Collaborative Doctoral Awards
Studentship Competition (Project-led)

Project Proposal

NORTHERN BR—DGE CONSORTIUM DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council

SECTION 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT	
Proposed Project Title:	Eavesdropping on our past: Mapping the oral soundscape of Northern Irish English (NIE)
Project Summary: *(Maximum 100 words)*	The project will create, from our newly digitised Tape Recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech (TRSHES), an open access resource for discovering and digitally mapping the linguistic structures of NIE. National Museums NI, linguists and spatial scientists in Belfast and Newcastle Universities will guide a programme of corpus creation, data encoding and analysis. The project will develop systematic and theoretically informed interactive resources delivering (i) academic exploitation; (ii) public engagement, (iii) sustainability and (iv) professional development tools. Using models from elsewhere in the UK for 'promoting, preserving and future-proofing' linguistic resources[1], the project will bring the TRSHES to comparable prominence.
Name of non-HE Partner Organisation:	National Museums, NI (NMNI)
Name of Contacts at non-HE Partner Organisation:	Dr Donal McAnallen/ Dr David Tosh
Email Addresses:	Donal.McAnallen@nmni.com/ David.Tosh@nmni.com

Primary AHRC Subject Area:	Linguistics
Secondary AHRC Subject Area (if **Interdisciplinary**):	Cultural and Museum Studies
Does the project Include a creative practice component?	NO
If you have listed two subject areas above, do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?	YES

If Yes, please briefly state why:
(Maximum 100 words):

The project re-purposes a new digitised incarnation of TRSHES, a 1970s dialect survey conducted by academics in NI and the Republic of Ireland. The digitisation project was initiated by the current supervisory team in collaboration with National Museums NI (NMNI). It was originally funded under the British Library's (BL) 'Save Our Sounds' programme and drew on our combined inter-disciplinary expertise: technical digital enhancement skills in BL/NMNI, and HEI experience of creating linguistic resources for academic, heritage and public engagement purposes. The new project will also require input from these disciplines in addition to expertise in digital mapping and heritage studies.

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[1] Mearns, A., Corrigan, K.P. and Buchstaller, I. (2016) The Diachronic Corpus of Tyneside English and The Talk of The Toon: Issues in Preservation and Public Engagement. In Corrigan, K.P. and Mearns, A. (eds) *Creating and Digitizing Language Corpora*, Vol. 3, 177-210. Palgrave Macmillan.

Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below:
(Maximum 750 words)

There is currently no authoritative resource on NIE which can be exploited for academic, public engagement, professional development, or heritage purposes. Although some research ensued from the original TRSHES project, it focused on diatopic phonological differences. The lack of systematic, theoretically informed orthographic transcriptions entailed that morphosyntactic and discourse-pragmatic analyses were beyond reach, as they remain today. Even the new digital archive which we have co-created is limited in value to the academic community as there are no digital transcriptions to accompany the digitised sound archive. Moreover, while theoretical descriptions of NIE exist in the academic literature, they are inaccessible to non-academic audiences. In other regions of the UK, significant progress has been made in creating and exploiting legacy spoken language data for impact-driven purposes in collaboration with heritage organisations. Newcastle University leads the field in digitising, re-using and preserving dialect and audio-visual material from northeastern England. Their state-of-the-art archive contains accessible, digitised, TEI-compliant text transcriptions and audio-visual data. It has generated several academic publications and attracted funded, national and international 'Big data' initiatives and international PGR projects. Their archive and accompanying tools provide resources for interactive, multimedia platforms aimed at the academic community and the wider public. These clearly demonstrate how digital language data can be re-packaged and exploited to ensure relevance for a wide range of end users.

