

Owen R. Ward, PhD

Linguist | AI Data Specialist | Instructional Designer Toronto, ON |

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| <https://owen-ward.github.io>

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY Linguist and Data Specialist with a PhD in Hispanic Linguistics and expertise in experimental design. Bridges the gap between human language and data analysis, specializing in Phonetics, Phonology, and Prosody. Experienced in statistical modeling with R, managing large-scale research projects, and evaluating AI model outputs for accuracy and quality.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Data Analysis:** R (Proficient in statistical modeling, LMER, and visualization), Praat (Scripting & Acoustic Analysis), Excel (Pivot Tables, Data Management).
- **Linguistics:** Phonetics & Phonology, Prosody/Intonation, Dialectology, Speech Perception, IPA Transcription.
- **Tools & Platforms:** Gorilla, PsychoPy, LabVanced, Canvas LMS, GitHub, Google Workspace.
- **Languages:** English (Native), Spanish (C2 - Near Native), French (B2), Portuguese (A2).
- **Programming Concepts:** Python (Basic familiarity).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DATAANNOTATION | Remote **AI Data Specialist & Linguistics Consultant** | 2025 –

Present Leveraging linguistic expertise to train and evaluate Large Language Models (LLMs).

- Evaluate model outputs for reasoning, factual accuracy, and safety protocols to support Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF).
- Assess AI performance, identifying hallucinations and inconsistencies.
- Develop complex prompts to test model capabilities in logical reasoning tasks.

TELUS INTERNATIONAL | Remote **Online Data Analyst** | 2023 – 2024

- Analyzed and annotated search query datasets to improve the relevance of search engine algorithms.
- Applied detailed project guidelines to evaluate localized content, ensuring cultural and linguistic appropriateness for North American markets.
- Categorized search results based on user intent, query context, and geographical relevance.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO | Toronto, ON **Lead Researcher & Quantitative Analyst** | 2018

– Present Led multiple quantitative research initiatives, including independent doctoral studies and supervisor-led laboratory projects.

- **Research Management:** Coordinated data collection and analysis for 3 concurrent research projects alongside a major independent doctoral study.

- **Data Engineering:** Designed and coded custom experimental tasks using Gorilla and Praat, processing over 5,000 data points from international participant pools.
- **Statistical Analysis:** Utilized R to build linear mixed-effects models (LMER) and generate data visualizations (ggplot2) to identify statistically significant patterns in speech perception.
- **Grant Writing:** Secured over \$65k in competitive research funding to support long-term data collection and analysis.

Instructional Designer & Lead Instructor | 2017 – 2025 *Designed and delivered curriculum for undergraduate Spanish courses, managing end-to-end course administration for over 15 terms.*

- **Curriculum Development:** Redesigned the *Spanish Pronunciation* (SPA221) course, integrating new acoustic analysis software to improve student learning outcomes.
- **Team Leadership:** Supervised and mentored Teaching Assistants (TAs), providing guidance on grading standards and pedagogical best practices.
- **LMS Management:** managed grade data, assessments, and digital content on Canvas for cohorts of 100+ students.

NORTH AMERICAN CANADIAN ENGLISH ACADEMY (NACEA) | Remote Course Designer | 2020 – 2022

- Developed comprehensive ESL curriculum modules focusing on phonetics and intonation for remote learners.
- Collaborated with a cross-functional team to digitize learning materials, ensuring accessibility and user engagement.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Hispanic Linguistics | University of Toronto | *Defended Oct 2025*

- *Thesis:* Quantitative analysis of vowel reduction and lexical stress in L2 acquisition.
- *Key Coursework:* Experimental Phonetics, Statistics for Linguists, Research Design.

Master of Arts (MA), Spanish | University of Western Ontario | 2017

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Honours Spanish | University of Waterloo | 2015