

PhD position in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie ITN: DCOMM “**Project 1: Demonstratives across languages**”.

Description:

The Research group on Languages and Language Acquisition at Balearic Islands University invites applications for one (1) three-year scholarship for a PhD student working in the general field of Language and Linguistics, starting as early as September 2016.

The grant is funded by Marie Curie ITN Early Stage Researcher project to Dr Pedro Guijarro Fuentes and is intended to support a PhD student in successfully developing an innovative and interdisciplinary research project in “Language Development and cross-linguistic language variation”. Thus, it is intended for advanced undergraduate students or masters students who will directly enrol in a PhD program (three-year fellowship).

Duties and Responsibilities:

The scholarship holder is expected to develop an innovative and interdisciplinary research project within the DCOMM Research Consortium “Project 1: Demonstratives across languages”.

Communication involves a combination of language and gestures that act in concert (Tomasello, 1999, 2003; Kita & Özyürek, 2003). (Spatial) Deictic communication is paradigmatic of communication, allowing speakers to use language and gesture to refer, and direct the attention of a conspecific, to an object/object part in the world. The primary words used for spatial deictic communication are demonstratives – words including *this/that/here/there* in English, *este/ese/aquel/aquí/ahí/allí* in Spanish (Coventry et al., 2008). These words occur in all languages, are among the highest frequency terms within a language and philologically emerge as the earliest traceable words in languages (Deutscher, 2005; Diessel, 1999, 2006). They are among the first words children acquire (Clark, 1978, 2003) and are more closely associated with deictic gestures than other linguistic items (Clark, 1996; Diessel, 2006). Deictic gestures are also a predictor of language acquisition (Iverson, & Goldin-Meadow, 2005), and in some languages it is obligatory to point when using a spatial demonstrative (*Goemai*, Hellwig, 2003; *Kilivili*, Senft, 2004). Against this background, research in this Project typically seeks to understand how different languages (English, Spanish, German among others) from diverse families (e.g., Germanic and Romance families among others) represent demonstratives and more importantly how L1, L2 and bilingual (Ln) speakers from distinct language backgrounds acquire them. There is very little research on deictic communication, with virtually no empirical psycholinguistic studies on demonstratives. The overarching goal is thus to produce better-grounded, finer-grained, empirical psycholinguistic studies on the acquisition of demonstratives taking into account cross-linguistic similarities and differences among languages from several family origins.

All applications will be reviewed by a selection committee from Linguistics, Psycholinguistics and Cognitive Science. Selection criteria include the candidate’s academic preparation and accomplishments to date, academic promise and originality of the project, as

well as its fit within the Research Project focus. Shortlisted applicants may be invited for an interview via Skype.

If accepted, the scholarship holder is expected to take up residence in Palma de Mallorca and enrol in the University of the Balearic Islands' PhD Programme in Philology and Philosophy. The scholarship holder will participate in the training activities of the Innovative Training Network, including academic courses on specialized topics in linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive science and related disciplines. The Consortium also hosts research visits of internationally known researchers from various fields and regular ESR meetings.

The scholarship holder can also benefit from other courses offered by the UIB Postgraduate Centre, which focus on soft skills (e.g. time management, project management) and expert technical competences (e.g. presentation skills, statistics). In addition, the Research Consortium also supports participation in summer schools, conferences and secondment visits to international partner institutions.

For a total of up to 36 months, the scholarship holder will receive a gross salary before taxes of 2740 EUR per month, plus a supplementary family allowance, if applicable, and may apply on an occasional basis for travel costs and participation at international conferences.

Requirements:

Essential:

The successful candidate is expected to hold a good first BA degree and/or a Master's degree (or equivalent) in Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, or Cognitive Science (or related discipline) and to have a research focus in the field of linguistics, applied linguistics, and cognition, broadly construed. Excellent spoken and written English language skills are essential.

Desirable:

The successful candidate ideally needs to have documented research activities, such as presentations/publications and experience of advanced statistical analyses. Note that some knowledge of Spanish is preferable to attend some PhD courses.

How to Apply:

Interested candidates should send their applications electronically, including:

- Their BA's degree or equivalent (scan);
- Their Master's degree or equivalent (scan);
- A curriculum vitae (CV), including the names and email addresses of at least two senior scholars who are willing to provide letters of reference;
- A brief sketch of the planned dissertation project (no more than 1 page);
- A detailed prospectus for their dissertation project (no more than 5 pages);
- An accompanying letter outlining their motivation for applying for the Research Consortium, Project 1.

Mailing Address for Applications: p.guijarro@uib.es

Make sure that you include the keywords “DCOMM – project 1” in your email subject header!

Application Deadline: 21 March 2016

Mailing Address for Applications:

Attn: Dr Pedro Guijarro Fuentes

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