

Linguistics Department
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📄 [Facebook.com/SignGestureLab](https://www.facebook.com/SignGestureLab)

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Natasha R. Abner

Research Interests

Morphosyntax and the interface between form and meaning, using insights from sign language and gesture

Multi-modality in human communication

Emergence and development of linguistic and communicative structure

Employment

- 2017–present **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor, MI.
Assistant Professor, Linguistics Department
Director, [Sign Language & Multi-Modal Communication Lab](#) (Lab Tour Video)
Lead Faculty, [Language Across Modalities](#)
Faculty Member, [Initiative on Disability Studies](#)
Coordinator, American Sign Language/US Partnership, www.spreadthesign.com
- 2014–2017 **Montclair State University**, Montclair, NJ.
Assistant Professor, Linguistics Department
- 2012–2014 **University of Chicago**, Chicago, IL.
Postdoctoral Scholar, Goldin-Meadow Laboratory, Department of Psychology

Education

- 2007–2012 **PhD in Linguistics.**
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
- Fall 2010 **Visiting student.**
Département d'études cognitives
École normale supérieure
Paris, France
- 2001–2005 **BA in Linguistics, Summa Cum Laude.**
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor, MI

Theses

Dissertation

Title *There Once Was a Verb: The Predicative Core of Possessive and Nominalization Structures in American Sign Language*

Committee Hilda Koopman and Edward Stabler (chairs), Karen Emmorey, and Edward Keenan

<https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/001711>

Master's Thesis

Title *Right Where You Belong: Right Peripheral WH-Elements and the WH-Question Paradigm in American Sign Language*

Committee Edward Stabler and Anoop Mahajan (chairs), and Pamela Munro

Honor's Thesis

Title *Resultatives Gone Minimal*

Advisors Acrisio Pires and Samuel Epstein

Grants & Fellowships

In Revision	Event Description in Sign Language and Gesture	<i>National Science Foundation</i>
	Ranked competitively; revision in progress	(\$438,402)
2022	Provost's Early Tenure-Track Faculty Research Support	<i>ADVANCE, University of Michigan</i>
2018	New Initiative New Infrastructure (NINI) Grant	<i>University of Michigan.</i> (\$12,500)
2016	Historic Relations Between Sign Languages: Language Families or Iconic Similarities? PI: Carlo Geraci	<i>Fyssen Foundation</i> (≈ \$36,500 [in Euros])
2016	Summer Grant Proposal Development Award	<i>Montclair State University</i>
2011–2012	Dissertation Year Fellowship	<i>UCLA</i>
2010	Mellon Pre-Dissertation Fellowship	<i>UCLA</i>
2009	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship	<i>UCLA</i>
2009	Peter Ladefoged Research Grant	<i>UCLA, Linguistics Department</i>
2008	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship	<i>UCLA</i>
2007–2009	Cota Robles Fellowship	<i>UCLA</i>

Awards

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| 2022 | Nominee, Outstanding Advisor Award | <i>University of Michigan</i> |
| | ◦ Awarded annually in recognition of undergraduate and graduate advisors who go above and beyond to support students by providing information and advice, supporting their well-being, and fostering their academic and personal success | |
| 2020 | Best Paper in Language | <i>Linguistic Society of America</i> |
| 2019 | Distinguished Diversity Leaders Award | <i>University of Michigan</i> |
| | ◦ Team award to the Student Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Board for demonstrating extraordinary commitment and dedication to diversity at the University of Michigan | |
| 2019 | Certificate of Appreciation | <i>Council for Disability Concerns, University of Michigan</i> |

- Awarded annually in recognition of outstanding disability advocacy
- Fall 2018 Honored Instructor *University of Michigan Housing*
- Awarded each semester to faculty who have had a positive impact on students
- 2010–2011 Charles E. and Sue K. Young Award *UCLA*
- Awarded annually to one student from the UCLA Humanities Division for exemplary achievement in scholarship, teaching, and University citizenship.
- 2005 Virginia Voss Award for Excellence in Academic Writing *University of Michigan*
- 2005 Outstanding Graduating Senior *University of Michigan, Linguistics Department*
- 2001–2005 James B. Angell Scholar *University of Michigan*

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2022 Motamedi, Y., K. Montemurro, N. Abner, M. Flaherty, S. Kirby, and S. Goldin-Meadow. The seeds of the noun-verb distinction in the manual modality: improvisation and interaction in the emergence of grammatical categories. *Languages* 7(2):95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages7020095>
- *(i)* 2022 Kayabaşı, D.* and N. Abner. On the Reflexive KENDI in Turkish Sign Language. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.753455>
- *(ii)* 2022 Abner, N., S. Namboodiripad, E. Spaepen, and S. Goldin-Meadow. Emergent Morphology in Child Homesign: Evidence from Number Language. *Language Learning and Development* 18(1), 16–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15475441.2021.1922281>
- *(iii)* 2019 Abner, N., M. Flaherty, K. Stangl*, D. Brentari, and S. Goldin-Meadow. The Noun-Verb Distinction in Established and Emergent Sign Languages. *Language* 95(2), 230–267. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2019.0050>
 - Awarded [Best Paper in Language](#)
- 2018 Cooperrider, K., N. Abner, and S. Goldin-Meadow. The Palm-Up Puzzle: Meanings and Origins of a Widespread Form in Gesture and Sign. *Frontiers in Communication* 3(23). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00023>
- *(iv)* 2017 Abner, N. What You See Is What You Get: Surface Transparency and Ambiguity of Nominalizing Reduplication in American Sign Language. *Syntax* 20(4), 317–352. <https://doi.org/10.1111/synt.12147>
 - Wiley top 20 downloaded papers for its publication year.
- *(v)* 2015 Abner, N., K. Cooperrider, and S. Goldin-Meadow. Gesture for Linguists: A Handy Primer. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 9(11), 437–451. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12168>
- 2013 Abner, N. Gettin' Together a POSSe: The Primacy of Predication in ASL Possessives. *Sign Language & Linguistics* 16(2), 125–156. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sll.16.2.02abn>
 - Reprinted in *Signs and Structures: Formal Approaches to Sign Language Syntax*

