



Postdoctoral Research Fellowship/Researcher position in Multilingual Language Acquisition

One Post-doctoral Research Fellowship/Researcher position within Multilingual Language Acquisition is available in the Department of Language and Culture at the University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway. The position is affiliated with the LAVA research group ([Language Acquisition, Variation & Attrition](#)) and is connected to the project MiMS ([Micro-variation in Multilingual Acquisition & Attrition Situations](#)), funded by the Research Council of Norway 2016-2020.

The appointment is a fixed term position for a period of two years.

The Post-doctoral Research Fellowship aims to qualify the researcher for work in senior academic positions. A candidate may not be appointed to more than one fixed term position as a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the same institution.

For further information about the positions and the project, please contact Professor Marit Westergaard, Tel: +47 77644256, E-mail: marit.westergaard@uit.no.

Affiliation

The position is affiliated with the Department of Language and Culture (ISK). The Department consists of 75 permanent employees, 10 adjunct professors, and approximately 30 PhD fellows. Additionally, the Department has approximately 25 temporary research and teaching positions. The Department's core activities are research, teaching, and dissemination within linguistics, literature, art history, and media and documentation studies.

The Department has a very active and diverse research profile. It houses one of the world's most excellent research communities in linguistics, with research groups within cognitive linguistics (CLEAR), Sami language technology (Giellatekno and Divvun), socio-linguistics (LAIDUA), language acquisition (LAVA), and theoretical linguistics (CASTL-FISH). The Department's research communities within literature, art history, and media and documentation studies are nationally highly competitive, and are organised into research groups such as Health Art Society (HAS), Russian Space, WARGAME and ALMPUB.

ISK offers one-year programme education, Bachelor, and Master programmes within general linguistics, literature, art history, media and documentation studies, English, Kven, Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, Sami, Spanish, and German. It also offers PhD education within cultural/literary studies, art history, media and documentation studies, and linguistics.

The LAVA research group currently consists of 21 active researchers, including seven professors/associate professors, four Professor II positions (20%), a lab manager, four researchers/postdoctoral fellows, two MSCA postdocs, and three PhD students. From the fall of 2018, one more MSCA postdoc and one PhD student will join the group. The group members are involved in a number of research projects both locally and internationally, e.g. the [MiMS](#) and [SALT](#) projects financed by the RCN. For further information about the group's work and activities, see the website of the LAVA research group here: <http://site.uit.no/lava/>

The MiMS project has received funding (NOK 9 million) from the Research Council of Norway for four years, 2016-2020. The advertised researcher/postdoc position is connected with this project and will give the successful candidate the opportunity to work closely with an outstanding team of linguists. For further information about the MiMS project, see the project website here: <http://site.uit.no/mims/>.

The appointed Post-doctoral Research Fellow must have her/his daily workplace at UiT, campus Tromsø.

The position's field of research/research project and other duties

For a number of years, the acquisition research group at UiT has worked on monolingual language acquisition, focusing on linguistic phenomena where there is variation in the input, e.g. word order variation expressing fine distinctions in syntax and information structure. Currently there is an increased focus on variation in a bilingual/multilingual perspective, i.e. bilingual acquisition (2L1), second and third language acquisition (L2 and L3), as well as heritage languages. The work of the LAVA group has a theoretical foundation and the focus is on the mental grammars of various populations of speakers. The object of study is syntactic microvariation and the importance of factors such as complexity, frequency or economy in the acquisition process and in heritage language situations. The research methodology includes both corpora of spontaneous production as well as different types of experimental work (production/comprehension experiments, eyetracking).

