



Dan Dediu

PhD Linguistics, 2007

Who is your current employer and what do they do?

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

A research institute focused on various aspects of language from the genetics and neurobiology of language to linguistic diversity and history.

What is your job title and what does the job entail?

Research Staff (postdoctoral researcher)

Research (no teaching) activities, in my case on a wide range of topics but mainly concerning genetic influences on language and quantitative methods (such as phylogenetics) for analysing linguistic diversity.

How did you achieve your current position?

As usual, a bit of luck was essential :) During my PhD in Edinburgh, together with Prof. Bob Ladd, I developed a suggestion that genetics could be partly responsible for the distribution of linguistic tone among the world's languages. Following the publication in 2007 of the resulting paper (and during the ESRC postdoctoral fellowship I was awarded, also in Edinburgh), I was invited for an interview by the MPI Nijmegen, which were interested in starting up a new department on Language and Genetics. After I finished my ESRC grant, in June 2008, I moved to Nijmegen and continued working on various types of relationships between genetics and language. After a couple of years the department of Language and Genetics was officially created, headed by Prof. Simon Fisher (of FOXP2 fame), and I am currently one of its members.

How do you feel you have used the skills and/or knowledge developed during your research degree in your career to date?

Short answer: I used them fully! During the PhD I learned data analysis (a main aspect of my work), some linguistics (I did not have any training in Linguistics prior to my PhD!) and probably as important (if not more), I talked, worked and had beer with many amazing people doing many amazing things (another aspect of academic life in which Edinburgh excels).

Other qualifications

Mathematics & Computer Science, 1997 University of Bucharest
MSc Neurobiology and Behaviour, 2001 University of Bucharest