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- *(vi)* 2021 Abner, N. Determiner phrases — theoretical perspectives. In *Routledge Handbook of Theoretical and Experimental Sign Language Research*, J. Quer, R. Pfau, and A. Herrmann (eds.), 213–231. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315754499-10>
- *(vii)* 2017 Abner, N. Syntactic Categorization in Sign Languages. In *Handbook of Categorization in Cognitive Science (2nd edition)*, H. Cohen and C. Lefebvre (eds.), 549–566. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-101107-2.00022-1>
- *(viii)* 2017 Abner, N. and R. B. Wilbur. Quantification in American Sign Language. In *Handbook of Quantifiers in Natural Language, Volume 2*, D. Paperno and E. Keenan (eds.), 21–59. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44330-0_2

Publications in Progress

* indicates student co-author

- *(ix)* To be submitted Abner, N., G. Clarté, C. Geraci, R. Ryder, J. Mertz*, A. Salgat*, and S. Yu*. Computational phylogenetics reveal the history of sign languages. To be submitted to *Science* (Anticipated submission Spring/Summer 2022).
- To be submitted King, R.* and N. Abner. Event Semantics in Speech and Gesture. To be submitted to *Glossa* (Anticipated submission Spring/Summer 2022).
- In prep. Abner, N. Structured Iconicity in the Composition of Events and Arguments. In preparation for *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*.
- In prep. Abner, N. and L. Lakusta. Gestural Insights on Communicative Biases in Motion Event Description. In preparation for *Linguistics Vanguard*.
- In prep. Abner, N. and M. Baptista. Anti-exceptionalism in Linguistics Teaching. In preparation for *Language* (Teaching Linguistics).

Conference Proceedings

* indicates student co-author

- 2020 Abner, N., C. Geraci., S. Yu*, J. Lettieri*, J. Mertz*, A. Salgat*. Getting the Upper Hand on Sign Language Families: Historical Analysis and Annotation Methods. *FEAST: Proceedings by the Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory Conference*, V. Kimmelman (ed.), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.31009/FEAST.i3.02>
- 2018 Yu, S.*, C. Geraci, and N. Abner. Sign Languages and the Online World: Online Dictionaries & Lexicostatistics. *11th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC 2018)*, N. Calzolari, K. Choukri, C. Cieri, T. Declerck, S. Goggi, K. Hasida, H. Isahara, B. Maegaard, J. Mariani, H. Mazo, A. Moreno, J. Odijk, S. Piperidis, and T. Tokunaga (eds.), 4235–4240. <https://aclanthology.org/L18-1>

- 2018 Wilbur, R. B., N. Abner, S. Wood, and H. Koulidobrova. When BEAT is ‘exceed’: Verbal comparison in American Sign Language. *Proceedings of Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory*, V. Kimmelman and H. Koulidobrova (eds.), 59–69. <https://raco.cat/index.php/FEAST/article/view/335118>
- 2014 Abner, N. Got Me A Plumb, Gonna Get Me A Scale. *Proceedings of Chicago Linguistics Society* 47(1), M. Abrego-Collier, A. Kang, M. Martinovic, and C. Nguyen, 1–15. <https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/001575>
- 2012 Abner, N. The Object of My POSSESSION. *Proceedings of West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics 30*, N. Arnett and R. Bennett (eds.), 21–31. <https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/001576>
- 2012 Graf, T. and N. Abner. Is Syntactic Binding Rational? *Proceedings of the 11th International Workshop on Tree Adjoining Grammars and Related Formalisms*, G. Satta and C-H. Han (eds.), 189–197. <https://aclanthology.org/W12-4600>
- 2011 Abner, N. WH-Words That Go Bump in the Right. *Proceedings of West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics 28*, M. B. Washburn, K. McKinney-Bock, E. Varis, A. Sawyer, and B. Tomaszewicz (eds.), 24–32. <https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/001105>

Edited Volumes

- 2008 Abner, N. and J. Bishop. *WCCFL 27: Proceedings of the 27th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*.

