

# Sherry Yong Chen

Department of Linguistics & Philosophy  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
32 Vassar Street  
Cambridge MA 02139

✉ sychen@mit.edu  
🌐 <https://sherrychen.org>  
🔗 ID: linguistsherry  
🐦 @linguistsherry

## Education

### DEGREE-SEEKING PROGRAMS

- 2017- **PhD in Linguistics**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- MIT Presidential Fellow, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Fellow
  - Dissertation topic: presupposition projection in conditionals
- 2015-2017 **M.Phil in General Linguistics** (Distinction), University of Oxford
- George Wolf Prize for Best Performance in MPhil/MSt in Linguistics
  - Thesis: Processing Tenses for the Living and the Dead (Advisor: E. Matthew Husband)
- 2012-2015 **B.A in General Linguistics** (summa cum laude), University of Hong Kong
- Undergraduate Research Fellow
  - Prize in Linguistics, Prize in Language and Communication

## Publications

### BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Decomposing event in real-time: Putting the pieces (back) together. In C. Cummins & N. Katsos (Eds), *Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

### ARTICLES & PROCEEDINGS

- Forthcoming Kobayashi, F. H. & **Chen, S. Y.** Ways of decomposing events: Structural differences between adverbial and adnominal distributive numerals. *Proceedings of the 55th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS55)*.
- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.** & van Tiel, B. Every ambiguity isn't syntactic in nature: Testing a Rational Speech Act model of scope ambiguity. In *Proceedings of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)* (Vol 4, pp. 254-263). ACL Anthology.
- 2020 **Chen, S. Y.** Deriving *Wh*-Correlatives in Mandarin Chinese: *Wh*-movement and (Island) Identity. *Proceedings of the 50th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 50)*, Vol 1, pp.101-110.
- 2020 **Chen, S. Y.**, Kobayashi, F. H., Koring, L., Bill, C., Rosenstein, L. & Hackl, M. Comprehending

and: Developmental Path of English Conjunction in Child Language. *Proceedings of the 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD44)*, pp.91-104

2020 Hu, J., **Chen, S. Y.**, Levy, R. A closer look at the performance of neural language models on reflexive anaphor licensing. *In Proceedings of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)* (pp. 382-392). ACL Anthology.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Zero degrees: numerosity, intensification & negative polarity. In E. Ronai, L. Stigliano, and Y. Sun (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 54th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society* (pp. 53-68). CLS.

2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Comprehending anaphoric presuppositions involves memory retrieval too. *Proceedings of the LSA 92nd Annual Meeting*, 3(44), 1-11.

2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Contradictory (Forward) Lifetime Effects and the Non-Future Tense in Mandarin Chinese. *Proceedings of the LSA 92nd Annual Meeting*, 3(6), 1-14.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Movement Constraints on the Relative Order of Double Topics in Mandarin Chinese. In R. Maddeaux (Ed.), *Toronto Working Papers in Linguistics* (Vol 38).

#### BOOK REVIEWS

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Book review for *Pragmatic aspects of scalar modifiers: at the semantics-pragmatics interface*, by Osamu Sawada. *Journal of Linguistics*, 55(3), pp. 681-685.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Book review for *The Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics*, edited by Yan Huang, Oxford University Press. The LINGUIST List.

## Talks & posters

#### PEER-REVIEWED TALKS

2020 Hu, J., **Chen, S. Y.**, Levy, R. A closer look at the performance of neural language models on reflexive anaphor licensing. Talk given at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL). January 2-5, 2020. New Orleans, USA.

2019 Kobayashi, F. H. & **S. Y. Chen** Ways of decomposing events: Structural differences between adnominal and adverbial distributive numerals. Talk given at the 55th Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS55). May 16-18, 2019. Chicago, USA.

2018 Kobayashi, F. H. & **Chen, S. Y.** Ways of decomposing events: a unified semantics for adnominal and adverbial distributive numerals. Talk given at the Southern New England Workshop on Semantics (SNEWS). December 2, 2018, Amherst, USA.

2018 **Chen, S. Y.** From zero to bigger things: numerosity, intensification, and NPI licensing. Talk given at the 54th Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS54). April 26-28, 2018. Chicago, USA.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Non-Future Tense in Mandarin Chinese: Evidence from Contradictory (Forward) Lifetime Effects. Talk given at the *Tenselessness* Workshop. October 5-6 2017. London, UK.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** New Solution to an Old Puzzle: Syntactic Approach to Manner/Result Complementarity Explains the Structural Effects in Novel Verb Learning. Talk given at the Cambridge vP Workshop. June 19, 2017. Cambridge, UK.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Syntactic Constraints on Chinese Double Topicalisation: Locality and PCC Effects. Talk given at the Language at the University of Essex Postgraduate Conference (LangUE). June 15, 2017. Essex, UK.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Double Topicalisation, Syntax Does Constrain! Talk given at Edinburgh Linguis-

tics and English Language Postgraduate Conference (LEL). May 29-31, 2017. Edinburgh, UK.  
2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Movement Constraints on Double Topicalisation in Mandarin Chinese. Talk given at Manchester Forum in Linguistics. April 29-30, 2017. Manchester, UK.