In NI, there is no such open access resource and we are therefore unable to systematically promote the TRSHES. A key consequence from a wider publics perspective is that there is no opportunity to engage with their rich linguistic heritage, its historical development or spatial distribution. Perceptions of language behaviour are therefore often skewed and driven by political, religious and other types of social stereotyping. Neither is there any central repository of NIE that can be used, e.g. in co-constructing, with education authorities, English Language materials for NI teachers or pupils. This latter situation means that youngsters are not helped to understand the uniqueness of their own accents and dialects, or the importance of language to issues of identity and belonging. Instead, they are consistently exposed to language varieties which are more formal and more standard than their own, generating prescriptive norm pressure and high indices of linguistic insecurity.

The recently completed digitisation of TRSHES, which the proposed supervisors and NMNI have led on, enables us to address these deficiencies by way of the proposed project in which we will co-create a new public corpus of NIE data. Its initial focus will be on designing and populating an accessible website, laying the groundwork for developing an online academic resource similar in scale and functionality to the Newcastle initiative. The stages of the proposed project are:

(i) Selection of key fieldwork sites and speakers from the original TRSHES, to establish a meaningful overview of linguistic and social geographies;
(ii) Assembling metadata on speakers and fieldworkers;
(iii) Cataloguing and digitising editorial sheets of fieldworkers' transcriptions;
(iv) Undertaking due diligence to, as far as possible, locate original speakers or their descendants to request permission for public dissemination;
(v) Where possible, re-interviewing original participants to capture linguistic and cultural changes across the lifespan;
(vi) Transcription of original and new interviews (orthographic and phonetic transcriptions, using appropriate XML-compatible transcription protocols for the former);
(vii) In conjunction with CCEA, pilot-testing resources for schools and CPD materials for education and heritage purposes;
(viii) Development of a public-facing website containing audio and transcribed data as well as relevant visual illustrative materials from the Public Records Office NI, Placenamesni.org and NMNI collections, alongside digital maps prepared in conjunction with QUB's Centre for GIS and Geomatics.
(ix) Co-curation of an exhibition in 2022 to mark the 50 year anniversary of the first Colloquium on Hiberno-English, the catalyst for the resulting TRSHES;
(x) Website launch and the enrichment of permanent NMNI displays with locally relevant material from the TRSHES.

The consolidation of our digitised corpus and its resources is additionally compelling regarding its status as a 'Monitor Corpus'. Following the Newcastle model, wherein their digitised legacy corpora triggered opportunities for ongoing student fieldwork and data collection, the NI corpus will constitute a dynamic resource for projects which will track ongoing trajectories of linguistic and cultural change in NI.

A major strength of this project, given the potential for ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, is that face-to-face linguistic fieldwork is unnecessary (additional interviews can be conducted virtually). The digitised data is accessible remotely, on a platform already developed for internal research purposes by NMNI, NU and QUB.

Please provide details of any resources and facilities, including details of any high cost equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that may be required to complete the project successfully, and where you will seek these resources (e.g. NBCDTP; partner resources; departmental/school funds). Please include estimated costs:
(Maximum 200 words)

The required resources/facilities at NMNI/NU/QUB are in place. Generic training offered by NBCDTCP will be availed of where required and project-specific training will be provided by the HEI supervisors and NMNI. Outwith the costs already covered by the DTP (and for which application will be made to its small/large grant schemes as the student's needs arise), we wish to signal explicitly the need for funds: (i) to equip the student with a laptop computer capable of processing large sound, multimedia and text files as a precaution should COVID-19 restrictions require them to work remotely; and (ii) to cover the student's attendance at the British Museum's International Training Programme if they are accepted. The hardware/software/BM training will total c.£3000; (iii) Currently, exhibition costs (c.£7000) are envisaged as an NMNI in-kind contribution. Should financial constraints make that impossible, funding will be sought from e.g. the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Supervision sessions will be conducted mostly online, but in-person project meetings will be required approximately twice per semester in one or other direction (COVID-19 regulations permitting). We are cognisant of current AHRC policy regarding staff travel costs and so will instead approach relevant NU and QUB Deans.