Other Academic Publications and Manuscripts

* indicates student co-author

- 2018 Müller, E.* , A. Salgat* , and N. Abner. Review of *Nominal Modification in Italian Sign Language*. *Folia Linguistica* 52(2), 543–548. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin-2018-0017>
- 2014 Abner, N. *There Once Was a Verb: The Predicative Core of Possessive and Nominalization Structures in American Sign Language* (Dissertation Abstract). *Sign Language & Linguistics* 17(1), 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sll.17.1.06abn>
- 2013 Abner, N. Review of *Sign Language – An International Handbook (Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science – HSK 37)*. *Sign Language & Linguistics* 16(2), 269–275. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sll.16.2.07abn>
- 2012 Abner, N. Nominal Possession in American Sign Language. *LSA Annual Meeting Extended Abstracts* 3, 14:1–5. <https://doi.org/10.3765/exabs.v0i0.586>
- 2010 Abner, N. For Game Settings, Press Select. *UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics*, T. Graf (ed). <https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/001174>
- 2009 Abner, N. and H. Burnett. On the So-Called “Determiners” of Tongan. Ms.
- 2009 Abner, N. Phrasing and Prominence: Extracting Prosodic Information from the BU Radio Corpus. Ms.

Conference Presentations

* indicates student co-author

- 2022 Kayabaşı, D.* and N. Abner. The Functions of KENDI in Turkish Sign Language. To be presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research, Osaka, Japan <https://cscenter.co.jp/tislr2022/>
- 2022 Motamedi, Y., K. Montemurro, N. Abner, M. Flaherty, S. Kirby, S Goldin-Meadow. The role of improvisation and interaction in the emergence of noun-verb distinctions. Nominated by Scientific Committee as alternate for presentation at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research, Osaka, Japan <https://cscenter.co.jp/tislr2022/>
- 2022 Kayabaşı, D.* and N. Abner. The Functions of KENDI in Turkish Sign Language. Presented at the Seventh Workshop on Turkic and Languages in Contact with Turkic, University of Connecticut. <https://sites.google.com/uconn.edu/tu7/>
- 2021 Kayabaşı, D.* and N. Abner. On The Syntactic Category of the Reflexive KENDI in Turkish Sign Language. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory, Hong Kong. <http://www.cslds.org/feast2021/>
- 2021 Dipzinski, M.* and N. Abner. A Spoken-Word Poet's Gestural Guide to Creating a Queer World. Presented at the 27th Annual Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conference, San Francisco, CA. <https://www.ciis.edu/academics/graduate-programs/human-sexuality/events-and-info-sessions/27th-annual-lavender-languages-and-linguistics-conference/>
- 2020 Abner, N., C. Geraci, S. Yu*, J. Lettieri*, J. Mertz*, A. Salgat*. Structural Phylogenetics and the Reconstruction of Sign Language History. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory, Paris, France. <https://sites.google.com/site/feastconference/feast-2020-online>
- 2020 Motamedi, Y., K. Montemurro, N. Abner, M. Flaherty, S. Kirby, S Goldin-Meadow. The Seeds of the Noun-Verb Distinction in the Manual Modality: The Role of Improvisation and Interaction. Accepted at EvoLang XIII: Evolution of Language International Conference, Brussels, Belgium. Canceled due to COVID. <https://brussels.evolang.org/>
- 2020 Abner, N., C. Geraci, J. Mertz*, J. Lettieri*, S. Yu* A Handy Approach to Sign Language Relatedness. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, New Orleans, LA. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lisa-2020-annual-meeting>
- o Acceptance Rate: 32%
- 2019 Abner, N., C. Geraci, J. Mertz*, S. Yu*. Articulatory Evidence for Sign Language Typology and History. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany. <https://www.idgs.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/tagungen/tislr2019.html>

- 2019 Abner, N., L. Lakusta, Y. Hussein*, R. Lotwisch*, E. Miiller*, A. Salgat*. Asymmetries in Spatial Communication: Evidence from Sources and Goals. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany. <https://www.idgs.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/tagungen/tislr2019.html>
- 2019 Geraci, C., J. Mertz*, J. Lettieri*, S. Yu*, N. Abner. Typological and Historical relations across sign languages: The view from articulatory features. Presented at Phonetics and Phonology in Europe (PaPE 2019), University of Salento, Lecca, Italy. <http://pape2019.unisalento.it>
- 2019 Abner, N., L. Lakusta, Y. Hussein, R. Lotwisch*, E. Miiller*, A. Salgat, A*. Asymmetries in Spatial Communication: Evidence from Sources and Goals. Accepted for presentation at Linguistic investigations beyond language: gestures, body movement and primate linguistics, ZAS, Berlin, Germany. (declined)
- 2019 Abner, N., J. Mertz*, J. Lettieri*, S. Yu*, C. Geraci. Typological and Historical relations across sign languages: The view from articulatory features. Presented at Generative Linguistics in the Old World (GLOW 2019), University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway. <https://glowlinguistics.org/42/>
 o Acceptance Rate: 21.6%.
- 2019 Abner, N., R. Lotwisch*, Y. Hussein*, L. Lakusta. From Speech to Gesture: Where Do We See Source-Goal Asymmetries? Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, New York, NY. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lisa-2019-annual-meeting>
 o Acceptance Rate: 32.05%.
- 2019 Geraci, C., J. Mertz*, S. Yu*, J. Lettieri*, N. Abner. Typological and Historical relations across sign languages: The view from articulatory features. Presented at 45th Generative Grammar Meeting (IGG45), University of Padua, Padua, Italy. <http://www.maldura.unipd.it/IGG45/>
- 2018 Abner, N., C. Geraci, J. Lettieri*, and S. Yu*. Articulatory Relationships Across Sign Languages. Presented at International Society for Gesture Studies, Cape Town, South Africa. <http://www.isgs8conference.com/>
- 2018 Abner, N., R. Lotwisch*, Y. Hussein*, and L. Lakusta. Source-Goal Asymmetries: Where do they come from and what parts of communication do they get to? Presented at International Society for Gesture Studies, Cape Town, South Africa. <http://www.isgs8conference.com/>
- 2018 Abner, N., and R. King*. Event Semantics in Gesture and Sign. Accepted for presentation at International Society for Gesture Studies, Cape Town, South Africa. (declined)
- 2018 Yu, S., C. Geraci, and N. Abner. Sign Languages and the Online World Online Dictionaries & Lexicostatistics. Presented at 11th Language Resources and Evaluation Conference, Miyazaki, Japan. <http://lrec2018.lrec-conf.org/en/>

