilities

This document is not designed to be a list of all tasks undertaken but an outline record of any faculty/post specific responsibilities (5 to 8 maximum). This should be read in conjunction with those contained within the accompanying generic Role Profile.

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1. Conduct research within the framework of the Leverhulme Trust funded project "Declining Case: Inflectional Loss in Progress" (grant number RPG-2020-078).
2. Day-to-day running of the research project basis and reporting to the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigators.
3. Conduct linguistic field research in Serbia.
4. Annotation and analysis of the results of the fieldwork.
5. Contribute to joint papers and conference presentations.

N.B. The above list is not exhaustive.