

Pia Pratscher Lehecka

Historical Linguist

Personal Details

Name Pia Pratscher Lehecka
Pronouns she/her
Nationality Austria
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Education

2023 – present **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD): Linguistics and English Language** *University of Edinburgh, Scotland*
2020 – 2023 **Master of Arts: English Language and Linguistics** *University of Vienna, Austria*
2021 **Erasmus Semester** *University of Edinburgh, Scotland*
2016 – 2020 **Bachelor of Arts: English and American Studies** *University of Vienna, Austria*

Employment – Teaching

Sep. 2024 – May 2025 **Lecturer** on Linguistics and English Language 2C: English in Time and Space, [Linguistics and English Language](#), School of PPLS, University of Edinburgh
Sep. –Dec. 2024 **Lecturer** on Scots & Scottish English, [Linguistics and English Language](#), School of PPLS, University of Edinburgh
Sept. 2023 – present **Tutor** in Linguistics, [Linguistics and English Language](#), School of PPLS, University of Edinburgh
2019–2023 **Tutor** in Historical Linguistics, [English and American Studies](#), University of Vienna, Austria
2016–2019 **English teacher**, Schülerhilfe Eisenstadt, Austria
2016–2018 **English tutor**, freelance after-school tutoring, Austria

Employment – Research and non-academic

Feb. 2025 – Feb. 2026 **Research Assistant**, Digitisation of DOST materials, University of Glasgow
Apr. 2024 – May 2025 **Research Assistant**, [From Inglis to Scots Project](#), University of Edinburgh
Nov. 2024 **Research Aid**, [CDT in Natural Language Processing](#), School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh
2021–2023 **Translator**, English ↔ German, multiple projects, Austria
2014–2017 **Service**, Winzerhof Ankerl, Austria

Conference organisation

- Dec. 2024 [*Fourth Angus McIntosh Symposium*](#), *Edinburgh, Scotland*
- Responsible for general administrative management and chairing the session on *Digital Resources of Older Scots*
- Apr. 2024 [*Ukrainian Week*](#), *Edinburgh, Scotland*
- Responsible for all ingoing and outgoing finance and securing local funding
- Dec. 2023 [*The Sixth Edinburgh Symposium on Historical Phonology*](#), *Edinburgh, Scotland*
- Responsible for general administrative management and chairing speaker sessions

Presentations

- Feb. 2025 Speaker at the [*Phonology Workshop*](#) on 'Spelling practices of high vowels in Older Scots', *Edinburgh, Scotland*.
- Dec. 2024 Speaker at the [*48th Austrian Linguistics Conference*](#) on 'Exploring a Historical Phonological Corpus: The case of long back vowels in Older Scots', *Innsbruck, Austria*
- Nov. 2024 Speaker at [*The Forum for Research on Languages of Ulster and Scotland*](#) on 'Orthographic evidence for the (im)mobility of Older Scots long back vowels', *Belfast, Northern Ireland*
- Nov. 2024 Speaker at the [*English Language Research Group*](#), 'Orthographic evidence for the (im)mobility of Older Scots long back vowels', *Edinburgh, Scotland*, upcoming
- Jun. 2024 Speaker at the [*Linguistics and English Language Postgraduate Conference*](#), on 'The sources of Scots /e:/ pre-Great Vowel Shift', *Edinburgh, Scotland*
- Apr. 2024 Speaker at the [*Angus McIntosh Catchup Sessions*](#) on 'Looking North and South for what's going on with the Great Vowel Shift', *Edinburgh, Scotland*
- Feb. 2023 Poster presentation at the [*2nd Annual Doctoral Conference Vienna Doctoral School Cognition, Behaviour and Neuroscience*](#) on 'The Subjective Mind in Language', *Vienna, Austria*
- Dec. 2020 Invited speaker at the [*International Legal Linguistics Workshop*](#) on 'French lexicon in Old and Middle English law', *Vienna, Austria*

Scholarships and Prizes

- 2023-2026 Awarded the [*School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences PhD Scholarship*](#) for PhD researchers (£150k)
- Nov. 2024 Awarded best postgraduate abstracts (£100) at 14th Triennial Conference of [*The Forum for Research on Languages of Ulster and Scotland*](#)
- Feb. 2024 Received *Student and Staff Initiative Fund* (£2k) for [*Ukrainian Week*](#)
- Aug. – Dec. 2021 Awarded [*Erasmus*](#) fund (€2k) by the English Department at the University of Vienna to visit the University of Edinburgh.