- 2018 Abner, N., C. Geraci, J. Lettieri*, and S. Yu*. Typological and Historical relations across sign languages: The view from articulatory features. Presented at XIV AISV Conference, Bozen-Bolzano, Italy. <https://aisv2018.events.unibz.it/>
- 2018 King, R.* and N. Abner. Representation of Event Structure in the Manual Modality: Evidence for a Universal Mapping Bias. Presented at Workshop on the Emergence of Universals, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. <https://u.osu.edu/mlk2018emergenceofuniversals/>
- 2018 King, R.* and N. Abner. Event Structure Markings in Sign Language and Gesture. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, Salt Lake City, UT. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lisa-2018-annual-meeting>
 o Acceptance Rate: 28.57%.
- 2017 King, R.* and N. Abner. Iconic Representation of Event Structure in ASL and Gesture. Presented at CLS-MPI Iconicity Focus Group Workshop. Center for Language Studies (Radboud University) & Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, Netherlands.
- 2017 Abner, N., E. Koulidobrova, S. Wood, and R. B. Wilbur. Don't miss the BEAT!: Exceeds Comparatives in American Sign Language. Presented at Chicago Linguistics Society. University of Chicago, Chicago, IL. <http://chicagolinguisticsociety.org/>
 o Acceptance Rate: 21%.
- 2017 Abner, N. and E. Koulidobrova. When BEAT is *exceed*: Verbal Comparison in American Sign Language. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland. https://sites.google.com/site/feastconference/conferences/feast_reykjavik_2017
 o Acceptance Rate: 28%.
- 2016 Abner, N., R. King*, and M. Russoniello*. Representation of Event Semantics in Predicate Signs and Gestures. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Venice, Venice, Italy. <https://sites.google.com/site/feastconference/conferences/feast-venice-2016>
- 2016 Abner, N., S. Namboodiripad, E. Spaepen, and S. Goldin-Meadow. Child Home-signers Innovate Morphology: Evidence from Number Marking. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research. La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. [Presented in American Sign Language]
 o Acceptance Rate: 20%.
- 2016 Abner, N., M. Flaherty, K. Stangl*, D. Brentari, S. Goldin-Meadow. Distinguishing Objects and Actions in Homesign and Nicaraguan Sign Language: The Emergence of Lexical Categories. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research. La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.
 o Acceptance Rate: 20%.

- 2015 Abner, N., M. Flaherty, K. Stangl*, D. Brentari, S. Goldin-Meadow. Emergent Lexical Categories: Nouns and Verbs in Homesign and Nicaraguan Sign Language. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. Universitat Papeu Fabreu, Barcelona, Spain. <https://sites.google.com/site/feastconference/conferences/feast-2015-barcelona-2>
- 2015 Abner, N., K. Cooperrider, and S. Goldin-Meadow. Creating Meaning in the Palm of Your Hand. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, Portland, OR. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lisa-2015-annual-meeting>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 31.53%
- 2015 Abner, N., S. Namboodiripad, E. Spaepen, and S. Goldin-Meadow. Morphology in Child Homesign: Evidence from Number Marking. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, Portland, OR. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/event/lisa-2015-annual-meeting>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 31.53%
- 2015 Abner, N., Two-for-One Deal: Ambiguity and Transparency in ASL Nominalization. Accepted for presentation at the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC. (declined)
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: ~30%
- 2014 Abner, N. and K. Cooperrider. Pinning Down Palm-Ups. Presented at the 6th Conference of the International Society for Gesture Studies. University of California, San Diego, CA. <http://isgs.ucsd.edu/>
- 2014 Two-By-Two: Ambiguity of Nominalizing Reduplication in American Sign Language. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Venice, Venice, Italy.
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: ~40%
- 2014 Abner, N., S. Namboodiripad, E. Spaepen, and S. Goldin-Meadow. What Counts: Morphological Encoding of Number Information in Child Homesigners. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Venice, Venice, Italy.
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: ~40%
- 2013 Abner, N. Classifying Reduplicated Nominals in ASL. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research. University College London, London, England.
- 2013 Abner, N. Interpreting Possessives in ASL: Nominal and Verbal Factors. Presented at Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research. University College London, London, England.
- 2013 Abner, N. Deriving Meaning in the VP and DP: The Case of Possessives in American Sign Language. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. Boston, MA. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/2013-annual-meeting>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 30.67%

