Laurel Perkins

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Research Interests

Behavioral and computational study of syntax and semantics acquisition: argument structure, *wh*-movement, verb learning and event representations, computational models of learning and parsing in development

Positions

2020 -	Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles
2020	Postdoctoral Fellow, Laboratoire de Sciences Cognitives et Psycholinguistique, Ecole Normale Supérieure

Education and Training

2014-2019	Ph.D. in Linguistics, University of Maryland, College Park Dissertation: "How Grammars Grow: Argument Structure and the Acquisition of Non-Basic Syntax." Advisor: Jeffrey Lidz
2013-2014	Research Assistant, Language Acquisition Research Center, Hunter College, CUNY PI: Virginia Valian
2005-2010	Honors B.A. with High Distinction in Literary Studies, University of Toronto Minors: Italian Language, Near & Middle Eastern Civilization
2008-2010	Artist Diploma with Honors in Vocal Performance, University of Toronto

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2024-2027	NSF Grant, "Collaborative Research: Non-local syntactic dependency acquisition in infancy" (NSF #BCS-2236013/2236014). Lead PI, with Jeffrey Lidz. $220,100.
2024-2025	UCLA Society of Hellman Fellows Award, "Topic-Comment structure in thought and language acquisition." $19,400.
2024-2025	UCLA Social Impact Collaborative Exploratory Grant, "Diversifying language development research in Los Angeles: Learning Spanish and English in children from 0-6." With Victoria Mateu. $10,000.
2023-2025	NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, "Doctoral Dissertation Research: Computational Investigation of Extralinguistic Cognition in Developmental Parsing" (NSF #BCS-2314618). With Katya Khlystova. $8,720.
2023	Faculty Research Grant, "Children's acquisition of intransitive verb classes in Spanish," UCLA Academic Senate. $7,760.
2020	Postdoctoral Study Grant, "Representing subjects and objects in infancy: A behavioral and computational investigation," Fyssen Foundation. With Anne Christophe. €30,000.
2020	Robert J. Glushko Dissertation Prize, Cognitive Science Society. $10,000.
2018-2020	NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, "Doctoral Dissertation Research: Behavioral and Computational Investigation of Transitivity in the Acquisition of Non-Basic Syntax" (NSF #BCS-1827709). With Jeffrey Lidz and Naomi Feldman. $15,653.
2019	Howard Lasnik Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Graduate Student, University of Maryland Linguistics Department
2015-2019	Fellow, NSF-NRT Training Program, "NRT-DESE: Flexibility in Language Processes and Technology: Human- and Global-Scale" (NSF: #DGE-1449815), University of Maryland

2014-2019   Flagship Fellow, University of Maryland

Publications

Papers
Under review	**L. Perkins** & T. Hunter. "Modeling regularization in language acquisition as noise-tolerant grammar selection." [lingbuzz]

Under review   **L. Perkins,** N.H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Mind the Gap: Learning the surface forms of movement dependencies." [lingbuzz]

2024   **L. Perkins,** T. Knowlton, A. Williams, & J. Lidz. "Thematic content, not number matching, drives syntactic bootstrapping." *Language Learning and Development*, DOI: 10.1080/15475441.2024.2372663.

2024   E. Khlystova, A. Williams, J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "Visual perception supports 4-place event representations: A case study of TRADING." *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Volume 46 (CogSci 2024).*

2023   **L. Perkins** & T. Hunter. "Noise-tolerant learning as selection among deterministic grammatical hypotheses." *Proceedings of the 6th meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL 2023).*

2023   S. Maitra & **L. Perkins**. "Filtering input for learning constrained grammatical variability: The case of Spanish word order." *Proceedings of the 6th meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL 2023).*

2023   V. Mateu, **L. Perkins,** & N. Hyams. "Learning unaccusativity: Evidence for split intransitivity in child Spanish." *Proceedings of the 97th Linguistics Society of America Annual Meeting.*

2022   **L. Perkins**, N. H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "The power of ignoring: Filtering input for argument structure acquisition." *Cognitive Science*, 46 (1) e13080; DOI: 10.1111/cogs.13080.

2021   **L. Perkins** & J. Lidz. "Eighteen-month-old infants represent nonlocal syntactic dependencies." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* 118 (41) e2026469118; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2026469118.

2020   J. Schneider, **L. Perkins**, & N. H. Feldman. "A Noisy Channel Model for Systematizing Unpredictable Input Variation." M. M Brown & A. Kohut (eds.), *Proceedings of the 44th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*: 533-547. Cascadilla Press.

