

Elnaz Eléonore Jalilian

PhD in Language Sciences · Linguist working on multimodality, language acquisition and tool-assisted corpus linguistics
LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes

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ABOUT

I'm Elnaz Jalilian, a linguist at LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes. My research looks at how speakers distribute information between speech and gesture, and at the tools that let us annotate and analyse such data at scale.

My path brings together three strands: the linguistics of language acquisition and multimodality, training in computer science and applied mathematics, and tool-assisted corpus linguistics. After a PhD on the verbal and gestural expression of motion in Persian and Azeri, I completed a Master's in computer science for the social sciences and joined the ParaTaxe project as a postdoctoral researcher, building pipelines for aligning and publishing multi-parallel corpora.

I am now bringing these two areas of expertise together: semi-automated multimodal annotation tools (gesture detection to pre-fill ELAN annotation) in the service of research on language acquisition and language teaching.

Multimodality · Gesture–speech relation · Motion events (Talmy) · Language acquisition · Persian & Azeri · Corpus linguistics · Multi-parallel corpora · Text alignment · NLP · ELAN annotation · Language teaching

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2025 – 2026

Research collaborator, ParaTaxe project

LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes · with O. Kraif, C. François (UNIL) & N. Rimasson-Fertin

Dissemination of results: JLC 2025 talk, JADT 2026 paper, and a data paper on the Grimm Tradalign corpus (first author, in preparation).

2024 – 2025

Postdoctoral researcher, ParaTaxe

PARAllel Texts Alignment eXploration and Edition · LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes

Designed and evaluated an open-source pipeline for aligning and publishing multi-parallel corpora on the web, including the corpus of translations of Grimm's fairy tales. Deep-learning-based alignment, precision/recall evaluation against a gold-standard sub-corpus, and a corpus import interface.

2023

Research engineer & NLP research intern

LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes

Word embeddings and unsupervised clustering of linguistic data (Python, scikit-learn, TensorFlow); corpus processing.

2014 – 2016

Early Stage Researcher, GestLanD

EU Marie Curie IRSES project · University of Cape Town & University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Gesture and language development across Romance and Bantu cultures. Collected multimodal data from children speaking Southern Sotho and Zulu; verbal and gestural transcription and annotation in ELAN; XML annotation schemes; trained Master's students in multimodal annotation.

2012 – 2020

Doctoral researcher

LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes · supervised by Jean-Marc Colletta

Study design, data collection in schools in Iran (Tehran, Tabriz), multimodal annotation and statistical analysis of a cross-linguistic, developmental corpus.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

2024 – 2026

Project manager, Web & Data Analytics

SynapticByte · remote

End-to-end management of web and software projects: scoping, specifications, planning, and coordination between clients, end users and developers; interface design and testing; technical and functional documentation.

2018 – 2019

Lecturer in Persian language and civilisation

Sciences Po Grenoble

Grammar, Persian script, speaking and pronunciation, cultural workshops (literature, arts, history), written and oral assessment.

2017 – 2018

Assistant activity leader

O.V.E.

Observation of communication and language disorders in people with early-onset Alzheimer's disease; cognitive and social workshops.

2012 – 2020

Freelance scientific translator

English · French · Persian

Translation of scientific articles; English as a foreign language tutoring (2009 – 2016).

DOCTORAL THESIS

Spatial references in multimodal communication: a cross-linguistic and developmental study of the verbal and gestural expression of "motion" in Persian and Azeri spoken narratives

PhD in Language Sciences, Université Grenoble Alpes, 2020 · 304 pp. · Supervisor: Jean-Marc Colletta

- Corpus of 112 narratives (56 Persian, 56 Azeri) across four age groups (6, 10, 14 years and adults), annotated in ELAN at verbal, gestural and relational levels.
- First study of motion verbs in Azeri (a verb-framed language); spoken Persian shows both verb- and satellite-framed features; evidence of Persian influence on Azeri as a contact language.
- Children adopt language-specific verbal patterns very early; gestural expression of path increases with age, then declines in adolescence.
- A four-way typology of gesture–speech relations: co-expressivity dominates, and gesture increasingly compensates for path information absent from speech.