- 2012 Graf, T. and N. Abner. Is Syntactic Binding Rational? Presented at TAG+11: The 11th International Workshop on Tree Adjoining Grammars and Related Formalisms. University Paris-Diderot, Paris, France.
- 2012 Abner, N. and T. Graf. Binding Complexity and the Status of Pronouns in English and ASL. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland.
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: ~40%.
- 2012 Abner, N. Getting Together a POSSE: The Primacy of Predication in ASL Possessives. Presented at Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory. University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland.
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: ~40%.
- 2012 Abner, N. and T. Graf. The Complexity of Binding in English and ASL. Presented at Chicago Linguistics Society. University of Chicago, Chicago, IL. <http://chicagolinguisticsociety.org/>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 18%.
- 2012 Abner, N. The Object of My POSSESSION. Presented at the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics. University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA. <https://thi.ucsc.edu/thirty-years-of-west-coast-linguistics/>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 8.6%.
- 2012 Abner, N. Nominal Possession. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. Portland, OR. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/meetings-institutes/annual-meetings/2012>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 30.53%.
- 2012 Daland, R. and N. Abner. Testing Prerequisites for Prosodic Bootstrapping. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. Portland, OR. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/meetings-institutes/annual-meetings/2012>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 37.95%.
- 2011 Abner, N. On Being and Becoming P and *Plumb* P. Presented at the Chicago Linguistics Society. University of Chicago, Chicago, IL. <http://chicagolinguisticsociety.org/>
- 2010 Abner, N. WH-Words That Go Bump On the Right. Presented at the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.
- 2010 Abner, N. Rightward WH-Movement as Clefting in American Sign Language. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. Baltimore, MD. <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/meetings-institutes/annual-meetings/2010>
 ◦ Acceptance Rate: 46.25%.
- 2010 Abner, N. and H. Burnett. Tongan Un-Ds: On the So-Called Tongan “Determiners”. Presented at the Workshop on Syntax and Semantics 7. University of Nantes, Nantes, France.

- 2010 Abner, N. Rightward WH-Movement as Clefting in American Sign Language. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Michigan Linguistics Society. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Invited Talks

* indicates student co-author

- 2022 Panel Discussion: The Cognitive Science of Concepts: Contrasting Perspectives Across the Disciplines. Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science, University of Michigan.
- 2022 A manual for encoding events. Princeton Symposium on Syntactic Theory, Princeton University.
- 2021 Envisioning a better world: The case of sign languages. Humanities Collaboratory, University of Michigan.
- 2020 Event Structure Markings in Sign Language and Gesture. Department of Psychology, University of Chicago.
- 2019 Handmade Events. Linguistics Department, University of Michigan.
- 2018 Grammatical Categories in Established and Emergent Languages. Linguistics Program Eastern Michigan University.
- 2018 The Emergence of Language in Deaf Communities. Friends of Linguistics, University of California–Los Angeles.
- o [News coverage](#)
- 2018 Typological and Historical Relations Across Sign Languages. Linguistics Department, University of Massachusetts–Amherst.
- 2017 Grammatical Categories in Established and Emergent Languages. Linguistics Colloquium, Graduate Center, City University of New York.
- 2016 Language Emergence and the Gesture-(Sign) Language Continuum. Seminar in Meaning in Speech, Sign, and Gestures, New York University.
- 2016 Distinguished Categories: Structured Iconicity in Established and Emergent Sign Systems. LINGUAE Seminar in Linguistics. Institut Jean-Nicod, Département d'études cognitives, École normale supérieure, Paris, France
- 2016 American Sign Language: Patterns and Pressures of the Linguistic System. Seminar on the State of the Art of Sign Language Research. Institut Jean-Nicod, Département d'études cognitives, École normale supérieure, Paris, France
- 2016 Origins of Event Visibility. Purdue Workshop on Emerging Languages, Purdue University.
- 2015 WH-Questions in American Sign Language: The Not-So-Odds and Ends. Department of Linguistics, Swarthmore College.
- 2014 What You See Is What You Get-Get: Reduplicated Nominals in American Sign Language. Linguistics Syntax Supper, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

- 2013 Nominalization in American Sign Language: Evidence for Structure Dependence in Reduplication. Linguistics Colloquium, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.
- 2013 Predicative Origins of Possessive Constructions in American Sign Language. Workshop on Language, Cognition, and Computation. University of Chicago.
- 2010 Questions at the Interface. Formal and Experimental Approaches to Sign Language in Paris. École normale supérieure, Paris, France.

Advising

University of Michigan - Research

As director of the Sign Language & Multi-Modal Communication Lab, I also regularly advise research assistants from the Deaf community who are not otherwise affiliated with the university.

