

Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie - Zentrales Bewerbermanagement



The Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA) brings together scientists from diverse backgrounds (natural sciences and humanities) with the aim of investigating the history of humankind from an interdisciplinary perspective using comparative analyses of genes, cultures, cognitive abilities, languages and social systems of past and present human populations, as well as those of primates closely related to humans.

Postdoctoral researcher (m/f/d) in the field of Historical Linguistics and the development of AI assisted methodology

City: Leipzig; Starting date (earliest): 01/08/25; Duration: 2 years; Remuneration: TVöD; Reference number: FT-06-2025; Closing date: 30/04/25

Working field

Are you a historical and/or computational linguist with a good understanding of traditional comparative historical linguistics? Are you interested in what AI can bring to the table and have a good grasp of these technologies? Then you might be the right candidate for this job!

About DLCE

The Department of Linguistic and Cultural Evolution aims to answer big picture questions about the evolution of language and culture. Our focus is on describing and explaining the major patterns of linguistic and cultural variation across the globe. We tackle these questions by developing novel language documentation methods, global linguistic and cultural databases, and analyses using evolutionary theories and computational methods.

Why “AI assisted Historical and Comparative Linguistics”?

This project aims to investigate the potential of artificial intelligence (AI), e.g. large language models, to assist and enhance research in historical linguistics. The project will focus on developing AI tools designed to support linguists in handling vast amounts of historical linguistic data, facilitating tasks such as tracking phonological, syntactic, and semantic changes over time, inferring cognates and constructing language phylogenies. By offering more efficient methods for processing large, complex datasets, these AI-powered tools will allow researchers to uncover patterns and trends that may not be easily detectable through manual analysis alone. The emphasis will be on using AI to complement the knowledge and interpretive skills of historical linguists, empowering them to make more informed inferences and pursue new lines of inquiry.

Requirements

- A passion for science
- A PhD in Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and/or Historical Linguistics

- Familiarity and some experience with using the comparative method in historical linguistics
- Experience with AI technologies such as large language models (e.g., GPT, BERT,...) and machine learning
- Excellent statistical / computational skills with a knowledge of Python and/or R
- Familiarity with computational linguistics tools and frameworks
- Ability to work in interdisciplinary teams
- Proficiency in both spoken and written English

What we offer

- Full-time position, starting in the late summer of 2025, initially limited to two years
- Salary based on experience according to the German TVöD
- According to German labor laws, benefits include 30 days holiday per annum plus Bank Holidays and - Christmas closure days as well as an attractive pension proposition
- An inspiring, international, interdisciplinary environment with leading domain scientists at our department and in various Max Planck Institutes and universities
- Space, freedom, support and resources to do all the things described above

Application

Electronic Applications will be considered until April 30, 2025.

Only complete submissions via our online applicants management system (link via the job offer on our career website) will be taken into consideration.

Please submit your application in English, including the following:

- Cover letter, explaining research experience and reason for interest in this project, along with a concrete research project proposal (max. two pages)
- Your CV and copies of degree certificates (Bachelor's/Master's/PhD diplomas and transcripts)
- Names and contact information (including e-mail and phone) for 2-3 referees

The Max Planck Society and the Department of Archaeogenetics of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology are committed to equal opportunities, diversity, and gender equality. We actively support the compatibility of work and family and have set ourselves the goal of employing more severely disabled people and groups that are underrepresented in science, especially in the given field of activity. Therefore, we explicitly encourage them to apply and welcome applications from all backgrounds.

More information at <https://stellenticket.de/192623/LUH/>

Offer visible until 09/04/25