Please outline the arrangements for communication between the partner organisation and academic host organisation in regard of the project management and the monitoring of academic progress:
(Maximum 150 words)

Queen's University Belfast, Newcastle University and NMNI have already established a formal Memorandum of Understanding to enable sharing of resources emanating from the digitised version of TRSHES. We have also established clear and regular lines of communication with our counterparts in NMNI and between the proposed supervisory team at the HEIs who have been successfully collaborating to move the sound archive digitisation project forward for several years now. At the beginning of the project we would, additionally, complete a Project Initiation document on behalf of QUB, NU and NMNI, to articulate our respective roles and responsibilities to the student (and theirs to all three organisations). With regard to monitoring of academic progress, both Universities exercise rigorous processes for checking achievement at various milestones: initial review, differentiation and annual progress review. (130 words)

What benefits will accrue to the student and the partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?
(Maximum 300 words)

The student will make a groundbreaking contribution to the documentation/spatial analysis of NIE and will acquire through collaborating with NMNI and Heritage@Newcastle (https://research.ncl.ac.uk/heritage-newcastle/) public engagement skills for communicating the value of impact-driven research. Through participation in the British Museum's International Training Programme (https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/international/international-training-programme), the student will acquire specialist skills in UK museum work for promoting language heritage data. They will undertake a placement in Newcastle and will develop global professional networks. The student will also be mentored to achieve Advance HE Fellowship, thus enhancing their employability prospects.

NMNI will acquire the HEI input needed to augment, assemble and profile TRSHES which our collaborative involvement with the British Library's 'Save Our Sounds' project has digitised. We are now keen to push ahead towards the next phase, enabling NMNI to promote and exploit this major collection of NIE speech in their holdings. The partnership would build upon previous HEI agreements but also provide opportunities to develop more formal arrangements with diverse organisations in NE England. This collaboration will help NMNI realise its core research policy ambition, i.e. to become an Independent Research Organisation. Furthermore, the research would allow NMNI to meet legislative requirements under the Museums and Galleries Order (NI) 1998 (e.g. ensure that 'objects are exhibited to the public'; 'promote awareness, appreciation and understanding'). This collaboration will also allow NMNI to evidence: (i) the value of the records that they hold for the purposes of research and (ii) the importance of developing new research approaches based on technological/methodological innovations. As the student gains knowledge of the TRSHES holdings, this will feed into the museum's redevelopment of its own Data Management System (DAMS) and augment current information on its collections. This contribution will lead to greater institutional knowledge of the latter and thus permit enhanced access for the public and other researchers.

Please briefly state what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the partner will be making over the duration of the award:
(Maximum 100 words)

NMNI will not be required to make any financial contribution to the project. Their in-kind input will consist of: (i) hosting the digitised audio files on their server and making them available to QUB and NU for the purposes of the project; (ii) providing space for the appointed student to visit the museum at pre-arranged times to consult and digitise uncatalogued material associated with TRSHES; (iii) advising on strategies for public engagement with NI audiences; (iv) co-curating an exhibition to launch the project website; (v) advising on methods for maintaining and enhancing the profile of the data beyond project completion.

Please describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the student will be taking with the organisation:
(Maximum 300 words)

The arrangement requires the student to avail of data samples which are held on NMNI's server, and which are already shared with the proposed supervisory team at QUB and NU under the terms of our Memorandum of Understanding (non-disclosure agreements will be in place for the duration of the project). The current MoU allows us to collaborate in the fields of corpus linguistics, dialectology and sociolinguistics, and permits us to extend our collaboration 'to other topics of mutual interest …' Regular access to the data will be virtual, therefore. In-person visits to NMNI will be required occasionally (we imagine no more than six times over the course of the project), to document and scan all non-catalogued materials extant in the museum. The student will also receive specialist training in best practices regarding the digitising of legacy sound data and how to document and archive it so that it is future-proofed. They will likewise undertake training in the ethical and legal frameworks for re-purposing legacy sound data and acquire skills to undertake community engagement initiatives that showcase museum collections to the general public in exhibition formats as well as educational contexts. Once the analytic phases of the project have been completed, the student will then consult with NMNI to identify methods for bringing the core themes emerging from the data to public prominence. The student and supervisory team will liaise with NMNI in mounting an exhibition to launch the project website, and to ensure the long-term digital sustainability of the material generated.