2020   **L. Perkins** & J. Lidz. "Filler-gap dependency comprehension at 15 months: The role of vocabulary." *Language Acquisition*, 27(1): 98-115.

2018   J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "The importance of input representations." *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, 8(6): 743-748.

2017   **L. Perkins**, N. H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Learning an Input Filter for Argument Structure Acquisition." *Proceedings of the 7th Workshop on Cognitive Modeling and Computational Linguistics.*

Chapters
2023   **L. Perkins** & J. Lidz. "Behavioral Acquisition Methods with Infants." J. Sprouse (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Experimental Syntax.*

2018   J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "Language Acquisition." J. Wixted (ed.), *The Stevens' Handbook of Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience,* Fourth Edition, Volume 4.

Volumes Edited
2016   **L. Perkins**, R. Dudley, J. Gerard, & K. Hitczenko (Eds). *Proceedings of the 6th Conference on Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition North America (GALANA 2015).*

Presentations

Conference Talks

2024	E. Khlystova, A. Williams, J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "Visual perception supports 4-place event representations: A case study of TRADING." Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci 2024), Rotterdam.
2023	S. Maitra & **L. Perkins**. "Filtering input for learning constrained grammatical variability: The case of Spanish word order." 6th meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL 2023), Amherst.
2021	**L. Perkins**, Y. Ying, A. Williams, & J. Lidz. "Object *wh*-questions with unknown verbs are transitive for 20-month-olds." 46th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 46), Boston/Online.
2021	**L. Perkins** & J. Lidz. "Non-Local Syntactic Dependencies in Infancy: *Wh*-Question Representations Develop Between 14- and 18-Months." Symposium on "Beyond Categories: Infant Syntax Above the Word Level" (**L. Perkins**, chair, & J. Lidz, discussant), 2021 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Minneapolis/Online.
2020	M. Hirzel, **L. Perkins**, & J. Lidz. "19-month-olds parse *wh*-questions incrementally." 45th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 45), Boston/Online.
2019	A. Williams, **L. Perkins**, & J. Lidz. "Transitive clauses can describe 3-participant events: Evidence against one-to-one matching between arguments and participants in verb learning." 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 44), Boston.
2019	J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "The Development of *Wh*-Question Representations in Infancy: Evidence from 15- and 18-Month-Olds." 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 44), Boston.
2019	J. Schneider, **L. Perkins**, & N.H. Feldman. "A noisy channel model for systematizing unpredictable input variation." 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 44), Boston.
2019	H. Muller, P. Gaston, B. Dickerson, K. Durvasula, M. Hirzel, K. Hitczenko, M. Kandel, A. Liter, P. Lyskawa, J. Nelligan, M. Papillon, and **L. Perkins**. "Gender bias in representation and publishing rates across subfields." 93rd Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, New York.
2017	**L. Perkins**, N.H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Learning to Filter Non-Basic Clauses for Argument Structure Acquisition." 42nd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 42), Boston.
2017	J. Lidz, A. Williams, & **L. Perkins**. "Conceptual correlates of transitivity in early verb learners." Symposium on Event concepts and early word learning, 42nd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 42), Boston.
2017	**L. Perkins**. "Perceiving transitivity: consequences for verb learning." 7th Annual Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning (MACSIM), Washington, D.C.
2017	**L. Perkins**, N.H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Learning an Input Filter for Argument Structure Acquisition." 7th Workshop on Cognitive Modeling and Computational Linguistics (CMCL), Valencia, Spain.
2016	**L. Perkins**, A. X. He, A. Williams, R. Dudley, S. Björnsdóttir, & J. Lidz. "Can intransitive clauses name 2-participant events? A new test of Participant-to-Argument Matching in verb learning." Pre-CUNY Workshop on Events in Language & Cognition 2016, Gainesville.

Conference Posters

2023	**L. Perkins** & T. Hunter. "Noise-tolerant learning as selection among deterministic grammatical hypotheses." 6th meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL 2023), Amherst.

