

Dr. Job Schepens

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Research keywords: linguistic distance, transfer learning, computational modeling

Career stage: 7 years full time equivalent postdoctoral experience and parent of three children

Postdoctoral Positions

- 2023 - Present Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter
Universität zu Köln, Center for Digital Humanities & Center for Linguistics
Supervisors: Nils Reiter, Nikolaus Himmelmann
- 2019 - 2022 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter
TU Dortmund, Group for Empirical Educational Research
Supervisors: Aileen Edele, Hanna Gaspard
- 2016 - 2019 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter
Freie Universität Berlin, Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience
Supervisor: Hauke Heekeren
- 2015 - 2016 Postdoctoral Fellowship
Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Center for Adaptive Rationality
Supervisor: Ralph Hertwig

Academic Degrees

- 2011 - 2015 PhD
Radboud University, Centre for Language Studies
Thesis title: *Bridging linguistic gaps: The effects of linguistic distance on adult learnability of Dutch as an additional language*
Supervisors: Roeland van Hout, Frans van der Slik
- 2008 - 2010 MSc Artificial Intelligence
Radboud University
Thesis title: *Cross-language distributions of high frequency and phonetically similar cognates*
Supervisors: Walter van Heuven, Ton Dijkstra
- 2004 - 2008 BSc Artificial Intelligence
Radboud University
Thesis title: *Distributions of cognates in Europe as based on Levenshtein distance*
Supervisor: Ton Dijkstra

Peer-reviewed publications

For a complete list, see the attached publication record or my [Google Scholar](#)

- Total publications: 17 (first or last author: 16)

- Citations: 1045, H-index: 11

Selected highlights

Schepens, J., Woloszyn, H., Marx, N., & Gagl, B. (accepted 22/7/25). Can Large Language Models (LLMs)

- generate useful linguistic corpora? A case study of the word frequency effect in young German readers. *MIT Open Mind*. doi.org/10.1162/OPMI.a.30
- Schepens, J., van Hout, R., & Jaeger, T. F. (2020). Big data suggest strong constraints of linguistic similarity on adult language learning. *Cognition*, 194: 104056.
doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2019.104056.
- IF 2019: 3.5 | Q1 Language, Q1 Cognitive Psychology, Q1 Education | Cited 66 times
- Schepens, J., Van der Slik, F., & Van Hout, R. (2016). L1 and L2 distance effects in L3 Dutch learnability. *Language Learning*, 66(1): 224–256. doi.org/10.1111/lang.12150
IF 2016: 2.0 | Q1 Language, Q1 Education | Awarded Article of the Year | Cited 122 times

External research support

2024	DFG Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1252: “Prominence in Language” Project member, 4 years, about € 20 million for the whole project Based on 400-page proposal with small personal contribution
2016	EU Marie Curie Horizon 2020 Individual postdoctoral fellowship, 2 years, € 170,000 10-15% acceptance rate based on 10-page proposal designed and written independently
2015	Max Planck Research Network on Aging Individual postdoctoral fellowship, 2 years, about € 50,000 10-15% acceptance rate based on 1-page proposal designed and written independently
2013	Fulbright Scholar Individual research internship, 3 months, \$ 3,000 10-15% acceptance rate based on 5-page proposal designed and written independently Evaluated by the Dutch Science Organization (NWO)

Invited presentations

2025 / 7	Klausurtagung of CRC 1252 <i>Duisburg, Germany</i>
2025 / 2	Research School of the German Society for Applied Linguistics <i>Cologne, Germany</i>
2024 / 4	ReproducibiliTea in the HumaniTees <i>Cologne, Germany</i>
2023 / 11	Second Language Acquisition Group (PI: Nivja de Jong) <i>Leiden, Netherlands</i>
2022 / 10	Cologne Center for Language Sciences <i>Cologne, Germany</i>
2022 / 8	Eurosla (The 31st Conference of the European Second Language Association) <i>Fribourg, Switzerland</i>
2021 / 11	Schimke Group, Institute for German Language and Literature <i>TU Dortmund</i>
2021 / 3	Stanat Group, Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research <i>Humboldt University</i>
2021 / 3	Invited Colloquium, American Association for Applied Linguistics <i>Houston, USA (online)</i>
2020 / 3	Cambridge Linguistics Forum

