



31. Mai - 10. Juni 2016  
Düsseldorf  
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## drupa 2016 – Press Release No. 53 / 9 June 2016

### Young Linguist awarded drupa Prize 2016

#### **Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy contributes to a better understanding of English grammar**

*Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy has received the drupa Prize 2016 for her doctoral thesis on a special grammar phenomenon in the English language so far not sufficiently researched by science. drupa recognised the 32-year old Hungarian for her doctoral thesis “Achievements, Durativity and Scales”. The prize comes with EUR 6,000 prize money and was presented by Claus Bolza-Schünemann (Chairman of the Management Board at Koenig & Bauer AG and Chairman of the drupa committee), Werner M. Dornscheidt (President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf) and Prof. Dr. Anja Steinbeck (Chancellor of Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf) as part of a ceremony held on 9 June at the Düsseldorf Congress Center Ost/East during drupa 2016.*

In his laudatory speech Claus Bolza-Schünemann praised the prize-winner’s achievement considered extraordinary by a jury of experts. In addition to what is considered an extremely impressive work overall Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy has succeeded in demonstrating the significance of “achievements” both in semantics and philosophy and mathematics but also in the development of artificial intelligence. The young scientist found an innovative approach to solving the scientifically much debated but so far insufficiently solved problem by subjecting several achievements to a “slow-motion observation”. Taking this approach even a non-continuous fact can be described in continuous form. On the basis of this theory the prize-winner developed a mathematical calculation model allowing achievements to be captured and processed in their strictly formally logical sense. With her work, the jury adds, Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy has given the English language more clarity and to some extent also paved the way to the technological future of Print 4.0. In view of increasing digitisation, improved man-machine communication is the dominating theme. “We



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know or rather assume that there is still a long way for us to go,” says Claus Bolza-Schünemann, and adds: “But every journey starts with the first step. Dr. Gyarmathy has made an important contribution to this with her work.”

What precisely is this doctoral thesis about? Each language has its peculiarities that puzzle scientists. When referring to events in English that occur while speaking, speakers use the continuous or progressive form, formed by adding the suffix *-ing* to verbs. “Mary is eating a piece of cake” – is a nice example of this grammar rule because this statement is made within another more prolonged process – the eating, for example.

But it is also possible to apply the progressive form to predicates describing an immediate change of state as expressed in the sentence: “Tom is arriving” meaning that Tom is still on the train but will also soon be home. Such changes of state are described by Achievements – also referred to as predicates – which are regarded as predicates of non-continuous, i.e. non-durative events. Achievements here do not describe a course but why is the progressive form used nevertheless? This is one of the questions Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy addressed in her doctoral thesis completed in 2015 and rated as *summa cum laude* and she presented answers.



### **On the Prize Winner**

Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy was born in Hungary. She successfully completed her Master’s in English Studies with theoretical linguistics as a focal and second subject at the University in Budapest. 2014 saw the linguist switch to the philosophical faculty at Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf, where she completed her doctoral thesis entitled “Achievements, Durativity and Scales” with honours last year. Dr. Zsófia Gyarmathy teaches formal semantics and formal logic as a scientific assistant at the philosophical faculty and she also worked in the fields of phonology and computer linguistics.



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### **On the drupa Prize**

Every year Messe Düsseldorf awards the drupa Prize to the best doctoral thesis produced at the Philosophical Faculty of the HHU. From as early as 1978 it has already recognised the outstanding humanistic works of this Düsseldorf University and promotes the publication and dissemination of the theses with the prize money of EUR 6,000. The drupa Prize is adjudicated by a body of experts consisting of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of Heinrich-Heine University, Düsseldorf, the Chairman of the drupa committee and the President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf.

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