2023	V. Mateu, **L. Perkins,** & N. Hyams. "Learning unaccusativity: Evidence for split intransitivity in child Spanish." 97th Linguistics Society of America Annual Meeting (LSA 2023), Denver/Online.
2022	**L. Perkins**, & T. Hunter. "Word order acquisition from immature representations: A model for noise-tolerant learning of deterministic grammars." 47th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 47), Boston.
2020	M. Hirzel, **L. Perkins**, & J. Lidz. "19-month-olds represent and incrementally parse filler-gap dependencies." 33rd Annual CUNY Human Sentence Processing Conference, Amherst/Online.
2019	**L. Perkins**, N.H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Mind the Gap: Learning the Surface Forms of Movement." 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 44), Boston.
2018	**L. Perkins**, T. Knowlton, A. Williams, & J. Lidz. "Matching number vs. linking roles: Using 3-participant scene percepts to understand infants' bootstrapping." 43rd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 43), Boston.
2018	T. Knowlton, **L. Perkins**, A. Williams, & J. Lidz. "Getting a grip on infants' event representations: participant number in TAKE and PICK-UP." The XXI Biennial International Congress of Infant Studies (ICIS), Philadelphia.
2017	A. Williams, **L. Perkins**, A. X. He, S. Björnsdóttir, & J. Lidz. "A New Test of One-to-One Matching Between Arguments and Participants in Verb Learning." 42nd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 42), Boston.
2017	J. Lidz & **L. Perkins**. "Vocabulary Predicts Filler-Gap Dependency Comprehension at 15 Months." 42nd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 42), Boston.
2017	**L. Perkins**, T. Knowlton, M. Hirzel, R. Dudley, A. Williams, & J. Lidz. "Linguistic and Conceptual Structure in Verb Learning." The James S. McDonnell Plenary Workshop on the Ontogenetic Origins of Combinatorial Thought, San Diego.

Invited Talks

2023	**L. Perkins**. "How to grow a grammar: Noise-tolerant syntax learning in infancy." Department of Linguistics, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.
2022	**L. Perkins**. "Linguistic and event representations in early verb learning." Integrated Language Science and Technology Seminar, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
2022	**L. Perkins**. "Filtering input for grammar acquisition." Summer School on Computational Cognitive Modelling for Language, UC Irvine, Irvine, CA.
2022	**L. Perkins**. "Syntactic development in infancy." Department of Linguistics, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY.
2022	**L. Perkins**. "How to grow a grammar: Syntactic development in infancy." Department of English Literature and Language, Dongguk University, Seoul/Online.
2021	**L. Perkins**. "Linguistic and event representations in early verb learning." Cognitive Development Center, Central European University, Budapest/Online.
2021	**L. Perkins**. "How to grow a grammar: Syntactic development in infancy." Centre for Language Evolution, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh/Online.
2021	**L. Perkins**. "How do grammars grow? Wh-dependency development in infants." Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Urbana/Online.
2020	**L. Perkins.** "How grammars grow: Argument structure and the acquisition of non-basic syntax." Glushko Symposium, 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci 42). Toronto/Online.
2020	**L. Perkins.** "How to grow a grammar: Syntactic development in 1-year-olds." Lectures en linguistique expérimentale, Laboratoire de linguistique formelle, CNRS / Université de Paris, Paris/Online.

2019	K. Hitczenko & **L. Perkins**. "Introduction to Bayesian Modeling in Linguistics." 2nd meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL), New York.
2017	**L. Perkins**. "Perceiving transitivity: consequences for verb learning." Harvard Language and Cognition Seminar Series, Cambridge, MA.
2017	**L. Perkins**. "Perceiving transitivity: consequences for verb learning." Rutgers Workshop on Word Learning and Linguistic Theory, New Brunswick, NJ.
2017	**L. Perkins**, N.H. Feldman, & J. Lidz. "Learning to Filter Non-Basic Clauses for Argument Structure Acquisition." MIT Workshop on Simplicity in Grammar Learning, Cambridge, MA.

Teaching

UCLA
Fall 2023	LING213A: Grammatical Development (graduate)
Fall 2023	LING185A: Computational Linguistics I (undergraduate)
Spring 2023	LING209A: Computational Linguistics I (graduate)
Winter 2023	LING213A: Grammatical Development (graduate)
Winter 2023	LING264: Psycholinguistics/Computational Linguistics Seminar (graduate)
Fall 2022	LING185A: Computational Linguistics I (undergraduate)
Fall 2022	LING254: Topics in Linguistics; Computational Models of Learning (graduate). With Tim Hunter.
Spring 2022	LING209A: Computational Linguistics I (graduate)
Winter 2022	LING185A: Computational Linguistics I (undergraduate)
Fall 2021	LING254: Topics in Linguistics; Linguistic Knowledge and Extralinguistic Cognition in Grammar Development (graduate)
Fall 2021	LING264: Psycholinguistics/Computational Linguistics Seminar (graduate)
Spring 2021	LING185A: Computational Linguistics I (undergraduate)
Winter 2021	LING254: Topics in Linguistics; Models of Syntax Learning and Learnability (graduate)

