



Three-year PhD scholarship in Slavic Linguistics

The Aleksander-Brückner-Zentrum Halle/Jena (Jena branch) invites applications for a three-year PhD scholarship funded by the Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung (DPWS). The Ph.D. research is to focus on language contact between Polish and Ukrainian in the twentieth century. Please apply by 15.08.2024.

Research environment

The PhD dissertation will be written within a group at Jena University headed by Ruprecht von Waldenfels in cooperation with Ukrainian and Polish colleagues. The focus of the group is on the comparative study of Slavic languages and variation within and between these languages, with a focus on Polish, Ukrainian and Russian. Methodologically, the group focuses on the study of corpus data and aims to combine sociolinguistic insights with up-to-date computational methods. Corpora developed or co-developed in the group include ParaSol, a parallel corpus of Slavic languages, the corpus of the Polish dialect of Spisz as well as GRAC, the largest and most important reference corpus of Standard Ukrainian to date (uacorpus.org). A large corpus of Ukrainian dialects is in preparation. The candidate is expected to reside in Jena or nearby, become an active part of the team and participate in local workshops, colloquia etc.

Polish-Ukrainian contact in the 20th century

The Ph.D. dissertation is to be written on issues of language contact between Polish and Ukrainian focussing on the legacy of the Polish influence on standard Ukrainian in the twentieth century.

Background

Starting in the 19th century and until WWII, two different variants of standard Ukrainian developed with lexical doublets such as *pomič* (West) / *dopomoha* (East) 'help', *samochid* (West) / *mašina* (East) 'car' and a large set of grammatical and pragmatic features. Many - but certainly not all - of these differences developed under the influence of contact with Polish and Russian, the dominant languages of administration, education and commerce in the West and in the East of Ukraine, respectively. After WWII, a single standard of Ukrainian spread to all of Ukraine, albeit under the pressure of Russification. The Polish influence on the standard largely became a thing of the past, with elements of the former Western standard having different fates: some became dominant, others obsolete, others stylistic variants.

This dissertation

In general, many aspects of the initial two standard variants and specifically the influence of Polish on the Western standard in comparison to the influence of Russian on the Eastern standard are under-researched. The dissertation should make an empirically based contribution to these and related issues. Complementary to ongoing work at our group that involves corpus-driven lectometry of varieties of standard Ukrainian, the dissertation will ideally focus on assessing the impact of language contact on features specific to the two standard variants of the early twentieth century, thereby presupposing a comparative Slavic perspective.

Depending on the personal expertise of the candidate, the PhD research can be developed along different research axes, too. For example, taking a more anthropological turn, the fate of Western or Polish-influenced features as stylistic variants that convey a certain identity could be investigated. Research into the influence of Polish on spoken variants of Ukrainian would also be considered. Candidates are encouraged to submit their own ideas; interdisciplinary approaches are especially appreciated.



Requirements

- The candidate must hold a Master's degree or an equivalent qualification in a linguistic subdiscipline, ideally Slavic philology or Slavic linguistics.
- The Candidate is expected to have very good knowledge of at least one of Ukrainian or Polish and be prepared to learn the other language during the first year. Candidates with limited knowledge of Polish are expected to spend at least half a year at our partner institution Instytut Języka Polskiego PAN in Cracow.
- Knowledge of Russian is an asset, as are computational skills (R, Python, statistical expertise).

We offer

- an interesting and stimulating environment with experts in Ukrainian and Polish corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics and computational methods in Jena and a range of partners in Poland, Ukraine and the Czech Republic;
- an interdisciplinary perspective within the Aleksander-Brückner-Zentrum Halle / Jena;
- a monthly scholarship of 1500 Euros for 36 months, with reasonable funds for traveling, field work and conference attendance.

Your application

Please send cover letter, cv, list of publications (if applicable) in a single PDF and attach your master's thesis or other sample of writing separately by August 15th, 2024

For questions, please contact Prof. Dr. Ruprecht von Waldenfels (ruprecht.waldenfels@uni-jena.de).

Time line

03/07/2024: Publication of the call for applications

15/08/2024: Application submission deadline

September 2024: Eligibility review and online interviews

October or November 2024: Start of scholarship (may be negotiated)