- Dec. 2017 Awarded *Bronze and Silver Achievement Badge*, Musikverein Müllendorf, Austria
- Apr. 2017 Awarded the *Young Business Founders Grant* (€2k), Burgenland, Austria

Impact and Volunteering

- 2024 **Ukrainian Week**, *The University of Edinburgh*
- This event raised awareness of and familiarity with Ukrainian culture, literature, history and language.
- 2016–2018 **Austrian music heritage ambassador**, *Musikverein Müllendorf, Austria*
- This volunteering involved upkeeping Austrian music traditions through regular concerts, fundraising events and promoting music at primary schools.
- 2019 **Peer-mentoring**, *The University of Vienna, Austria*
- This peer-mentoring supported first year university students. My task was to create a safe environment to help them make social connections and support them in non-academic ways, e.g. with organising their studies and work, commuting and social/family challenges.

Languages

German	Native	<i>Austrian Standard & Dialect, German Standard</i>
English	Full professional proficiency, C2	<i>Nine years at university level</i>
Italian	Intermediate B1	<i>Four years of high-school level studies</i>
Romanian	Beginner	<i>Minimally conversationally, basic understanding skills</i>
Scots	Basic	<i>Good understanding in reading and listening, no fluency</i>
Latin	Advanced	<i>Good translation and grammar skills</i>
Old English	Advanced	<i>Good translation and grammar skills</i>

Doctoral Thesis (Linguistics)

- Title *Long Vowels and Diphthongs in Older Scots*
- Supervisors [Professor Warren Maguire](#) & [Dr Benjamin Molineaux](#)
- Description This is a study of the Older Scots Great Vowel Shift based on orthographic evidence in the *From Inglis to Scots Corpus* (1350-1500), *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (1350-1500) and the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (1450-1700). It aims to date and locate the individual vowel changes that make up the Great Vowel Shift.

Master Thesis (Linguistics and English Language)

- Title *The role of subjectivity in the grammaticalisation of downtoners - a corpus-based analysis of 'simply', 'just', 'barely', and 'nearly'*
- Supervisor [Professor Nikolaus Ritt](#)
- Description This thesis examines the interaction of subjectification and grammaticalization in four downtoners based on their relative frequency development, syntactic flexibility and semantic bleaching in the corpora *Early English Books Online* (1470- 1699), *A Representative Corpus of*

Academic Interests

Corpus methods and digital humanities: Corpora have been my primary research resource since 2020. Besides a synchronic study in cognitive linguistics on [The Coronavirus Corpus](#), my work has mainly involved diachronic corpora. I am particularly interested in a critical engagement with corpora as a resource, its advantages over previous non-computational methods, and its application challenges and how they can be addressed. This has been a focus from a research perspective for the past years, but my recent work on the [From Inglis to Scots](#) corpus has allowed me to engage with these issues from a compiler's perspective.

Historical Phonology: I am keenly interested in the mechanisms of sound changes in languages, especially the effects of language contact. Most recently my research focuses on the Great Vowel Shift, in which Scots has been used to argue for this change being a push chain shift. In my PhD, I investigate spelling evidence of this shift to contribute a Scots perspective to a field that has nearly exclusively studied English.

History of Scots and English: The historical development of these two languages was my first introduction to linguistics, and ultimately the reason I chose a linguistic career. My research in this field has been varied, including evolutionary accounts of pronoun borrowing in English, a socio-linguistic study of the Jacobite Movement in Robert Burns' poetry, and a lexical study on the effect of Romance borrowings in English legal texts.

Dialectology: I have been interested in dialects long before I was introduced to linguistics. The study of language varieties, how they function and spread diachronically and synchronically is utterly fascinating to me. So far, my academic studies focussed on dialects of English and Scots, but beyond that the dialects of Austria and Southern Germany are most on my mind.

Grammaticalisation and Subjectification: Between 2020 and 2022, most of my work encompassed corpus-based research on grammaticalisation and subjectification. My keen interest in grammaticalisation and its semantic, syntactic and phonological effects continues to this day.

Other Interests

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| Hiking | To me, hiking is the best way to spend a Sunday. |
| Literature | I am an avid reader of Sir Terry Pratchett's works, but also generally historical novels. |
| Swimming | Besides reading, hiking, and thinking about languages, I enjoy swimming. It always provides a reliable balance to my studies and work. |