

**Project Title****The Origins and Evolution of Language (RDF/16/HUM/FEENEY)**

This PhD level project will involve an investigation into the emergence and subsequent evolution of the human faculty for language. The precise focus of study is dependent upon candidates' specific interests and expertise and is open to negotiation. The project may investigate: the biology of language evolution, with a focus on the coevolution of genetics and culture; the question of when and why language evolved; the evolution of phonology, morphology, syntax and/or meaning with particular reference to protolanguage; and evidence from language evolution as a factor in understanding the nature of the human language faculty. Proposals in the field of language change and creativity, including grammaticalization, language modelling, gestural communication and pidgins and creoles would also be considered.

The successful candidate will undertake PhD level study, working in tandem with similar research currently being undertaken by Dr Andrew Feeney and Dr Rachel Edwards in the English Language & Linguistics group at Northumbria University

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/humanities/research/english-research/english-language-and-linguistics/>

It is expected that candidates will have a background in theoretical and/or empirical linguistics, though applicants from other areas such as psychology, philosophy and ethology would also be welcome.

The University of Northumbria has a large and lively postgraduate community in the Humanities. Our PhD students benefit from generous research space and resources in the recently expanded Glenamara Centre as well as the new Institute of the Humanities. PhD students develop a portfolio of skills and competencies through the Humanities Training Programme, the Teaching Shadowing Scheme, the annual PhD conference and the Graduate School's Professional Development and Research Training Programme. In addition, each PhD student is allocated a personal research allowance to be used for fieldwork costs and/or conference attendance as well as funding to support the organisation and development of research networks, conferences and seminar series.

**Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences****Department of Humanities, English Language and Linguistics****Principal Supervisor**

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and

Dr Rachel Edwards  
Principal Lecturer in Language, Culture and Communication

Deadline for applications: 18 March 2016

Interview date (if known): w/c 2 May 2016

Start Date: 3 October 2016