SECTION 2: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Professor Joan Rahilly	School/Department:	School of Arts, English and Languages, Queen's University, Belfast
Second Supervisor:	Professor Karen Corrigan	School/Department:	School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics, Newcastle University
Additional Advisor:	Dr Donal McAnallen	Organisation/Institution:	National Museums, NI
Additional Advisor:	Dr David Tosh	Organisation/Institution:	National Museums, NI

Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisors will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected student:
(Maximum 500 words)

Research supervision will be equally shared between Newcastle University and Queen's University Belfast, led by Prof. Karen Corrigan and Prof. Joan Rahilly, respectively (whilst this form requires first and second supervisors to be named, we would wish to follow a co-tutelle model). Both supervisors have worked and published on Irish English throughout their careers. In addition to Prof. Corrigan's influential monograph on Irish English and her recent groundbreaking book on newcomers' acquisition of sociolinguistic variation in Northern Ireland, she has published widely on methods for creating language databases for academic and public end-users. Prof. Rahilly has an extensive set of publications on aspects of articulation in children's speech in NI, and is an international authority on the prosodic realisation of Northern Irish English. She also brings her expertise on clinical phonetics and linguistics and in delivering CPD events for schoolteachers on oral language production. Profs. Corrigan and Rahilly first collaborated in 2013-2014, to bring a fresh perspective and much-needed attention to the systematic study of Northern Irish English (NIE), with the original TRSHES as the driver for this new project. Since then, they have worked together and in collaboration with NMNI/British Library to create the digitised sound survey which underpins the current proposal.

They each have strong records of funded PhD supervision and Corrigan has already acted as co-supervisor on a successfully completed Northern Bridge funded doctoral project shared across NU and QUB.

In NMNI, we will collaborate with two advisors: Dr Donal McAnallen and Dr David Tosh. Dr McAnallen is NMNI's Project Manager for the museum's 'Unlocking our Sound Heritage' project, a UK-wide initiative funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and led by the British Library. From the 'Unlocking' project, Dr McAnallen brings significant expertise in preserving endangered sound recordings and bringing them to prominence. In addition, he is a linguist (specialising in the Irish language) who holds qualified teacher status. The former makes him uniquely placed to contribute to this initiative since Irish English is a contact induced variety that still bears traces of its Celtic roots. His educational qualifications mean that he can offer expert advice on developing suitable materials for schools. Dr Tosh is NMNI's Research Co-ordinator: his focus is on harnessing research findings to benefit the museum's collections in ways that benefit society and meet the organisation's core objectives. They bring their shared skills and institutional objectives to the proposed project by supporting the development of the underpinning research and facilitating the dissemination of results.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected student will be joining and its suitability:
(Maximum 500 words)

The student will encounter research environments at the HEIs which are singularly well-placed to facilitate research on NIE given staff expertise. Additionally, both institutions provide a stimulating environment for doctoral students, ranging from subject-specific centres and special interest groups in which they will be supported in developing and presenting their work as part of the wider PGR and research communities, to opportunities for training on the methodologies required for the project, and broader professional development options. REF scores for Language and Linguistics (straddling UoA26/27) in both institutions continue to underscore their high calibre of research and impact.

In QUB, the student will work within the School of Arts, English and Languages, a unit including academics working in varied areas within language and linguistics. The School offers a distinctive commitment to and strong record of engaged research in collaboration with the local community, the business world, and government. (https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/ael/Research/EngagedResearchinArtsEnglishandLanguages/). Projects undertaken here promote the values of partnership and collaboration in research, by building and sustaining mutually-beneficial research relationships, with real-world impact. The proposed studentship will also benefit from advisory input from colleagues in QUB's School of Natural and Built Environment, including the Centre for Data Digitisation and Analysis, the Centre for GIS and Geomatics, and the QUB Heritage Hub.

