

Post-Doctoral Position – National Center for Scientific Research (France)

Title:

Perceptual treatment of linguistic distance: an fMRI study in standard vs. colloquial Arabic

Affiliation:

The applicant will be affiliated to PRAXILING Lab. (UMR CNRS 5267) at Montpellier (France). Functional *Magnetic Resonance Imaging* experiments will be conducted at the fMRI Center of Marseille (France). The applicant will team up with the researchers working in the frame of a larger project dealing with the evaluation of linguistic distance at different levels, supported by the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the University of Montpellier (France).

Scientific advisers:

(i) Dr. Melissa BARKAT-DEFRADAS

Arabic Linguistics, Lab. PRAXILING UMR 5267 CNRS / Université de Montpellier (France)

(ii) Dr. Cheryl FRENCK-MESTRE

Experimental Psycholinguistics, Lab. LANGAGE ET PAROLE UMR 6057 CNRS / Université de Provence (France)

(iii) Dr. Jean-Luc ANTON

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Description of the study:

Arabic is a diglossic language, in which two varieties coexist; ‘high’ and ‘low’. The ‘high’ variety refers to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is used mainly in formal settings. The ‘low’ variety refers to the different spoken dialects; these differ widely between Arab countries and communities, along geographical, religious and socio-economic lines. Linguistic differences between Colloquial Arabic (CA) and MSA are manifest in all language domains, including phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. Nevertheless, there remains a question as to whether MSA and varieties of CA are more appropriately regarded as distinct languages and/or dialects or as different registers of one language. This project aims at delineating the nature of the underlying distinction between MSA and CA by examining neural responses to a highly constrained perceptual situation.

Applicant’s activity

The job is to be filled for 12 months (starting October, 1st, 2009). The applicant will mainly be responsible for (i) collaboration on the fMRI experimental design; (ii) fMRI data acquisition and, (iii) fMRI data analysis.

The projected end result of the study is dissemination in scientific meetings as well as a co-authored scientific paper published in a referenced journal (i.e. category A in the ERIH Linguistics and/or Psychology List).

Required skills

- PhD in Neurosciences or Cognitive Sciences (a special interest for language processing is a plus)
- Good knowledge of fMRI technique
- Complete mastery of SPM or BrainVisa softwares (or equivalents)

Gross salary: ±24.000 annual

Applications (CV + cover letter) should be sent before June, 30th, 2009 to:

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For any further information, contact:

- Linguistic dimension :

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