Graduate Advising

- 2021–present Sovoya Davis *Primary Advisor*
- 2021–present Danuta Allen *Secondary Advisor*
- 2020–present Demet Kayabaşı *Primary Advisor*
- 2020–present Yu-Chuan (Lucy) Chiang *Secondary Advisor*
- 2019–present Akimenka, Aliaksei *Secondary Advisor & Reader*
- Qualifying Research Paper: *Exceptional Case Marking clauses as derived achievements: a neo-constructivist approach*
- 2019–present Chia-Wen Lo *Dissertation Committee Member*
- Dissertation: *Delta Oscillations in Language Comprehension*
- 2017–present Marjorie Herbert *Dissertation Committee Member*
- 2020 Yushi Sugimoto *Reader*
- Qualifying Research Paper: *Subject Condition Effect in Japanese Redux*
- 2019–2020 Lauren Nikolai *Primary Advisor*
- 2017–2018 Joy Peltier *Primary Advisor*
- 2017 Alicia Stevers *Graduate Student Research Mentor*

Undergraduate Advising

- 2021 Lynn Eickholt *Reader*
- Undergraduate Honors Thesis: *Exploring the Role of the Arcuate Fasciculus in Early Reading Development*
 - High Honors
- 2019–2021 Mitchel Dipzinski *Undergraduate Research Advisor*
- 2019–2020 Alice Hanlon *Advisor*
- Undergraduate Honors Thesis: *Marginalized Communities and Environmental Disasters: The Flint Water Crisis and the Deaf Community in Flint, MI*
 - High Honors
 - [News coverage](#)
- 2019–2020 Muzi Li *Undergraduate Research Advisor*
- 2019–2020 Rebecca Lee *Undergraduate Research Advisor*

- 2018–2020 Anah Salgat *Undergraduate Research Advisor*
 2018–2019 Emily Miiller *Undergraduate Research Advisor*

University of Michigan - Other

- 2020, 2021 Michigan Humanities Emerging Research Scholars Program
 2019–present Faculty Advisor, Young Democratic Socialists of America
 2019–2020 Alumni Mentor, Residential College Mentorship Program

Thesis Advising/Reviewing at Other Universities

- 2019 Charlotte Hauser. *Subordination in LSF: Nominal and sentential embedding*. Rapporteur, PhD Committee. Université de Paris.
 2018 Mirko Santoro. *Compounds in sign languages: The case of Italian and French Sign Language*. Rapporteur, PhD Committee.
 2016 Brendan Costello. *Language and modality: Effects of the use of space in the agreement system of lengua de signos española (Spanish Sign Language)*. External PhD Reviewer. University of Amsterdam & University of the Basque Country (Joint Degree).
 2014 Lara Mantovan. *Nominal modification in Italian sign language (LIS)*. External PhD Reviewer. Ca'Foscari University of Venice.

Linguistic Society of America

- 2019 Pop-Up Mentoring, Committee on Gender Equity in Linguistics (formerly COSWL)

Montclair State University - Programmatic

- 2016–2017 Academic Advisor, Minor in American Sign Language
 2014–2017 Faculty Advisor, American Sign Language Club
 2014–2017 Academic Advisor, Undergraduate program in Linguistics

Montclair State University - Research

- 2017 Rebecca Lotwich. *The Source-Goal Phenomenon in Speech and Gesture*. Undergraduate Research Symposium.
 2015 Gulnaz Gumerova. *The Acquisition of Russian Grammatical Gender*. Master's Research Project.

University of Chicago

- 2014 Jessica Goodman. *Development of the Palm-Up Gesture: The Influence of Child-Directed Speech*. Undergraduate Honors Thesis.

Teaching

University of Michigan

Graduate Courses

RACKHAM Studying Disability Arts and Culture
 580

- o Cross-listed graduate seminar in disability studies taken by students from a variety of schools and programs across campus

LING 780 Language Genesis Across Modalities (with Marlyse Baptista)
◦ Interdisciplinary seminar required of all graduate students in the program
Mixed Undergraduate+Graduate Seminars

LING Linguistic Theory Across Modalities
492/792

LING Sign Language Linguistics
492/792

Undergraduate Courses

LING 102 Deafness and Disability
◦ First year seminar

LING 102 Deafness and Disability vs. Climate, Contagion, and Capital
◦ First year seminar

LING 210 Introduction to Linguistic Analysis
◦ Team-based learning design

LING 315 Introduction to Syntax
◦ Team-based learning design
◦ Satisfies Upper Level Writing Requirement and student writing from the course is regularly disseminated in our [Department newsletter](#)

LING 497 Gesture, Sign, and Speech
◦ Capstone seminar

Montclair State University

LNGN 210 Introduction to General Linguistics

LNGN 220 Structure of American English

LNGN 300 Syntax

LNGN 301 Semantics

LNGN 350 Sign Language Linguistics

LNGN 351 Gesture, Sign, and Speech

APLN 500 Language & Linguistics (Graduate Level)

University of California, Los Angeles

LING 1 Introduction to the Study of Language [TA]

LING 1 Introduction to the Study of Language [Sole Instructor]

LING 3 American Sign Language: Structure & Culture [Sole Instructor]

LING 20 Introduction to Linguistic Analysis [TA]

LING 120C Semantics [TA]

LING 165B Syntax II [TA]

LING 200B Syntactic Theory II (Graduate Level) [Grader]