MiMS, brief project description: Children clearly learn language from the ambient input, but not from input alone. One of the main questions in theoretical linguistics and language acquisition is how much is provided by an innate endowment and how much must be learned from the primary linguistic data. The MiMS project addresses this central issue within a new approach to language acquisition and attrition, the micro-cue model (MCM) that the PI has developed in a number of publications in recent years (e.g. Westergaard 2014) based on data from monolingual acquisition. The MiMS project will extend this theoretical approach to multilingual situations, and new data will be collected from several populations of bi- and multilingual children and adults, e.g. German-Russian bilingual children, Norwegian-American heritage speakers, and bilingual children learning English as an L3. The focus is on (morpho-)syntactic micro-variation in Norwegian, Russian, German and English, related to word order and certain aspects of nominal structure (grammatical gender, determiner use). These languages and these syntactic constructions are chosen as they represent an interesting combination of challenges, both for children acquiring and adults maintaining these systems in multilingual contexts. According to the MCM, both acquisition and diachronic change take place in small steps (e.g. Westergaard

2008, 2009). By identifying the small steps in these processes (referred to as micro-cues), the project will increase our understanding of the human language faculty and the building blocks of language. It will also investigate the effect of more general factors such as complexity, frequency and economy in the acquisition and attrition processes. The MiMS project will thus make important contributions to current research in the fields of language acquisition, multilingualism and theoretical linguistics.

The MiMS project is divided into four Work Packages, where the successful candidate for this researcher/postdoc position is expected to participate. Please see the MiMS website for further information (including the full research proposal) or contact the PI Marit Westergaard (see contact details above).

Qualification requirements

- A PhD in Linguistics or another relevant field.
- Experience with experimental methods in language acquisition.
- Native or near-native proficiency in Russian and/or Norwegian will be preferred.
- Excellent command of spoken and written English.

The applicants must provide a **research proposal** (3-5 pages), stating how their work will fit in and contribute to the research of the MiMS project.

Personal suitability will be given special consideration in the evaluation process.

Working conditions

The working hours are reserved for research, research related activities and research administration.

The successful candidate must be willing to engage her/himself in the ongoing development of her/his discipline and the university as a whole.

The remuneration for this position is in accordance with the State salary scale code 1352.

A compulsory contribution of 2 % to the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund will be deducted.

Application

The **application** must be submitted electronically via the application form available on www.jobbnorge.no and shall include:

- letter of application
- project description
- CV (containing a complete overview of education, supervised professional training and professional work)
- diplomas and references
- list of works and description of these
 - the list of works shall contain the following information:
 - author(s), the work's title
 - for articles: the journal's name and volume, the first and last page of the article, year of publication
 - for publications: publisher, printer, year of publication, number of pages
- **NB: up to ten works that are central to the applicant's academic production. The applicant's PhD thesis should be submitted as one of these works.**

Additionally, the applicant should provide a description of her/his academic production, indicating which works are the most relevant in relation to the announced position, and therefore should be emphasized in the assessment. The remaining listed works should be described briefly in order to demonstrate the depth of the production. The descriptions should be attached to the application.

Assessment

The applicants will be assessed by an expert committee. It is the committee's mandate to assess the applicants' qualifications based on their submitted works and the job announcement.

The best qualified applicants will be selected for interviews. The interview shall among other things aim to clarify the applicant's personal suitability for the position. The applicants may be required to give a trial lecture.

Other information

The University of Tromsø wishes to increase the proportion of women in research positions.

In the event that two or more applicants are found to be approximately equally qualified, female applicants will be given priority.

For further information, applicants should consult the [supplementary regulations for appointment to postdoktor \(postdoctoral Research Fellow\), stipendiat \(PhD\) and vitenskapelige assistent \(Research Assistant\) positions at the UiT](#) and the http://www.uhr.no/documents/Regulations_Post_doctoral_and_research_fellow.pdf

Questions concerning the organisation of the working environment, such as the physical state of the place of employment, health service, possibility for flexible working hours, part time, etc. may be directed to the telephone reference in this announcement.

UiT's HR policy objectives emphasises diversity, and encourages all qualified applicants to apply regardless of gender, functional ability and national or ethnic background.

UiT is an IW (Inclusive Workplace) enterprise, and will make the necessary adaptations in order to facilitate for employees with reduced functional ability.

Personal data given in an application or CV will be processed in accordance with the Act relating to the processing of personal data (the Personal Data Act). In accordance with Section 25 subsection 2 of the Freedom of Information Act, the applicant may request not to be registered on the public list of applicants. However, the University may nevertheless decide to publish the applicant's name. The applicant will receive advance notification in the event of such publication.

Jobbnorge ID: 150806, Deadline: Closed