EDUCATION

2023

Master MIASHS — Computer science & social sciences (DCISS)

Université Grenoble Alpes

Python programming, statistics and machine learning applied to language data.

2020

PhD in Language Sciences

Université Grenoble Alpes, LIDILEM

Linguistics, sociolinguistics and language acquisition.

2011

Research Master in Language Sciences

Université Grenoble 3 Stendhal

Thesis: *A study of abstraction and co-speech gestures* (supervised by J.-M. Colletta).

2008

BA in English Language and Literature

Alzahra University, Tehran

PUBLICATIONS & TALKS

Peer-reviewed conference proceedings

2026 Kraif, O., François, C., **Jalilian, E.**, Rimasson Fertin, N. & Roux, P. ParaTaxe: a Suite of Tools for Processing and Publishing Multi-parallel Corpora. *JADT 2026 – 18th International Conference on Statistical Analysis of Textual Data*, Vol. II, pp. 606–613. University of Palermo.

2026 **Jalilian, E. E.** De la représentation du mouvement à sa mise en mots et en gestes : une typologie de la répartition de l'information entre parole et geste et ses perspectives didactiques. *Multimodalité dans l'enseignement, apprentissage et acquisition des langues*, INALCO, Paris. Accepted.

Thesis

2020 **Jalilian, E.** *Références spatiales dans la communication multimodale : une étude inter-langue et développementale sur l'expression verbale et gestuelle du « mouvement » dans des récits parlés en persan et en azéri.* Université Grenoble Alpes.

Working papers & in preparation

in prep. **Jalilian, E.**, Kraif, O. et al. Data paper on the Grimm Tradalign multi-parallel corpus. *Data & Corpus.*

2019 **Jalilian, E.**, Colletta, J.-M. & Hadian-Cefidekhanie, A. Morphological variation in early representational gestures. hal-02049616

2019 **Jalilian, E.** & Colletta, J.-M. Cross linguistic study of the representation of space in language and gesture: evidence from Persian and Azeri languages. hal-02049622

Selected talks

2026 Typology of speech–gesture information distribution and its teaching perspectives. International conference on multimodality in language teaching and acquisition, INALCO, Paris.

2026 ParaTaxe: a Suite of Tools for Processing and Publishing Multi-parallel Corpora. JADT 2026, University of Palermo, Italy.

2025 New tools for processing and exploring multi-parallel corpora (with C. François, O. Kraif, N. Rimasson-Fertin). Journées de linguistique de corpus (JLC 2025), ENS de Lyon.

2024 Corpus import interface and processing pipeline. Study day *Aligner les mondes littéraires*, LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes.

2015 A comparative study of multimodal representations by Persian and Azeri speakers. Symposium on Acquisition, Multilingualism and Gesture, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. HAL

2015 Cross linguistic study of the representation of space in language and gesture (with J.-M. Colletta). AFLiCo 6, Grenoble. HAL

2014 Spatial references in multimodal communication. 2nd European and 5th Nordic Symposium on Multimodal Communication, Tartu, Estonia. HAL

2014 Development of multimodal production: a comparative and intercultural study. CEDIL'14, Grenoble. HAL

2012 Attributing abstract meaning to hand gestures (with J.-M. Colletta & A. Hadian-Cefidekhanie). 5th Conference of the International Society for Gesture Studies (ISGS), Lund, Sweden. HAL

METHODS, TOOLS & LANGUAGES

- **Multimodal annotation:** ELAN, Praat, XML annotation schemes
- **Statistics:** R, SPSS; parametric and non-parametric tests
- **Programming & NLP:** Python (pandas, NumPy, scikit-learn, TensorFlow), text alignment, embeddings, clustering
- **Also:** Java, SQL, MongoDB, Git, Flask, HTML/CSS

- **Persian & Azeri** — native
- **French** — fluent (language of the PhD)
- **English** — fluent

Projects: GestLanD (EU Marie Curie IRSES), ParaTaxe (IRGA, UGA), ACR Grimm & Grimm Tradalign platform (UGA / Université de Lausanne).