



Investigating reading strategies in older adults - ESRC DTP Joint Studentship in the Midlands Graduate School

University of Nottingham and University of Leicester

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), with the first intake of students to begin in October 2017.

One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Joint Studentship between the University of Nottingham (where the student will be registered) and the University of Leicester, to commence in October 2017.

Project Details

The ability to read is essential for functioning effectively and meeting everyday demands of living, working, and citizenship. However, it is well established that even healthy older adults (65+) experience reading difficulty compared to younger adults. Due to population ageing and rising retirement ages, people will be living longer and have extended working lives, often in jobs requiring good reading ability. Consequently, this age-related reading difficulty is likely to be of increasing social concern.

Recent research comparing reading patterns of younger and older adults suggests that older readers adapt to changes in reading capabilities in a number of ways. One perhaps counter-intuitive finding is that older adults tend to skip words more frequently and make generally longer forward eye movements than younger adults. Based on these findings, it is argued that older readers compensate for their slower processing of text by employing a “risky” reading strategy in which they are more likely than younger adults to infer the identities of upcoming words using prior context and only partial word information. However, little is currently known about the mechanisms underlying risky reading, or the resulting nature and quality of the mental model of the text that is constructed. Thus, the aim of the current project is to use eye-tracking to investigate the consequences of risky reading at the word-, sentence-, and wider discourse-level.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Joint Studentship application form [available online here](#) and along with two references, email this to Raj Birring (raj.birring@nottingham.ac.uk).

Application deadline: Wednesday 15th February 2017

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/mgsdtp/studentships/eligibility/

Informal enquiries prior to application can be directed to Dr. Ruth Filik (ruth.filik@nottingham.ac.uk) or Prof. Kevin Paterson (kbp3@le.ac.uk).