PEER-REVIEWED POSTERS

- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.** & van Tiel, B. Every ambiguity isn't syntactic in nature: Testing a Rational Speech Act model of scope ambiguity. Poster presented at the *Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)*, Feb 15 - 19, 2021.
- 2020 Kobayashi, F. H. & **Chen, S. Y.** Quantifying over thematic roles: Mandarin distributive numerals and reciprocals. Poster presented at the 43rd Generative Linguistics in the Old World (GLOW), March 31 - April 3, 2020. Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Germany.
- 2020 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Illusory Licensing from Inaccessible Antecedents in Presuppositional Dependency. Poster presented at the 33rd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 19 - 21, 2020. Amherst, MA.
- 2020 **Chen, S. Y.** & van Tiel, B. "Every Horse didn't Jump over the Fence": Scope Ambiguity via Pragmatic Reasoning. Poster presented at the 33rd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 19 - 21, 2020. Amherst, MA.
- 2020 **Chen, S. Y.**, Kobayashi, F. H., Koring, L., Bill, C., Rosenstein, L., & Hackl, M. Comprehension of Conjunction by English-speaking Adults and Children. Poster presented at the 33rd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 19 - 21, 2020. Amherst, MA.
- 2019 Kobayashi, F. H., **S. Y. Chen**, L. Rosenstein & M. Hackl. Comprehending *and*: Development Path of English Conjunction in Child Language. Poster presented at the 44th Boston University Conference on Language Development BULCD. Nov 7-10, 2019. Boston, MA.
- 2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Deriving Wh-Correlatives in Mandarin Chinese: Wh-movement and (Island) Identity. Poster presented at the 50th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS50). Oct 24-27, 2019. Boston, MA.
- 2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Comprehending the presupposition of *too*: the effects of distance and interference. Poster presented at the 32nd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 29 - 31, 2019. Boulder, CO.
- 2019 **Chen, S. Y.**, Rosenstein, L., & Hackl, M. Facilitation effects of QUD and event type on negative sentences. Poster presented at the 32nd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 29 - 31, 2019. Boulder, CO.
- 2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Locality and distance distributivity: Mandarin reduplicated numerals at the syntax-semantics interface. Poster presented at the NASSLLI Student Session. June 23-29, 2018, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Modelling Memory Retrieval Processes with Drift Diffusion. Poster presented at the 31st Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. March 15-17, 2018. Davis, CA.
- 2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Comprehending anaphoric presuppositions involves memory retrieval *too*. Poster presented at the LSA 92nd Annual Meeting. January 4-7, 2018. Salt Lake City, UT.
- 2018 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Contradictory (Forward) Lifetime Effects and the Non-Future Tense in Mandarin Chinese. Poster presented at the LSA 92nd Annual Meeting. January 4-7, 2018. Salt Lake City, UT.
- 2017 Mills, A. C. & **Chen, S. Y.** Simplicity and complexity in the production of manner/result meanings: a preliminary investigation. Poster presented at MIT Workshop on *Simplicity in Grammar Learning*. September 23, 2017. Cambridge, MA.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Memory in the processing of anaphoric presuppositions. Poster presented at the 23rd Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing Conference (AMLaP). September 7-9, 2017. Lancaster, UK.

2016 **Chen, S. Y.** & Husband, E. M. Processing Tenses for the Living and the Dead: Evidence from Self-Paced Reading. Poster presented at the 22nd Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing Conference (AMLaP). September 1-3 2016. Bilbao, Spain.

#### INVITED TALKS

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Comprehending *and*: Lessons from Children's Understanding of English Conjunction. Talk given at the annual Language Acquisition Workshop in New England (LAWNE), MIT. November 17, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Comprehending *and*: Developmental Path of English Conjunction in Child Language. Talk given at Language and Cognition (LangCog). Language Development Lab (Sned-Lab), Department of Psychology, Harvard University. October 22, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Memory Retrieval in the Processing of Anaphoric Presupposition Dependencies. Talk given at the Psycholinguistics Colloquium, Berlin School of Mind and Brain, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. July 8, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Processing Lifetime Effects in Tensed and Tenseless Languages. Talk given at the Psycholinguistics Colloquium, Institut für deutsche Sprache und Linguistik, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. July 8, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** The Linguistics of *One, Two, Three*. Talk given at Language and Computation (CompLang). MIT. Feb 21, 2019.