Guest Lectures

2022 Acquisition of Sign Languages. Language Development, University of Michigan

- 2021, 2018 Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship Training. Linguistics Department, University of Michigan
- 2017 Sign Language Typology. Languages of the World, Montclair State University
- 2016 Homesign and Emergent Sign Languages. Psycholinguistics, Montclair State University
- 2014 Sign Language Linguistics. Introduction to Linguistics, Macalester College
- 2014 Sign Language Variation and Change. Sociolinguistics, Macalester College
- 2013 Possessives. Structure of American Sign Language, University of Chicago
- 2012 Sign Language Syntax and Semantics. Introduction to Linguistics, University of Chicago.
- 2011, 2010, Sign Language Linguistics. Introduction to the Study of Language, UCLA
2009, 2008
- 2011 Raising vs. Control. Syntactic Theory I (Graduate Level), UCLA
- 2011, 2010 Language Acquisition: What About Sign? Language Development, UCLA
- 2011 Verbal Structure in American Sign Language. Syntax II, UCLA
- 2010 Phonology of Signed Languages. Phonology II, UCLA
- 2009 Sign Language Linguistics. Language as a Window to the Mind, UCLA
- Webinars**
- 2019 How to Submit an Abstract for the LSA Annual Meeting: Tips from LSA Staff and Program Committee, Linguistic Society of America

Outreach Activities

Media

- 2016–present Coordinator, American Sign Language/US Partnership, www.spreadthesign.com
- 2021 [Teaching for Equity: U-M Faculty Perspectives](#)
- 2021 [Accessibility Statements in Equity-Focused Teaching](#)
- 2019 [Articulatory Evidence for Sign Language Typology and History \(SIGNopsis\)](#)

Public Presentations

- 2020 [A Handy Approach to Sign Language Relatedness](#)
- o Presented at Five Minute Linguist
 - o 1 of 7 presenters invited to compete in a short presentation of research
 - o 2nd place
- 2020 With Stephanie Kerschbaum, Accessibility, Sign Language, and Deafness. Invited presentation at Ann Arbor District Library. Canceled due to lack of interpreters.
- 2019 (with Robin Queen) If you're going to walk the walk, you've gotta talk the talk: Including language in DEI practices and initiatives. 2019 University of Michigan Disability Community Month.
- 2018 The Emergence of Language in Deaf Communities. Friends of Linguistics, Linguistics Department, University of California, Los Angeles, CA.
- o [News coverage](#)

- 2018 Why do we love sign language so much for everyone but Deaf kids? Language-Matters Initiative, University of Michigan.
- 2018 Critical Conversation = Encounters in Alterity (Invited Discussant), University of Michigan Initiative on Disability Studies, University of Michigan.
- 2018 Sign Languages & The Rights of Deaf Children. Pre-Speech and Hearing Club, University of Michigan.
- 2018 “Radical Inclusion: Infrastructural Spaces by Design”, Stalled! Non-Compliant Bodies (Invited Panelist). A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan.
- 2010 Intra-Language Variability: Syntax fail? Undergraduate Linguistics Club, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.

Public Writing

- 2021 [Public letter and advocacy materials for Michigan’s Language Acquisition and Equality 4 Deaf Kids Legislation \(HB5777\)](#)
 - Legislation passed the Michigan House of Representatives and is pending a Senate vote.
- 2020 Sign Language Consultant. *Britannica All New Kids Encyclopedia*.
- 2020 [Public letter in support of Michigan’s Language Acquisition and Equality 4 Deaf Kids Legislation \(HB5836\)](#)
- 2017 [“Statement Condemning HR 620 and Supporting the Disability Integration Act”](#)
- 2016 [“Sources for Authentic Portrayal of Life with Disability”](#)
- 2015 [“Remembering Other Dreams: \(Sign\) Language Access & Empowerment”](#)

Events (Lead Organizer)

- 2021 [Toward an Anti-Ableist Academy](#)
 - Month-long event series on disability in higher education, highlighting student, faculty, and staff experiences
 - In addition to organizing the event series, I also served as a panelist for “Disability Studies Futures at the University of Michigan” (October 5) and “Requesting Accommodations” (October 27)
- 2021 [Loving our planet like we should love each other: Disability in the time of climate crisis](#).
 - Panel discussion on disability and the climate crisis organized with disabled advocates from across the USA as part of the 2021 *Deafness and Disability vs. Climate, Contagion, and Capital* seminar
- 2021 [You don’t have to go it alone: Accessing public benefits in Michigan](#)
 - Webinar on accessing public benefits, with representatives from the Food Bank Council of MI, the Washtenaw Health Plan, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, and Legal Services of South Central Michigan
- 2018 [Sean Forbes: Public Performance & Community Discussion](#)
 - Community event featuring a performance and discussion with Deaf hip-hop artist Sean Forbes

