The Voice of Crime: 
An Introduction to Forensic Phonetics

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Date: November 26, 2021 (Friday)
Time: 3:30pm - 5:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)
*Seminar will be conducted via ZOOM

The Zoom Meeting details will be provided on 25 November 2021

Abstract

A recent case involved a cyber-criminal operating in Germany, fluently speaking German however with a fairly strong foreign accent. The investigators were interested to know, where the person came from, his age, how long he had been in Germany and in which area he had learnt his German. Can this be done? In this talk I will show, how phonetic/linguistic analysis can provide useful information and where the expert reaches his/her limits.

Forensic phonetics is not only an unusual field within the area of forensics and criminology, it also involves a variety of fairly different disciplines like linguistics, acoustics, physics and medicine. Good perceptual and technical skills are required and certain cases may require an expert who shows patience and perseverance. In this talk I will first provide a brief history and will discuss the different methods that were developed over the years. Next, an overview is given of the different services that phoneticians can provide. With real case examples I will show which speaker features may be speaker specific and demonstrate the way from a criminal recording to a forensic report.

Speaker

Dr. Gea de Jong-Lendle has undertaken forensic investigations since 1994, for both prosecution and defense. In the U.S.A. she assisted in the analysis of airplane recordings derived from a blackbox and was involved in a project on the acoustic classification of gunshot signatures. During her time in the UK, she provided forensic voice analysis services for a number of UK institutes/forces like the Forensic Science Service, Metropolitan Police, Liverpool Police and assisted police forces in the Netherlands and Turkey. Since 2016, she is leading a forensic phonetics team in Marburg conducting forensic analyses in Germany for the German Police, defense lawyers, firms or private clients. Other academic posts include Senior Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and Lecturer at City University in London. She holds a PhD in linguistics from the University of Florida and an M.Phil. in Computer Speech and Language Processing from the University of Cambridge.

Dr. Gea de Jong-Lendle’s main research interests focus on the area of acoustic-, perceptive- and forensic phonetics. As a member of the Dyvis research team in Cambridge, she has contributed to the creation of a large forensic database (100 male speakers of the Standard Southern British Dialect) and to a variety of smaller research projects and presentations on e.g. speaker variability, F0 characteristics, language change and formant behaviour. In a former research project she was involved in the creation of a database and research papers on speech produced under the influence of alcohol. Current interests include voicelineups, articulation & dysfluency and motor recognition.

All are Welcome

Enquiries
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