#### INTERNAL TALKS

2020 **Chen, S. Y.**, Soh, C., & Aravind, A. Intermediate *Wh*-Copies in a Non-*Wh*-Copying Language. Talk given at Language Acquisition Lab, MIT. December 4, 2020.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Michael Kenstowicz. Longyou (Wu) Tones and Tone Sandhi. Talk given at Phonology Circle, MIT. November 18, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Comprehending *and*: Developmental Path of English Conjunction in Child Language. Talk given at Language Acquisition Lab, MIT. October 18, 2019.

2018 **Chen, S. Y.** Resolving scope ambiguity under degree questions. Talk given at Experimental Syntax & Semantics Lab, MIT. November 16 2018.

2018 **Chen, S. Y.** Anaphoricity, Presuppositions, and Memory Retrieval Processes. Talk given at Experimental Syntax & Semantics Lab, MIT. February 23 2018.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** Double topicalization, I find really interesting. Talk given at Syntax Square, MIT. October 24, 2017.

#### PUBLIC TALKS

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** New Understanding of Temporal Interpretations in the Chinese Language. Talk given at the 2017 China Oxford Scholars' Speaker Event. May 12, 2017. Oxford, UK.

2017 **Chen, S. Y.** As Time Goes by: Understanding Time in Language and Cognition. Talk given at Lincoln College Lord Florey Talk Series. March 17, 2017. Oxford, UK.

## Research experiences

- 2019 Summer Research Assistant (XPrag.de Internship Program), ZAS BERLIN  
• PIs: Bob van Tiel & Uli Sauerland  
• Project: Modelling the Use of Quantifiers in Typical and Atypical Speakers Probabilistically (MUQTASP)
- 2017- Graduate Affiliate, Computational Psycholinguistics Lab, MIT  
• PI: Roger Levy  
• Project: Psycholinguistic approaches to the evaluation of language models
- 2017- Graduate Student, Language Acquisition Lab, MIT  
• PIs: Athulya Aravind & Martin Hackl  
• Project: Comprehension of English conjunction in child language
- 2015-2017 Graduate Student, Language and Brain Lab, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
• PIs: E. Matthew Husband & Aditi Lahiri  
• Projects: Presupposition and memory mechanism; Processing of tense; Decomposition of Chinese compound characters
- 2015 Summer Research Assistant, Language Processing Lab, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
• PI: Heeju Hwang  
• Project: Syntactic and semantic properties of pronoun use in Cantonese
- 2014 Summer Research Intern, Developmental Psychology Lab, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
• PI: Terry Au  
• Project: Phonological representation and early literacy in Chinese
- 2013 Summer Research Assistant, Department of Linguistics, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
• PI: Umberto Ansaldo  
• Project: Complexity and simplicity in isolating languages

## Honors, awards & scholarships

- 2017-2018 Walter A. Rosenblith Presidential Graduate Fellowship, MIT
- 2016-2017 George Wolf Prize (Best Performance in MPhil/MSt in Linguistics), University of Oxford
- 2016-2017 Lincoln College Crewe Graduate Scholarship, University of Oxford
- 2016-2017 Oxford China Simon Li Scholarship, China Oxford Scholarship Fund (COSF)
- 2015-2016 Lincoln College North American Alumni Graduate Award, University of Oxford
- 2015 University Postgraduate Scholarship, University of Hong Kong (declined)
- 2014-2015 Prize in Linguistics, University of Hong Kong
- 2014-2015 Macmillan Prize in Language and Communication, University of Hong Kong
- 2014-2015 Chan Kai Ming Prize (Best performance in Faculty of Arts), University of Hong Kong
- 2014-2015 Kam Louie Arts Centenary Prize, University of Hong Kong
- 2013-2015 Sir Man Kam Lo/Jardine Scholarship, University of Hong Kong
- 2013-2014 Reaching Out Award, the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund
- 2013-2014 Kai Chong Tong Scholarship, University of Hong Kong
- 2012-2015 Dean's Honour List, Faculty of Arts, University of Hong Kong
- 2012-2015 Foundation Scholarship for Outstanding Students, University of Hong Kong
- 2012-2013 Hua Cheng Chinese Culture Scholarship, University of Hong Kong
- 2012-2013 Ho Fook Prize (best performance among first-year B.A), University of Hong Kong

## Fundings & grants

### INTERNAL FUNDINGS

- 2019 Summer Angelika R Howard Memorial Fund  
2018 Summer Japan Fund for Linguistic Research  
2017-2022 MIT Linguistics & Philosophy Graduate Fundings

