



The Collaborative Research Centre CRC 1287 “Limits of Variability in Language: Cognitive, Computational, and Grammatical Aspects” in Potsdam, Germany, invites applications for 10 positions for PhD candidates and Postdocs available from July 2021 for a duration of four years

The linguistic system exhibits a high degree of variability at all levels of linguistic description. This variability in language can be characterised as a range of different possible linguistic behaviours that are available to an individual language user, a group of language users, or in specific languages. The variability is limited by the constraints of the underlying linguistic system and shaped by cognitive and social or communicative factors. This variability is not just reducible to random noise but provides an important source of information to explain and predict linguistic behaviour. By modelling the factors influencing linguistic behaviours, the CRC (21 PIs in 13 scientific projects, one transfer project, and three service projects) contributes to a better understanding of the underlying mental representations and processing architectures in individual language users, as well as of the grammatical options available in individual languages and specific linguistic varieties, and options shared by particular subgroups of language users.

The CRC provides a fantastic research infrastructure including a large interdisciplinary network of researchers, its own graduate school (successful PhD candidates and Postdocs automatically become members of the MGK - Integrated Research Training Group), and funding opportunities for conference visits, summer schools, hosting international experts, etc.

Project C07: Limits of variability in phonotactic acquisition due to universal biases: A cross-linguistic investigation of monolingual and bilingual infants

PIs: Natalie Boll-Avetisyan (one PhD position or one postdoc position for 26 hours/week (65%))

Responsibilities: This project aims at disentangling to what extent phonotactic acquisition is experience-dependent (with differences between infants learning different or multiple languages), and to what extent experience-independent universal biases such as the Sonority Sequencing Principle might pose a limit on this acquisition. For this, we compare infants growing up mono- or bilingually with German and/or Russian, two phonotactically distinct languages. Russian-learning infants will be tested in Moscow, in collaboration with Dr. Lopukhina at the HSE Moscow babylab. Psycholinguistic methods will be employed, e.g., behavioural experiments testing for infants’ phonotactic listening preferences, as well as daylong audio recordings and corpus-based lexical statistics to understand what input infants receive.

Requirements: Applicants should hold a PhD/MSc/MA in linguistics, psychology, or a related field. Demonstrated experience in experimental methods as well as a solid statistical background is required. Programming skills are desirable. Knowledge of German and/or Russian is a plus. Enthusiasm to work in a multidisciplinary team, to contribute to the CRC-wide events, as well as to actively participate in the activities of the integrated graduate school (MGK) is presumed.

The salary is determined by the collective bargaining agreement for public employees in Germany (TV-L E13). All positions are temporary and limited to a term of 4 years in accordance with Section 2 subsection 1 of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Law (WissZeitVG). The position(s) require completed academic studies at an institute of higher learning (Master degree or equivalent). PhD positions are usually paid at 65% of the TV-L E13 tariff.

The University of Potsdam has a vibrant and interdisciplinary scientific community spanning many disciplines, including leading groups in the field of cognitive sciences (<http://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/cognitive-sciences/index.html>). The University is located in the city of Potsdam, which is connected to Berlin city centre via a quick 30-minute train ride. Potsdam is an attractive historical city and its palaces are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Both cities are culturally vibrant and offer an unparalleled quality of life, as well as affordable cost of living.

Under the laws of the federal state of Brandenburg, employees under this contract are permitted to dedicate at least 33% of their contract time for their scientific qualification. The University of Potsdam aims to increase the proportion of women in research and teaching and therefore expressly invites qualified female candidates to apply. The University of Potsdam values the diversity of its members and pursues the goals of equal opportunities regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic and social origin, religion/belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity. In the case of equal suitability, women in accordance with Section 7 (4) BbgHG and people with a severe disability will be given preferential consideration. We explicitly invite applications from abroad and from persons with a migration background.

Please send your application **as a single PDF** including: (1) a statement of research interests and motivation, (2) a full CV, (3) the names and e-mail addresses of at least two referees, (4) academic transcripts, (5) list of publications/talks/presentations, and (6) a link to a copy of the master's or PhD thesis **by June 30, 2021** to SFB1287@uni-potsdam.de. Late applications might be considered. Please clearly indicate in the subject line for which of the projects/positions you apply (e.g., "C07").

For further information: nboll@uni-potsdam.de