

PhD Fellowship in French Linguistics at the University of Leuven

The Research Group of French, Italian and Comparative Linguistics (FranItalCo, http://www.ling.arts.kuleuven.be/franitalco/index_en.htm) at the Department of Linguistics of the University of Leuven (<http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/ling/english>) is looking for applicants for a fully funded four-year PhD fellowship in French Linguistics (start date between October and December 2015).

The PhD project is part of the project (C1 3H150300) "FLaCIS - First Language Acquisition of Information Structure: the acquisition of topic and focus in French", which is funded by the Research Council of the University of Leuven. The team of this project is composed of the supervisor Karen Lahousse (KU Leuven) and co-supervisors Emmanuelle Canut (University of Lille-III, France) and Cécile De Cat (University of Leeds, U.K.).

Project summary

Information Structure (IS) concerns the way in which sentences are integrated into the information flow between speaker and hearer, it is a tool that guides speakers in the way they express their thoughts, and has an influence on the ordering of constituents in the clause. Although IS was already introduced in linguistics in the 60s, the way in which IS (function) interacts with syntax (form) is still not fully understood, as well as the place of IS in language and human cognition. The goal of this research project is to investigate the development, in French first language acquisition, of the relationship between the semantic/pragmatic (IS) functions of 'topic' and 'focus' and the corresponding formal devices, on the basis of linguistic and psycholinguistic methods. In order to achieve this goal, we will examine the acquisition by French children of the IS-notions of topic and focus and the corresponding syntactic devices of (i) dislocation, with (1a) or without (1b) an explicit resumptive element, and (ii) clefting, introduced by *c'est* 'it is' (2b-e) and by *il y a* 'there is' (2a), whether the relative clause is expressed (2a-d) or left implicit (2e), and whether the relative pronoun (or complementizer) is expressed (2a-b) or not (2c-e). [All examples from the De Cat corpus]

- (1) a. Lui, ça va là.
'That one goes there.' (Max 2;0.14)
- b. Maman, [elle] fait xx # moi, [je] fais [le] drapeau
'Mum, [she] makes the xx and I, [I] make [the] flag.' (Anne 2;2.00)
- (2) a. Il y a maman qui arrive!
'There's mother who is arriving !'
- b. C'est lui qui fait dodo sur lui.
'It's him who sleeps on him.' (Anne 2;4.20)
- c. C'est Bruno [qui] a mis comme ça.
'It's Bruno [who] put [it] like that. (Tom 2 ;1.13)
- d. C'est Mamy, [qui] a mangé. 'It's mum [who] ate.' (Tom 2 ;3.22)
- e. [C'] est Maman, [qui le fait] ça .
[it] is mum [who it does] that
'[It]'s Mum [who does] that.' (Anne 1;11.13)

Profile

Applications are invited from candidates with the following qualifications:

- You have an MA (or are currently finishing one) in Linguistics, Linguistics and Literature or Philology (or equivalent), with excellent study results;
- an excellent command of French (native or near-native) and a good command of (spoken and written) English;
- strong analytical skills to pursue creative work in French linguistics;
- a passion for linguistics and an international orientation (a.o. for research stays abroad during the doctoral period);
- an interest in authentic (acquisition) corpus data of French;
- a cooperative attitude and the ability to play an active role in the FranItalCo group and the Department of Linguistics;
- the ability to present research results at international conferences, and to publish in English in peer-reviewed journals.
- the willingness and ability to assist in the teaching of French at BA-level, by giving exercise sessions, assist in the supervision of BA-papers, correcting tasks, etc.

Candidates preferably have knowledge of language acquisition and/or statistics and/or information structure (and semantic-pragmatic analysis in general) and/or (quantitative and/or qualitative) corpus analysis.

Offer

- The candidate will have the opportunity to do doctoral research in the context of the above-mentioned project, during 4 years.
- The candidate will have 80% of his/her time available for his/her doctoral research activities, 20% will be dedicated to other services (e.g. assistance in the teaching of French and/or Italian linguistics, invigilation of exams, administrative support).
- The fellow will receive a salary of approximately 1700 EUR/month (after taxes) and all regular provisions for PhD fellows at the University of Leuven. In addition, s/he will be allocated office space and a laptop, and receive funding for research activities like attending conferences abroad and organizing workshops and conferences in Leuven or elsewhere.
- The successful candidate will collaborate with and be supported by the three promoters of the research project and will benefit from the stimulating environment of the FranItalCo research unit and the Department of Linguistics.

Procedure

Motivated candidates meeting these criteria are invited to apply online according to the instructions given at <https://icts.kuleuven.be/apps/jobsite/rubriek/9003?lang=en>

Please include: (i) a cover letter describing your motivation (in French); (ii) a detailed CV (in English or French); (iii) the names of up to three referees we may contact prior to appointment, and (iv) a sample piece of writing (in English or French, such as a BA- or an MA-paper). The deadline for applications is August 31st 2015. Interviews will be held with shortlisted candidates in Leuven on September 7th (online for overseas applicants). A decision will be made by September 20th.

For further information, please contact the project's supervisor, prof. dr. Karen Lahousse (Karen.Lahousse@arts.kuleuven.be)