Fully funded 4-year PhD position in Linguistics at Trinity College Dublin

Applications are sought for a fully funded 4-year PhD in Linguistics for research topics connected to the project *Gestural Grammar: Investigating Gestures in Southern Italy (GestuGram)* led by Dr Valentina Colasanti. Applicants with a background in syntax, semantics, sign language linguistics, or Romance linguistics (preferably Italo-Romance) are encouraged to apply. A background in quantitative methods and fieldwork methodologies is a plus, but not required. The starting date is September 2021.

The award comprises the student's full tuition fees (EU or non-EU) and an annual stipend of €17,316. Trinity's Provost's PhD Project Awards are generously funded through alumni donations and Trinity's Commercial Revenue Unit. As a condition of the funding, the successful applicant will be working on the research project led by Dr Valentina Colasanti and will be enrolled in the structured PhD programme (full-time) in Linguistics at the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin. Further details of the PhD programme can be found at https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/postgraduate/phd-masters-research/. The successful applicant will be also required to engage in teaching and tutoring on the Department's undergraduate courses.

Project summary

Gestures are movements of the hands and body often paired with speech, and emerging research suggests that they are deeply integrated with the grammar of language, conveying semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information.

While gesture is universal, individual gestures vary across languages. For example, in Neapolitan, a particular manual gesture can distinguish a declarative clause (e.g. *Mario has a car*.) from an interrogative clause (e.g. *Does Mario have a car?*). Thus, gestures are not simply 'ornamental', but can make grammatical contributions akin to the syntactic strategies of e.g. English (subject-auxiliary inversion). However, up to now, most work on gestures from a formal-theoretical perspective has focused on their semantic contribution; substantially less attention has been paid to their syntactic properties. However, it has been recently demonstrated, for instance, that gestures which contribute to the core meaning of an English sentence are obligatorily recovered as part of the interpretation of the syntactic phenomenon of ellipsis (Schlenker 2015, Esipova 2019, Sailor & Colasanti 2020).

The overall aim of this project is to situate the gesture-rich languages spoken in Southern Italy within the nascent field of gestural studies (which has mostly focused on English to this point: Ebert 2014, Abner et al. 2015, Schlenker 2015, Esipova 2018, 2019, Leeson et al. 2018, Sailor & Colasanti 2020, *i.a.*). These languages are of particular theoretical

import because of their rich inventory of gestures capable of making a grammatical contribution, which has not received sufficient attention to this point.

Application

Interested applicants should first contact the PI, Dr Valentina Colasanti, at valentina.colasanti@tcd.ie. To apply, please send a cover letter describing your interest and expertise in the topic of the project, along with a full CV (including the names and contact information of at least two referees), and a 2-4 page research proposal on a topic related to the project. The deadline for applications is **June 13, 2021**.

Contact details

Dr Valentina Colasanti
School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Trinity College Dublin
Dublin, Ireland
valentina.colasanti@tcd.ie
https://valentinacolasanti.it