Academic Service

Reviewing

- Grants *National Science Foundation* (2 applications), *National Science Centre of Poland* (1 application), *European Research Council* (1 application)
- Journals *Languages* (1 manuscript), *Cognitive Science* (1 manuscript), *Glossa* (2 manuscripts), *Sign Language and Linguistics* (5 manuscripts), *Language* (5 manuscripts), *Semantics and Pragmatics* (1 manuscript), *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* (1 manuscript), *Lingua* (3 manuscripts), *Journal of Semantics* (1 manuscript), *Cognitive Linguistics* (1 manuscript), *Child Development* (1 manuscript)
- Conferences *Joint Conference on Language Evolution* (2022), *North East Linguistics Society* (2021, 2020), *Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research* (2021, 2019), *Generative Linguistics in the Old World* (2021, 2019, 2018), *Sinn und Bedeutung* (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015), *West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* (2018), *Chicago Linguistics Society* (2021, 2020, 2018), *Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory* (2020, 2018), *Evolution of Language* (2020, 2017, 2013), *Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America* (2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2014), *International Society for Gesture Studies* (2016), *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* (2015), *Incontro di Grammatica Generativa* (2012)
- Edited Volumes *Three Streams of Generative Language Acquisition Research: Selected Papers from the 7th Meeting of Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition — North America, University of Illinois at Urbana, The Routledge Handbook of Theoretical and Experimental Sign Language Research*

University

University of Michigan

- Winter 2022 Executive Committee, Linguistics Department
- 2021–2022 Faculty Search Committee, Linguistics Department
- Winter 2021 Executive Committee, Linguistics Department
- 2021–*present* University Subcommittee on Intentional Recruitment of Students with Disabilities
- 2019–*present* Student Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Board, Office of the Provost
- o Recipient of the 11th Annual Distinguished Diversity Leaders Team Award
- 2018–*present* Council for Disability Concerns
- 2019–2020 Graduate Admissions Committee, Linguistics Department
- 2018–2019 Executive Committee, Linguistics Department
- 2017–2018 Graduate Committee, Linguistics Department
- Montclair State University
- 2017 Moderator, Student Research Symposium
- 2015–2016 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Montclair State University

2014–2015 Separately Budgeted Research & Distinguished Scholar Committee, Montclair State University

UCLA

2012 Search Committee, UCLA ASL Program

University of Michigan

2004–2005 Student Representative to the Undergraduate Committee, University of Michigan Linguistics

Editorial

2020–present Editorial Board, Sign Language & Linguistics

2019 Invitation to editorial team for special issue of *Linguistics and Philosophy* (declined)

Field

2021–present Steering Committee, Formal and Experimental Advances in Sign Language Theory.

2021–2022 Code of Conduct Subcommittee, Sign Language Linguistics Society

2020/2021 Nominated for Steering Group of the Linguistics and Language Science Section Z of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Elections postponed due to COVID.

2017–2020 Program Committee, Linguistics Society of America

Other Academic Service

2013 Sign Language Consultant. Fromkin, V., R. Rodman, and N. Hyams, eds. *Introduction to Language (10th Edition)*. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

2008, 2012 Open House Committee, UCLA Linguistics

2011–2012 Volunteer ASL Instructor, UCLA Undergraduate American Sign Language Club

2008–2012 Graduate Student Desk Czar, UCLA Linguistics

2007–2008 Planning Committee, 27th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics

Community Service

2006–present [Camp Looking Glass](#) Greenville, MS.
Board of Directors (Secretary) & Volunteer Co-Director of Programming

○ *Camp Looking Glass is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides free and accessible summer camp opportunities and year-round recreational activities for children and adults with disabilities in the Mississippi Delta — all at no cost to campers and their families. Our mission is to foster lifelong friendships between individuals with and without disabilities, and to provide a space where all individuals are included and celebrated.*

○ [Camp Looking Glass YouTube](#)

○ 2019 Special Achievement Award, Greenville Arts Council

○ 2019 Torchbearer, Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

- 2022–present [Washtenaw Equity Partnership](#) Washtenaw County, MI
Partner
- *A community collaboration with the [Vera Institute of Justice](#) to develop a transparent, coordinated, evidence-based Community Plan for identifying and addressing racial disparities across all components of the Washtenaw County juvenile and adult criminal legal systems and assuring the Plan’s implementation.*
- 2021–present [Detroit Disability Power](#)
Member
- *Detroit Disability Power is a membership organization that works to build the political power of the disability community and end disparities people with disabilities face in regards to housing, employment, education, transportation, healthcare and more.*
- 2020–present [Hungry for Justice](#) Statewide, MI
Steering Committee Member
- *Hungry for Justice aims to center the voices and concerns of Michiganders who suffer most from chronic and systemic disinvestment to promote racial equity, disability justice, and shared prosperity. Successfully advocated for legislative and policy changes to improve food assistance programs for disabled people and people impacted by incarceration, including COVID-safe shopping options as well as the passage of Senate Bill 1006.*
- 2008–2012 School on Wheels. Los Angeles, CA
Volunteer Tutor,
- 2007–2011 The Cheshire Project. Los Angeles, CA
Volunteer,
- 2005–2007 Teach for America. Greenville, MS
Corps Member

———— Scholarly Societies

- Lifetime Linguistic Society of America
Membership
- 2022–present American Association of University Professors
- 2020–present Cognitive Science Society
- 2018–present International Society for Gesture Studies
- 2017–present American Association for the Advancement of Science
- 2009–present Sign Language Linguistics Society

———— Languages

- Natural English, American Sign Language, French, Spanish
- Fieldwork American Sign Language, Appalachian English, Idioma de Señas de Nicaragua, Langue des signes française, Nicaraguan Homesign, Tongan
- Formal L^AT_EX, Python, OCaml