In Newcastle, the student will work primarily within the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics with additional access to shared resources and facilities in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, as well as the School of Modern Languages which operate as a Unit of Assessment for REF purposes. The Unit likewise has a demonstrable record of engaged research and impact, with case studies in the last REF designated either 3* or 4*. One of these was developed around the Talk of the Toon (https://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/toon/) initiative for building archives and creating associated tools, which will serve as a model for the proposed studentship. The student will have access to the expertise of Newcastle's Centre for Research Excellence in Heritage offering a wealth of disciplinary approaches to heritage with strengths in novel, risk-taking, creative and artistic research in this field. Input is also envisaged from the National Innovation Centre for Ageing (given the project's change across the lifespan orientation) as well as the National Innovation Centre for Data, where colleagues can advise on transferring data analytic skills to the private and public sectors.

Beyond the expert supervisory team, the student will avail of specialist colleagues in NMNI in creating resources and methodologies for public engagement, curation of materials for exhibition purposes, and longer-term data management and sustainability issues.

Depending on the student's background, either Belfast or Newcastle may be nominated as the primary place of residence. However, the student will belong equally to both institutions and will access all available possibilities for developing as an engaged researcher. Given that the student will be working with Northern Irish English throughout the period of the project, sustained periods of residence in NI will, however, provide a usefully immersive language environment.

SECTION 4: STUDENT SPECIFICATION

For further information about this Collaborative Doctoral Award and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:		
Lead Supervisor (or alternative Contact)	Professor Joan Rahilly (alternative contact: Professor Karen Corrigan)	**Email:**	j.rahilly@qub.ac.uk; k.p.corrigan@ncl.ac.uk
Expressions of interest must be received no later than:		13th January, 2021
Expressions of interest should be accompanied by the following documentation:		Academic CV; personal statement indicating suitability for the position.
Interviews for shortlisted candidates are expected to take place:		Week commencing 8th February, 2021

APPLICANT SPECIFICATION

Note, applicants must also meet the criteria for the acceptance on a doctoral programme as set out by the host institution's Postgraduate Admissions Service.

Education and Professional Qualifications	Essential Criteria	Primary degree with at least 2.1. Honours classification, including substantial coverage of topics in language and linguistics, specifically including language transcription (orthographic and phonetic), which will be tested at interview stage. Masters degree in language and/or linguistics.
	Desirable Criteria	Postgraduate qualification (in addition to the subject-specific Masters degree) involving a public engagement component.
Research and Impact Experience and Training	Essential Criteria	Proven ability to undertake and complete a defined research project; proven ability to deliver outcomes accoding to agreed milestones.
	Desirable Criteria	Proven ability to communicate the value of research to academic and non-academic audiences.
Professional Practice and Job-related Experience	Essential Criteria	Ability to produce reliable transcripts of language data and to analyse same.
	Desirable Criteria	Proven skills in web authorship and/or creating online engagement for professional purposes; proven ability in communicating research outcomes to adademic and non-academic audiences.
Interpersonal Skills	Essential Criteria	Ability to undertake, where required, one-to-one interviews with selected informants; ability to liaise with academic and non-academic stakeholders; ability to present research findings in an accessible manner for academic and non-academic audiences.
	Desirable Criteria	Excellent communicator who can work collaboratively in diverse HEI and cultural heritage teams.
Other Factors	Essential Criteria	Willingness and ability to undertake: (i) the full range of training requirements specified by the supervisory team;

		(ii) in-person interviews where required; (iii) travel between Queen's University Belfast, Newcastle University, NMNI, and the additional sites specified in the project remit.
	Desirable Criteria	