University of Maryland
Spring 2018	LING449R: Topics in Psycholinguistics; Syntactic and Semantic Arguments in Language Acquisition (undergraduate)
Fall 2016	TA for LING444: Child Language (undergraduate)
Spring 2016, Fall 2015	TA for LING200: Introductory Linguistics for Non-Majors (undergraduate)

Advising

Graduate
Doctoral dissertation (chair): Katya Khlystova (ongoing)

Doctoral dissertation (committee member): Kalen Chang, Lily Xu, Zhongshi (Andy) Xu (ongoing)

MA thesis (committee member): Kevin Liang (2024)

Faculty advisor, Graduate Summer Research Mentorship fellowship: Kerri Devlin (2021)

Undergraduate
Shalinee Maitra, Department of Linguistics, UCLA. Honors thesis: "Word Order Acquisition and Subject-Verb Agreement in Spanish." (2022)

Jordan Schneider, Department of Computer Science, University of Maryland. Honors thesis: "A Noisy Channel Model for Systematizing Unpredictable Input Variation." (2019) Co-advisor with Naomi Feldman.

Research assistants, UCLA: April Alvarez, Itzel Cerecedo, Xinyue Cui, Sofia Duffy, Tina Fotouhi, Emily Freedman, Nicole Fuches, Serena Gutridge, Elaine Heidmann, Gabriela Hernandez, Isabella Latcham-Radusky, Shalinee Maitra, Alexander Gonzalez Paz, Aileen Rodriguez, Ana Sofia Rodriguez, Wendy Rodriguez, Jose Angelo Urrutia, Hanyu Zhou

Research assistants, University of Maryland: Alexander Shushunov, Erika Arrigo, Lillianna Righter, Gbemileke Soyoye, Abigail Kameny, William Simpson, John-Paul Teti

PULSAR Graduate Fellow (Program for Undergraduate Language Science Ambassadors in Research), University of Maryland Language Science Center. Co-instructor for a seminar to introduce undergraduate students to language science research opportunities in the university. (2015)

Service

2021-	Undergraduate Faculty Advisor for Linguistics & Computer Science Major (with Tim Hunter), UCLA Linguistics Department
2023	Website Committee, UCLA Linguistics Department
2022	Mentor, LSA Committee on Gender Equity in Linguistics Pop-up Mentoring Program, 47th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 47), Boston.
2022-	Faculty Awards Nominations Committee, UCLA Linguistics Department
2020-2021, 2023-	Student Research Funds Committee, UCLA Linguistics Department
2021-2022	Chair, Subcommittee on Interdisciplinary Issues, Climate Committee, UCLA Linguistics Department
2018-	Bias in Linguistics Working Group: inter-departmental working group studying issues of representation and equity in the field of linguistics
2017	Organizing Committee, Workshop on Language and Poverty: Home, School, and Society, University of Maryland Language Science Center and Field Committee on Developmental Science
2017	Organizing Committee, Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 27, University of Maryland
2016-2017	Co-Chair (with Kasia Hitczenko), Outreach Committee, University of Maryland Language Science Center
2015-2017	Colloquium Committee, University of Maryland Linguistics Department
2015-2016	Language Science Day Committee, University of Maryland Language Science Center
2015	Program Committee and Organizing Committee, 6th Bi-Annual Conference on Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition – North America (GALANA 6), University of Maryland
2015	Working Group Co-Leader (with Juliana Gerard), "Extralinguistic Contributors to Language Acquisition," Winter Storm, University of Maryland Language Science Center

Ad-Hoc Manuscript Reviewer

Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Science, Glossa, Glossa Psycholinguistics, Infancy, Journal of Memory and Language, Journal of Experimental Psychology, Language Acquisition, Language and Cognition, Language Learning and Development, Nature Human Behaviour

Ad-Hoc Abstract Reviewer

Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci), Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning (CoNLL), Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition North America (GALANA), International

Conference on Computational Linguistics (COLING), International Congress of Infant Studies (ICIS), Learning Language in Humans and Machines (L2HM), Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)

Ad-Hoc Proposal Reviewer

National Science Foundation Linguistics Program - Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants (DDRI)

Professional Memberships

Association for Computational Linguistics, Cognitive Science Society, International Congress of Infant Studies, Linguistics Society of America

[last updated 8/20/2024]