Seminar: "Career outlook with a PhD in linguistics"

In the context of *Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics: Managing Languages, Arguments and Narratives in the Datafied Society*

ECTS: 1

Program:
- Date: December 13, 2022, 09.00-12.00, 13.00-17.30
- Place: USI, Lugano – room SI-007
- Lecturers: Tanja Samardžić (University of Zurich), Maja Miličević Petrović (University of Bologna)

Topic, focus:
The goal of this seminar is to provide PhD students in Applied Linguistics with an overview of possible career paths in academic research and tech industry. The focus will be on matching students' topics of study within the PhD program with broader needs for linguistic skills, which is necessary for students' professional profiling and a successful transition to the work force. In the seminar, the students will become familiar with a range of professional profiles identified in the needs analysis of the UPSKILLS project and work actively towards matching these profiles with their own sets of skills. In some cases, this matching will be a simple alignment between different terms used to refer to the same concepts. For example, the notion of *illocution* in linguistics corresponds closely to the notion of *intent* in various practical domains. In other cases, it will require a more profound change of the perspective. In practical assignments, the students will replicate the methods developed in the UPSKILLS project for identifying the current needs with the goal of gaining more general skills that will allow them to capture other profiles. This generalisation is especially important in the field of linguistics, whose broader relevance is strongly influenced by rapid changes in the technology and (cognitive) science.

Main value added from a theoretical and methodological perspective: Linguistic research is currently needed in many domains of science and development. Due to the lack of interdisciplinary communication, much of this research is performed by professionals who are not trained linguists. Understanding the broader relevance of their studies, the students of linguistics will be in a better position to bridge this interdisciplinary gap and build the set of skills needed for joining bigger teams. This seminar will not only broaden the employment perspective of the students, but stimulate them to reflect more profoundly on their own interests, knowledge and skills, giving a renewed sense of meaning to their studies.

Main value added from a practical perspective: The seminar will include three pieces of practical work. In the first step, the students will complete exercises in creating and analysing language corpora for observing professional trends. This part of the practical work will follow the methodology established in the UPSKILLS project and described in the project's deliverable *Competences, skills and tasks in today's jobs for linguists: Evidence from a corpus of job advertisements,* which can be downloaded from the project web site. The students will replicate the original project study on new examples. In the second step, the students will perform exercises in formulating professional profiles on the basis of insights from corpus data. This second part of the practical work will be performed in a close interaction with lecturers, who will guide the students in the process of summing up corpus evidence. In the third step, the students will practice estimating their own fit to the formulated profiles, with the lectures' guidance based on lessons learnt in the project. In this way, the students will gain a set of know-how skills needed for finding the appropriate advertisements and assessing the fit.

Learning objective: knowledge. Learning about the broader relevance of studies in linguistics.

Learning objective: skills, practices. Learning how to identify and meet career opportunities for linguistic research.

Learning objective: researcher attitudes. Forward thinking, design thinking, problem solving, planning.

Evaluation: Handed in the preparation for the seminar, in-course assignments which will be assessed with a pass/ fail evaluation.

Bio

Tanja Samardžić is a lecturer in Computational linguistics and a Group leader at the University of Zurich. Her background combines the theory of language with machine learning. Her research is about developing computational text processing methods and using them to test theoretical hypotheses on how language actually works. Tanja holds a PhD in Computational linguistics from the University of Geneva, where she studied in the group Computational Learning and Computational Linguistics (CLCL). She is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of computational approaches in the study of language.

Maja Miličević Petrović is an associate professor in General Linguistics at the University of Bologna, Department of Interpreting and Translation. Her background combines morphosyntax, second language acquisition and corpus linguistics. She holds an MPhil and a PhD in English and Applied Linguistics from the University of Cambridge, and a BA in Italian Language and Literature from the University of Belgrade. She is committed to promoting quantitative analysis of language data, and the study of language based on experiments and corpora.