	<i>University of Cambridge, UK (online)</i>
2020 / 3	Invited Colloquium, American Association for Applied Linguistics <i>Denver, USA (cancelled due to Coronavirus)</i>
2018 / 5	Harmonious Bilingualism Network Symposium <i>La Dolce Hotel, Brussels, BE</i>
2018 / 3	Symposium Experimental Approaches to Language Learning <i>Tagung experimentell arbeitender Psychologen, Marburg, DE</i>
2017 / 5	Department of Adaptive Rationality <i>Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, DE</i>
2016 / 6	Reading Education and Development Group <i>Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, DE</i>
2016 / 3	Center for Cognitive Neuroscience <i>Freie Universität, Berlin, DE</i>
2015 / 5	International Max Planck Research Network on Aging <i>Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE</i>
2014 / 12	Symposium on Cross-Linguistic Aspects of Complexity <i>Vrije Universiteit Brussel, BE</i>
2014 / 2	Human Language Processing Lab <i>University of Rochester, US</i>
2013 / 11	Potsdam Research Institute for Multilingualism <i>University of Potsdam, DE</i>
2012 / 3	Department of Linguistics <i>MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, DE</i>
2009 / 11	Bilingualism Group <i>University of Nottingham, UK</i>

Teaching

University of Cologne

Summer school on LLMs for DH research, ml-school.uni-koeln.de (teacher)
 Two-day workshop together with B. Gagl and H. Woloszyn
 September, 2025

TU Dortmund

Introduction to Scientific Methods (teacher)
 5 ECTS, seminar, BA Educational Science
 2022 spring, 2021 spring

General Didactics (teacher)
 3 ECTS, seminar, BA Educational Science
 2022 spring, 2021 fall, 2021, spring

Data Science in Educational Research (teacher)
 6 ECTS, seminar, MA Educational Science
 2020 fall

Exploratory Data Analysis (teacher)
 6 ECTS, seminar, BA Educational Science
 2020, spring

Statistics I (teacher)
6 ECTS, seminar, BA Educational Science
2020, spring

Radboud University

Explorative Data Analysis (co-teacher)
6 ECTS, seminar, BA Linguistics
2013, spring

Mathematics I (teaching assistant)
6 ECTS, lectures + lab sessions, BSc Artificial Intelligence
2010, spring

Academic Service

Departmental committees

2025 Selection committee member for a computational linguist, CRC Prominence in Language
2024 - Member of the General Board, CRC Prominence in Language, quarterly meetings
2024 Member of the Ombudscommittee, CRC Prominence in Language
2014 Selection committee member for two PhD positions, Radboud University
2013 Selection committee member for four PhD positions, Radboud University

Academic management

2023 - Present Establishing and organizing data and IT infrastructure for CRC 1252, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations, and providing guidance on data policies
2016 - 2019 Financial and data protection management of my H2020 Marie Curie project

Strategic development

2023 Contributor to collaborative and interdisciplinary research proposal application initiatives for a new DFG “Cluster of Excellence” and DFG “Collaborative Research Center”
2022 Member of a curriculum development group to enhance empirical methods in the BA educational science program, TU Dortmund

Interdisciplinary and international collaboration

2023 - Present Leading a project on the use of LLMs in psycholinguistics with B. Gagl (prof. for self-learning systems) and N. Marx (prof. for language education)
2014-2020 Initiating and leading a project on language testing statistics with F. Jaeger (prof. for human language processing, University of Rochester, USA), including a 3-month visit
2016, 3 weeks Research visit to the University of Basel with R. Mata (prof. for cognitive and decision sciences)
2012, 3 months Research visit to the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology with S. Wichmann (project leader on the automated similarity judgement program)
2009, 4 months Research visit to the University of Nottingham with W. van Heuven (prof. for bilingualism)

Event organization

2025 Workshop on Large Language Models for Linguistic Analysis, University of Cologne,
<https://sfb1252.github.io/llm-workshop/>
2023 - Rstats and Research Data & Methods (RDM). Bi-weekly statistics and reading group meeting, Part of CRC 1252.

