

Postdoctoral researcher

Comparatives under the microscope (COMIC)

The Center for Research in Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology (CRISSP) at KU Leuven invites submissions for a three-year postdoctoral position in formal linguistics.

Project summary

The COMIC-project will investigate the morphology, syntax, and semantics of adjectival comparative constructions of the type illustrated in (1).

(1) Jill is taller than Fred.

Compared to the positive degree (*Jill is tall*), the comparative construction adds two pieces of material. First, the comparative morpheme *-er* is added to the adjective *tall*, and second, the comparative adjective *taller* introduces the phrase *than Fred*, which contains the comparative standard *Fred*, to which Jill is compared. The comparative standard is introduced by the standard marker *than*. Comparative constructions thus combine **morphological** marking (the *-er*-morpheme), **syntactic** structure (the *than*-phrase), and a **semantic** interpretation, in which two entities are compared with respect to a certain property (in this example Jill and Fred with respect to their height).

Existing approaches typically study the morphology or the syntax or the semantics of comparative adjectives. This has led to a situation where the outcomes of the different perspectives do not properly link up with one another: semantic analyses do not take into account—and are sometimes incompatible with—typological observations and generalisations, and syntactic and morphological approaches are insufficiently informed by the insights of compositional semantics. The COMIC-project aims to fill this gap by developing a fully integrated analysis of these three aspects of comparative constructions.

Read the [full project description](#).

Responsibilities

Your tasks include (a) developing a compositional semantic analysis of comparatives, with a focus both on the comparative morphology of the adjective and on the syntax and morphology of the standard marker, (b) working towards an integrated analysis of comparatives that takes into account recent findings about the fine-grained morphological and syntactic distinctions found in comparatives and their standard markers, (c) co-supervising the PhD-students working on the COMIC-project. As described in the full project description, this position corresponds to Work Package #3 and a part of Work Package #4. In addition, the postdoctoral researcher will be expected to play an active role in the day-to-day activities of CRISSP and to participate in (the organisation of) reading groups, seminars, lecture series, workshops, etc. (See <https://www.crissp.be> for an overview of our activities.)

Profile

- a PhD in linguistics, with a specialization either in formal semantics or in formal syntax. In both cases, your work should be demonstrably focused on the interaction between syntax and semantics.
- a curious, enterprising, and creative mind; excellent analytical skills
- a proven track record of high quality linguistic research
- experience in (PhD-)student supervision and/or teaching experience is considered an asset
- fluency in both written and spoken English
- an interest in relating intricate language patterns to advanced linguistic theorizing
- an ability to work both independently and to function in a group

Offer

CRISSP offers an environment where intellectual creativity and independence are encouraged to thrive. We foster the lively exchange of ideas, and provide strong intellectual, moral, and logistical support to our PhD students, postdocs, and other collaborators.

The position will start in October 2021. It is a three-year position. Remuneration is in accordance with the official Belgian scales for academic personnel and bursaries, which offer internationally highly competitive pay (see [the KU Leuven jobsite](#) for more information).

Instructions for application

If you are interested, please apply via the [KU Leuven online application tool](#) no later than 16 August 2021. Include with your application a letter of motivation, a CV, a copy of your PhD-thesis, a copy of relevant publications, and the contact details of three professional references (name, affiliation, email, telephone number).

Contact information

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