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Zurich, February 20, 2017

**3 DOCTORAL POSITIONS (for up to 3 years) at the Departments of Comparative Linguistics and the Department of Psychology**

The Psycholinguistics Laboratory (Department of Comparative Linguistics) and the Research Unit Developmental Psychology: Infancy and Childhood (Department of Psychology) at the University of Zurich invite applications for three PhD student positions in first language acquisition research.

The three positions are embedded in the research project "**The role of causality in early verb learning: language-specific factors vs. universal strategies**" funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The main goal of this project is to explore the interrelation between language and cognition from a developmental perspective with a focus on the processing of causality and its role in early verb learning. The project combines a large-scale cross-linguistic corpus study with experimental psychological studies. In the corpus study the acquisition of causatives in 10 typologically maximally diverse languages are analyzed using longitudinal data of children in the age range between 2 and 3 years. In the psychological part of the project, the understanding and processing of observed causal events are compared between children speaking languages with different causative markings are compared, that is, Turkish and Swiss German. The team of the project consists of experts in first language acquisition and developmental psychology. It includes a close cooperation with our project partners at Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey.

The profiles of the 3 positions is as follows:

**PhD position 1:**

The goal of this subproject is to find out about the influence of linguistic variation in the acquisition of causatives. The PhD candidate will work as part of a large team of computational linguists, psycholinguists and data scientists investigating acquisition processes in the ACQDIV corpus (<http://www.acqdiv.uzh.ch/en.html>).

*Requirements:*

MA in Linguistics with a focus on typology and/or quantitative methods. Strong interest in language acquisition, typology and corpus linguistics. Solid background in one scripting language is required (preferred languages: R or Python). The successful candidate should have excellent teamwork skills, and be interested to go beyond disciplinary boundaries.

**PhD position 2 and 3:**

The aim of the experimental studies is to investigate whether children at the beginning of their grammatical development can broaden their syntactic knowledge to different types of causality or



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whether their knowledge is restricted to prototypical causal scenes. Further, we intend to explore whether young learners of Swiss German and Turkish are able to assign (similarly to children who learn English) the syntactic structure of a transitive sentence to an observed causal event.

*General requirements:*

MA in Psychology (or in General Linguistics) with a strong interest in developmental psychology and language acquisition. For both PhD positions the requirements are experience with experimental research, strong method knowledge and skills, good command of English, interest in pursuing an academic career in Psychology or Linguistics. The successful candidates should have excellent teamwork skills and be interested to go beyond disciplinary boundaries

*Specific requirements:*

The PhD candidates will design, build up (in collaboration with the team and PhD candidate 3) the experiments in the Laboratory of the Research Unit Developmental Psychology: Infancy and Childhood at the Department of Psychology at the University of Zurich.

PhD 2 will conduct the experiments primarily at the UZH, for this, native competence in Swiss German is required.

PhD 3 will conduct the experiments primarily at the Department of Psychology at Koç University in Istanbul. Accordingly, native competence in Turkish is required. Knowledge of (Swiss-)German is a plus.

**Research environment:**

We offer work in an interdisciplinary and international team located at the University of Zurich and Koç University in Istanbul. All three positions will be hosted at the University of Zurich. Position 1 will be affiliated with the Department of Comparative Linguistics and will lead to a PhD in Linguistics. The other two positions will lead to a PhD in Psychology or Linguistics. All three positions will be embedded in a doctoral program at either the Department of Comparative Linguistics or the Department of Psychology.

**Application:**

**Deadline** for applications: March 31, 2017.

The positions will start October 1st 2017 and will last for three years.

Applications should include

- (i) a cover letter that relates the applicants' experience and interests to the project
- (ii) a comprehensive CV
- (iii) a copy of the MA thesis
- (iv) the names and contact information of at least two references.
- (v) Candidates for the position of PhD 1 (corpus study) are additionally required to submit a code sample (URL or attachment).

Please send the documents combined into **one PDF file** to [sabine.stoll@uzh.ch](mailto:sabine.stoll@uzh.ch) and [daum@psychologie.uzh.ch](mailto:daum@psychologie.uzh.ch), both of which may be contacted for further information.