

PhD-student position at ZAS Berlin

The Leibniz-Center General Linguistics (ZAS, www.leibniz-zas.de) invites applications for a three-year Ph.D. research position at 65% of full time in the LMBayes project in research area 4 -- Semantics and pragmatics. The project is to start during the first half of the calendar year 2024, and the opening is work on modelling language- and individual-level differences affecting quantifier use employing cutting-edge statistical and computational models. The ideal candidate would be a Ph.D-student intending to complete their doctorate within the project but other researchers interested in a part-time position are also invited to apply.

Important data

Application deadline: November 15th, 2023 for full consideration, open until filled

Address for applications: fb4-lb@leibniz-zas.de

Benefits of the position

- Work in a diverse, large (15+ researchers) group in semantics-pragmatics
- Opportunity to learn and apply cutting edge research methods such as clustering, probabilistic pragmatics, and crosslinguistic semantics
- Collaboration with mathematicians of the Weierstrass Institute (WIAS)
- Access to Ph.D. supervision and to training and mentoring programs
- Pay at 65% of TVöD 13 Bund level of the German governmental scale
- Extra benefits for public transport and retirement savings
- Brand-new office space in central area in Berlin-Wilmersdorf

Requirements

- Completed M.A. in a relevant field
- Emerging research expertise in semantics and pragmatics
- Foundations and interest to expand knowledge in statistical model using R and more specialized software
- Evidence of both team-work skills and independent thinking
- The hired candidate must take a registered residence in Berlin, Germany

Desired assets

- broad education in cross-linguistic semantics or pragmatic modeling

- interest in learning experimental methods and Bayesian statistics
- technical skills in programming and web-design
- mathematical background, especially in stochastics and numerics
- at least working knowledge of English

Duties

The hired researcher will work on a research package addressing individual differences in pragmatic meaning in relation to differences in accessible lexical alternatives supervised by Sauerland. The work package will divide into two larger phases. In the first phase, we build up on our previous work on quantifiers in English (e.g. van Tiel et al. 2021, doi: 10.1073/pnas.2005453118) and combine clustering methods with a lexical uncertainty model (e.g. Franke & Bergen 2020, doi: 10.1353/lan.2020.0034) to form groups that best capture individual level differences. In a second phase, these methods will be transferred to a sample of European languages and their different sets of quantificational determiners.

We value diversity and welcome all applications - regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic and social origin, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation. Applications from severely disabled individuals will receive priority consideration if qualifications are equal. The ZAS is certified by the audit "berufundfamilie" for ensuring family-friendly working conditions. The ZAS strives to strengthen the gender balance and diversity of the staff in all working areas and at all scientific levels. Members of groups traditionally underrepresented in German academic positions are especially encouraged to apply.

Applications must be submitted via electronic mail and include the following five items in a single PDF attachment: 1) a letter of intent specifying relevant interests and experience; 2) the curriculum vitae; 3) up to three writing samples; 4) electronic copies of transcripts and diplomas; and 5) the names and email addresses of at least two scholars to be contacted for letters of recommendation. Interested researchers wishing for secure communication with PGP can contact us for the necessary encryption key.