



## PhD Offer in Linguistics (2023-2026) French discourse markers and compositionality

**Duration:** 36 months

**Beginning:** Fall 2023 (ideally October 2023)

**Place:** ATILF, From syntax to discourse axis (Nancy) and LLF (Paris)

**Salary (net):** about 1750 euros per month

**Advisors :**

[Mathilde Dargnat](#)

Université de Lorraine et ATILF-CNRS

[Jonathan Ginzburg](#)

Université Paris Cité et LLF-CNRS

### To apply

The electronic submission should include:

- 1) A CV of at most 5 pages, including the M1-M2 courses and the L3 (= bachelor)-M1-M2 grades.
- 2) A motivation letter.
- 3) The Master thesis and/or the submitted/accepted publications, if any, which can help the committee to appreciate the candidate's abilities.
- 4) The name of one or two referees.

To be sent to: [mathilde.dargnat \(at\) univ-lorraine.fr](mailto:mathilde.dargnat@univ-lorraine.fr) and [yonatan.ginzburg \(at\) u-paris.fr](mailto:yonatan.ginzburg@u-paris.fr)

Deadline: **27 juin 2023**

Online interviews (in French): from **July 2023 first week**

**Requisites :**

- Master 2 in Linguistics, Cognitive Sciences or NLP.
- Excellent command of French.
- A good background in formal or/and computational semantics would be welcome.

## CODIM project short description

<https://www.codim-project.org/>

The CODIM project is funded by the A(gence) N(ationale) de la R(echerche). It focuses on the two main linguistic resources for organizing monologues or conversations in human languages : D(is-course) M(arkers) (*therefore/donc, well/ben,bon* etc. in English/French) and prosody (in particular, intonation). It will evaluate their status with respect to two major views on communication: compositionality (the possibility of combining meaningful expressions into more complex meaningful expressions) and pattern- or construction-based approaches (the idea that language users exploit partly ‘frozen’ strings of words). We will compare the semantic and prosodic properties of simple and complex French DM (e.g. *ah + bon*) found in corpora for written and spoken French, using a variety of technical tools for DM identification (category-driven text mining), clustering (statistics and Machine Learning) and research in prosody (duration and intensity measures, contour representation). The project fosters a number of collaborations between linguists and computer scientists.

## Dissertation content description

### Topic: French discourse markers and compositionality

The dissertation will focus on a set of DM combinations and discuss their semantic and pragmatic properties and how they are related to those of the combined DM. This includes:

1. When the DM in a markedly frequent combination are intuitively close, accounting for the fact that their combination is not felt as redundant (and, as a result, awkward). Examples: *donc du coup, alors donc, mais pourtant, mais quand même, et alors, donc voilà*, etc.
2. When the DM are intuitively different, are they just complementary, which suggests that they introduce unconnected discourse relations/speaker manifestations), or do we need another type of analysis (see point 3)?
3. Is the combination compositional? Addressing this question requires discussing and possibly elaborating on existing compositional techniques. For instance, the current formal approaches in semantics are functional in an elementary mathematical sense: functions apply to arguments (which can themselves be functions) to deliver ‘interpretations’. Can we reduce the observed combinations to this type of mechanism? Also, in cases where such a reduction is possible, to what extent can it predict or motivate the strength of association between the DM which cluster into the combination? Why is this particular association more frequent than others? Does it correspond, for example, to specific discourse moves which play a prominent role in interactions?
4. Are there cases of repulsion (DM which do not occur together)? How come?

## Indicative References

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- Crible, L. & Degand, L. 2019. Domains and Functions : A Two-Dimensional Account of Discourse Markers. *Discours* 24 (online), 35 p.
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- Dargnat, M. 2020. Subjectivité et projection : le cas des particules discursives. In *Actes du 7e Congrès Mondial de Linguistique Française*, Montpellier, SHS Web of Conference 778, IDP Sciences.
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- Tian, Y. & Ginzburg, J. 2016. No I am: What are you saying “no” to? In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* 21, 1241-1252.

- Haselow, A. 2019. Discourse marker sequences: Insights into the serial order of communicative tasks in real-time turn production. *Journal of Pragmatics* 146, 1-18.
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- Heine, B., Kaltenböck, G., Kuteva, T. & H. Long (Eds.). 2021. *The Rise of Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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