

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Acrisio M. Pires, assistant professor of linguistics, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2001	University of Maryland, College Park
M.A.	1996	University of Brasilia
B.A.	1992	University of Brasilia

Professional Record:

2003	Visiting Instructional Faculty, University of Brasilia
2002 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
2001 – 2002	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Pires is a dedicated teacher and an outstanding mentor of students at all levels. He has chaired or co-chaired six dissertation committees and has directed four undergraduate honors theses, three of which have won College-wide awards. He has worked individually with eleven Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) research assistants. Most of his instructional time has been devoted to required syntax and semantics courses, and he has designed three of his undergraduate courses as upper level writing requirement courses, which entail an extra investment of time from the instructor.

Research – Professor Pires' research focuses on our underlying knowledge about human language(s), and the psychological and computational processes in the brain from which language arises. He has published one book and eleven research articles; he has written most extensively on English and Portuguese, but his published research includes analyses of several other languages as well. His international reputation is based primarily on his highly-respected work on non-finite verbal constructions, which offer serious challenges to certain central tenets of mainstream syntactic theory. In recent years he has extended his range beyond syntactic theory to bring evidence from cognate fields, especially language change and language acquisition, to bear on the foundational issues he addresses.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“The derivation of clausal gerunds,” *Syntax: A Journal of Theoretical, Experimental, and Interdisciplinary Research*, 10(2), 2007, pp. 165-203.

*The Minimalist Syntax of Defective Domains: Gerunds and Infinitives*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 2006.

“Verb movement and clitics: Variation and change in Portuguese,” in *Grammaticalization and Parametric Change*, M. Batllori, et al. (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 48-59.

“Ambiguity in the Korean morphological causative/passive,” with H.-S. Kim, in *Japanese/Korean Linguistics 12*, W. McClure (ed.), Stanford Center for the Study of Language and Information, pp. 255-266.

Service – Professor Pires has made major contributions to the Department’s teaching and research mission. He has served on important committees, organized biweekly research meetings of the syntax group, been an undergraduate concentration advisor, helped to develop new initiatives for the undergraduate and graduate programs, and co-organized conferences. In the profession at large, he has been a reviewer of submissions to journals, publishers, and conferences, and he has served on the Computing Committee of the Linguistic Society of America, the field's major organization.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...I found the data and analysis [in his paper ‘Verb Movement and Clitics] to be very interesting.”

Reviewer (B)

“His work is definitely at the cutting edge of research in formal syntax... He is very well read, his style of writing is lucid, and his works give a general impression of a very high level of competence and a genuine interest in the formal properties of language, but also, I believe, an emerging interest in scientific methodology and an ambition to find new ways to explain the properties of language. ...[Pires] is clearly a first class scholar...”

Reviewer (C)

“...I believe that Acrisio deserves to be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at U Michigan and that he would certainly be promoted here at [my institution]. ... He has three important strengths: his scholarship is excellent in quality and solid as regards quantity, his areas of expertise are exceptionally broad, and his supervision of graduate students is superior.”

Reviewer (D)

“It is rare to find a junior researcher take on so difficult and un-studied a problem as this one [wh-in-situ questions] and make so much headway on it... Overall, Dr. Pires [sic] publication record presents a strong portfolio of research. It certainly merits promotion to associate professor with tenure.”

Reviewer (E)

“...Dr. Pires’s [sic] multiple expertise has to do with the fact that he embraces a highly explanatory theory of language...in which comparative morpho-syntax, historical linguistics and psycholinguistics are all different aspects of the same tool of enquiry.”

Reviewer (F)

“Pires is a respected and continuously productive scholar whose work appears in some of the highest-ranked venues in the field of linguistics. He appears also to perform with strength in his teaching and service. He is remarkable for his theoretical dexterity, his breadth of interests, and his empirical dedication to bringing unusual data to light.”

Reviewer (G)

"I am confident that Dr. Acrisio Pires would be successful were he to seek a similar promotion and tenure in my current institution... I strongly recommend Dr. Acrisio Pires for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure."

Reviewer (H)


"Both in his collaborative work, as well as in his solo work, he has already proven to be an excellent researcher. ... [his book] is cutting-edge work that no one in the field has previously tackled. ...in my judgment [he] deserves tenure in your or any other institution."

Reviewer (I)

"I believe his record of professional accomplishments to be excellent in all respects. ... Like other outstanding linguists at the same professional stage, Professor Pires has accomplished several significant pieces of research, and has placed his work in publishing venues of the highest quality..."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Pires' research record is very strong and is moving forward in exciting directions. His classroom teaching and student mentoring are excellent. He also has a splendid service record. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Acrisio M. Pires be promoted to the rank of associate professor of linguistics, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Terrence J. McDonald  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,  
Professor of History, and Dean  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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