2021	Lead organizer of an invited colloquium at the annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics
2013	Member of the organizing committee for the colloquium series of the Centre for Language and Speech Technology, Radboud University

Reviewing

International Journals and conferences

Behavior Research Methods	1 x 2025, 1 x 2024
SSLA	1 x 2025
Cognition	2 x 2022
Bilingualism: Language and Cognition	3 x 2022
TESOL	1 x 2022
Frontiers in Political Science	1 x 2022
Dortmund Symp. on Emp. Edu. Research	1 x 2021
International Journal of Multilingualism	1 x 2021
Language Learning (Wiley)	3 x 2022, 4 x 2021, 1 x 2019, 3 x 2018
Learning & Instruction (Elsevier)	1 x 2020
Interactive Learning Environments (Routledge)	1 x 2020
Digital Scholarship in the Humanities (Oxford)	1 x 2020
Cognitive Science Society	2 x 2018, 2 x 2017
Second Language Research (SAGE)	1 x 2017

Funding agencies

H2020 Marie Curie Fellowships	10 x 2021, 10 x 2020, 10 x 2019, 10 x 2018
Research Foundation Flanders	1 x 2017, 1 x 2016
Foundation for Polish Science	1 x 2016

Ethics committees

TU Dortmund	1 x 2022, 1 x 2020
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Outreach activities to the general public

2017, 2018	Presenter at the Long Night of the Sciences, Berlin
2017	Jury member of the Neuroscience Olympiad Berlin
2014	Presenter at the Drongo Festival for Multilingualism, Amsterdam
2009	Co-Organizer of ICT training sessions and presenting ICT for groups of about 30 adult teachers and farmers, Kampala, Uganda.

Knowledge transfer through publications in profession-specific journals

Schepens, J., Van der Slik, F., & Van Hout, R. (2018). Nederlands leren als derde taal: De invloed van de eerste en tweede taal. <i>Les Journal for Dutch as a Second Language in Education</i> , 36. Boom.
Schepens, J., Van der Slik, F., & Van Hout, R. (2012). Het effect van linguïstische afstand op het leren van het Nederlands als tweede taal. In Bossers, B. (Ed.) <i>Vakwerk 8: Achtergronden van de NT2-lespraktijk</i> . Professional society for teachers of Dutch as a second language: Amsterdam.

Professional training

Summer school participation

2023, 2 weeks	Advanced Bayesian Data Analysis, Potsdam University
2013, 2 weeks	Language Development, Humboldt University
2012, 2 weeks	Language, Logic, and Information (ESSLLI), Opole University

2011, 2 weeks KU Leuven, Linguistics

Graduate school participation

- 2015 - 2018 Max Planck International Research Network on Aging
2011 - 2015 Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, IMPRS for Language Sciences
2011 - 2015 Radboud University, Graduate School for the Humanities

Academic and professional developments

- 2020 Online teaching (1 day)
TU Dortmund
2018-2019 Leadership skills (2 days), Career development (2 days)
Free University Berlin
2016-2017 Career development (1 day), Presentation skills (1 day), Writing skills (1 day)
Max Planck Gesellschaft
2011-2015 Academic Writing (80h), Management for PhD students (80h), Education in a Nutshell (40h), Advanced Conversation (40h), Presentation Skills (40h), Advanced Personal Presentation (5h)
Radboud University

Language Proficiency

Dutch (native), English (fluent), German (C2: 5 years of German residence, two C2-level language courses)

Technical skills

R, Java, and Python for data analysis, statistical modeling, machine learning, visualization

Awards

2018	American Ass. for Applied Linguistics	Best research article of the year
2017	Language Learning Journal	Best research article of the year
2015	Radboud Uni., Centre for Language Studies	Best research article of the year (€1,500)
2014	Radboud Uni., Grad. School for Humanities	PhD thesis award (€1,000)
2012	Ass. for Logic, Language and Information	Student award (€420)
2009	Int. Soc. for Psychophysics	Student award (\$300)