

Faculty of Education

PhD-programme in Linguistics

PhD programme in cooperation between the Universities of Bozen-Bolzano and Verona

Website: <https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/phd-linguistics/>

Duration: 3 years

Academic year: 2024/2025

Start date: 01.11.2024

Official programme languages: English, Italian, German.

1 position financed by European Social Fund Plus

Research project: **Language technologies for low-resource languages**

(cf: [Smart Specialisation Strategy Innovazione e Ricerca Alto Adige 2030 - Smart Specialisation Strategy \(RIS3\) della Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano - Alto Adige](#) – only available in Italian and German)

Description: In the domain of artificial intelligence, large language models have recently led to a boost in the development of language technologies which recognize and produce language both in oral and written form (e.g., chatGPT). However, a current challenge is the development of systems able to deal with 'small' languages (i.e. languages with few speakers) or non-standard languages (e.g. regiolects or dialects), for which not many resources are available which can be used to train the AI. In order to extend large language models to include low-resource languages, experts from the field of linguistics are needed which are able to define the needs of speech communities with respect to language technologies, can prepare datasets for training, and can contribute themselves to the creation of tools.

The goal of this project is to form such experts at the PhD level by providing a solid basis in the domain of linguistic analysis and sociolinguistics, as well as in domains connected to computational linguistics.

The region of South-Tyrol provides a perfect testing ground for language technologies of this type, with the presence of 'small' languages such as Ladin and its high density of non-standard Tyrolean dialects.

Supervisor: Prof. Alessandro Vietti, L-LIN/01

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Requirements:

- MA degree (all disciplines)
- MA degrees according to Italian law previous to the introduction of D.M. 509/1999

- Master of Science/Arts or equivalent degrees obtained outside of Italy
- Participants must also be under the age of 35 years, to be understood as up to the day before the participant's thirty-fifth birthday. The requirements must be fulfilled at the time of the deadline of the relevant call for applications (11th July 2024).

Language requirements

Language skills for English and for either German or Italian are evaluated during the admission interview. The language skills must be adequate for carrying out the research proposal submitted by the candidate.

Admission procedure and evaluation criteria

The selection process consists in the evaluation of the qualifications of the candidates (max. 40 points) and in an admission interview (max. 60 points). Only applicants obtaining a minimum of 25/40 in the evaluation of their qualifications are admitted to the admission interview.

The following documentation attesting qualifications is evaluated and must be uploaded to the selection platform:

- MA thesis: max. 10 points
- research proposal written in English, German or Italian. The proposal must not exceed the length of 9,000 characters (including spaces, excluding the bibliography): max. 25 points
- further attestations: curriculum vitae: max. 5 points

Admission interview

The admission interview will be held in English and, according to the choice of the candidate, in either German or Italian.

During the exam the submitted research proposal is discussed and language skills in English and in German or Italian are evaluated.

Candidates pass the admission interview when they reach a minimum of 40/60 points.

The admission interview takes place at the Faculty of Education, Brixen-Bressanone, Regensburger Allee 16, seminar room 2.01.

Candidates who make a motivated request by 11.07.2024 can participate in the admission interview online via MS Teams.

Date and time:	24.07.2024 , from 9 a.m.
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Committee

Alber, Birgit (unibz) chair
 Cantarini, Sibilla (UniVR)
 Spreafico, Lorenzo (unibz)

Substitute members: Abel, Andrea (unibz), Irsara, Martina (unibz), Rabanus, Stefan (UniVR)

At the end of the exam period, the Admission Board will draw up a rank list of candidates.

APPLICATION:

The following documents are required **for the application** to the doctoral programme (*see Article 3 of the public competition announcement*):

- **Degree certificate/exam transcript.** In the case of Italian university qualifications, the certification MUST be substituted by a **self-declaration** or by the Diploma Supplement.
- **Curriculum vitae** (in English or German or Italian).
- **Research proposal** (PDF/A file) written in English, German or Italian. The proposal must not exceed the length of 9,000 characters (including spaces, excluding the bibliography).