MHS-05652

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

1   The University invites applications for the above post available from 1 March 2015 for a period of 36 months.

2   Salary will be £30,434 to £34,233 per annum according to relevant experience

3   Informal enquiries may be made to Anna Theakston
Email: anna.theakston@manchester.ac.uk

4   Applications should be made on line. If you are unable to apply on line please request an application form by emailing hrservices@manchester.ac.uk quoting the reference number or by calling 0161 275 4499 (HR Services).

5   The University of Manchester values a diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Job Title: Research Associate

Contract Status: 36 month contract starting on 1 March 2015

Hours of Work: Full-time

Salary: £30,434 to £34,233 per annum

Location: School of Psychological Sciences, the University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester

Responsible to: Prof. Elena Lieven & Dr. Anna Theakston

Children's developing knowledge of information structure in sentence interpretation.

This post offers the opportunity to join a thriving research group at the University of Manchester, and become a member of the new ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development (LuCiD), a multi-million pound collaboration between the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Lancaster. The aim of the project is to develop a better understanding of how children develop sentence interpretation strategies cross-linguistically. The post will involve using naturalistic corpus data and experimental methods to determine the role of information structure in children's developing sentence representations.

You will be based at the School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester working with Prof. Elena Lieven and Dr Anna Theakston, but the project also involves collaboration with researchers across the LuCiD Centre.

Duties and responsibilities

Your duties and responsibilities will include the following:

- Intellectual development of the project
- Coordination of cross-linguistic corpus and experimental research work carried out by other Research Assistants working on the project.
- Corpus analysis and experimental design to investigate the role of information structure in children's sentence interpretation and production strategies.
- Recruitment and testing of participants
- Statistical analysis of the corpus and experimental data
- Dissemination of research findings through oral and poster presentations at seminars and/or conferences and involvement in public engagement events (both nationally and internationally)
- Publication of scientific papers for peer-reviewed journals
- Manage confidential information provided by participants, deal with ethical and administrative issues relating to the Project and efficiently manage and catalogue large volumes of data in accordance with the ESRC Centre's Data Management Plan.

- Supervision of research assistant(s), PhD student(s), and other researchers in the Project research team, as required.
- You may also be required to carry out such other duties, commensurate with the grading of the post, as may be assigned by the Investigators or their nominees.

The Project:

The project is part of a wider endeavour to investigate the acquisition of morphological productivity and word order cross-linguistically, but this post has a particular emphasis on the acquisition of complex syntax. The postholder will join a team of researchers including two Research Assistants and a further postdoctoral Research Associate. The post will involve overseeing/carrying out the detailed coding of morphology, word order, and information structure in a variety of language corpora (e.g. Finnish, Polish, Chintang, English, and German) and designing and carrying out experimental studies to investigate the role of information structure in children's complex sentence representations.

You will be required to conduct some analysis of English linguistic corpora, and design and implement experimental studies to investigate the role of information structure in English-speaking children's acquisition of complex sentence structures. Further duties will involve data handling and quantitative statistical analysis, preparing manuscripts for publication based on the project findings, and presenting the findings both at seminars and/or conferences, and through public engagement events. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project, you are expected to have a strong interest in, and enthusiasm for, child language acquisition and corpus-based research.

We are looking for a highly-motivated and independent researcher with experience in pragmatic language research, and experience of working with children. You must have, or expect to obtain, a PhD (or equivalent), in psychology, linguistics, cognitive science, or any cognate discipline. An understanding of how word order and case marking interact with information structure across languages is desirable. You must also have excellent statistical analysis and academic writing abilities.
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<u>The ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development (LuCiD)</u>

The LuCiD Centre is a multi-million pound 5-year collaboration between the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Lancaster, and affiliated institutions abroad. The Centre will study how children learn to communicate with language, how the developing brain supports this process, and how it is affected by cross-linguistic, socio-cultural and individual variation. LuCiD's Research Agenda contains five research streams in the UK and abroad. The first four streams will address four key questions in language and communicative development:

- Environment: How do children integrate multiple sources of information?
- Knowledge: How do children build linguistic representations?
- Communication: How do children learn to use language structure to communicate effectively?
- Variation: How do children adapt to cross-linguistic and socio-cultural variation?

The fifth stream, the Language 0-5 project, will provide the interconnection between the other four streams. It will follow 80 English-learning children from 6 months to 5 years to deliver the first data-intensive, cohort study on language development in UK children.

LuCiD's Research Agenda will be complemented by:
- a Technology Agenda that will create new integrated multi-method research designs and build technology products designed to be of direct benefit to language researchers and healthcare and education practitioners, with commercial applications for business and publishers
- a Communications Agenda for disseminating findings to commissioners and policy-makers, healthcare and education professionals, parents and the public, and other key stakeholders.
- a Capacity-Building programme that will develop future leaders, ensure that progress is maintained beyond the life of the Centre, and secure the future of UK research in the area.

To apply you must have:

- PhD (minor corrections or above) or equivalent, in psychology, linguistics, cognitive science, or any related cognate discipline.
- Experience of research with a focus on information structure, and an interest in and understanding of how information structure and constituent/word order interact in different languages.

Person Specifications:

	Essential	**Desirable**
Qualifications/ Education	A PhD or equivalent (or be in the final stages of a PhD) in a relevant discipline (minor corrections or above)	First class honours degree or Masters degree (or equivalent) in psychology, cognitive science, linguistics or a related discipline
Skills/Training	Knowledge of how information structure interacts with constituent/word order in different languages. Proven ability to select and conduct appropriate data analysis (e.g. mixed effects models) using standard and advanced data analysis programs (Excel, SPSS, R). Good written and oral communication skills Excellent knowledge of English Strong computer skills Good general research skills	Knowledge of the sentence processing literature Knowledge of additional languages other than English
Experience	Experience in the design and implementation of experimental	Experience of communicating research successfully to non-

	language studies	academic audiences.
	Experience of working with naturalistic corpus data	Experience of supervising research assistants and/or students
	Experience of working with preschool children, preferably in a research setting	
	Experience of participant recruitment, ethical considerations around research, and data management	
	Experience of publishing high-quality peer-reviewed research on child language development	
	Experience of publicising research work at national and international conferences	
Personal Attributes	Ability to work independently, show initiative and scientific curiosity	
	Ability to work successfully within a research team	
	Organisation skills and attention to detail	
	Willingness and ability to learn new techniques and approaches	