### EXTERNAL TRAVEL GRANTS

- 2019 Student Travel Award, the 32nd CUNY Human Sentence Processing Conference, University of Colorado  
2018 Full scholarships, North American Summer School in Logic, Language & Information (NASSLLI), CMU  
2015-2017 Faculty of Linguistics, Philology & Phonetics Student Travel Grant, University of Oxford  
2015-2017 Lincoln College Graduate Research Fund, University of Oxford  
2015-2016 Santander Academic Travel Awards, Santander & University of Oxford  
2013-2014 Worldwide Scholarship for Outgoing Exchange Students, University of Hong Kong

## Professional services

### ORGANIZATIONAL

- 2020 Committee member, the LSA *Committee on Ethnic Diversity in Linguistics* (CEDL).  
2019 Organizing committee, the 50th *North East Linguistic Society Conference* (NELS50). MIT.  
2019 Chair, the 6th *Semantics of African, Asian, and Austronesian Languages* (Triple A). MIT  
2018-2019 Organizer, *MIT Linguistics Colloquium*. MIT.  
2018 Student committee, the 28th *Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference* (SALT28). MIT.  
2018 Organizing committee, the 14th *Workshop on Altaic Formal Linguistics* (WAFL14). MIT.  
2017- Member, *Committee on the Status of Women in Linguistics*, Linguistic Society of America  
2016-2017 Co-organizer, *Oxford China Studies Postgraduate Research Seminars Series*. China Centre, University of Oxford  
2015 Spring Organizer, *Achieving Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Writing Workshop*. University Libraries & HKU Journal of Undergraduate Humanities, University of Hong Kong

### REVIEWING

- 2021 *Journal of Pragmatics*  
2019 The 8th biennial Experimental Pragmatics Conference (XPrag2019)  
2018 The 14th *Workshop on Altaic Formal Linguistics* (WAFL14)  
2018 NASSLLI Student Session  
2018 Discourse, Context & Media  
2017-2019 The Undergraduate Awards

### TEACHING

- 2021 Spring TA for *Language Acquisition* (24.904; Athulya Aravind), MIT  
2020 Summer TA for *Introduction to Semantics* (Cleo Condoravdi), CreteLing Summer School (Cancelled due to COVID)

- 2020 Summer Supporting TA for *Introduction to Syntax* (Kyle Johnson), CreteLing Summer School (Cancelled due to COVID)
- 2020 Spring TA for *Language Acquisition* (24.904; Athulya Aravind), MIT
- 2018 Fall TA for *Introduction to Linguistics* (24.900; Adam Albright), MIT

#### EDITING & PUBLISHING

- 2019-2021 Editor, *Whamit!* (weekly newsletter at MIT Linguistics).
- 2017-2018 Student Staff, *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*.
- 2016 Spring Section Editor, The Oxford Student
- 2014-2015 Editor & Initiator, Publishing Insights
- 2013-2015 Initiator & Editor in Chief, *HKU Journal of Undergraduate Humanities*. Faculty of Arts, University of Hong Kong

## Outreach

- 2017-2018 Marker, United Kingdom Linguistics Olympiad
- 2017 Spring Linguistic Consultant for Language Landscape & LinguaMania, Ashmolean Museum
- 2016-2017 Publicity Manager, Oxford Linguistics Society
- 2014-2015 Translator, TED Open Translation Project
- 2013-2015 Equal Opportunity Ambassador, University of Hong Kong

## Non-degree studies

- 2021 Spring *Lesson Planning Teaching Certificate Program*, MIT Teaching + Learning Lab
- 2020 Summer *Subject Design Teaching Certificate Program*, MIT Teaching + Learning Lab
- 2019 Summer DGfS Summer School (XPrag.de Priority Program), Humboldt-University zu Berlin.
- 2018 Summer North American Summer School on Logic, Language, and Information (NASSLLI), Computational Linguistics track. Carnegie Mellon University.
- 2017 Summer Advanced Core Training in Linguistics Summer School (ACTL). University College London.
- 2016 Summer The 13th China Linguistics Summer Institute. Fudan University, Shanghai.
- 2013 Autumn Overseas Exchange Program. University of Melbourne.

## Membership

- 2016- Linguistic Society of America (LSA)
- 2016-2017 Linguistic Association of Great Britain (LAGB)
- 2015-2017 Oxford Linguistics Society
- 2012-2015 Hong Kong University Linguistics Society

## Skills

#### LANGUAGES

English: full professional proficiency

- Undergraduate & postgraduate degrees taught and assessed in English

- GRE Analytical Writing: 5.5/6.0, 98% (Taken on 22/08/2016)

- IELTS score: 8.5/9.0 (Taken on 13/12/2014)

Mandarin & Wu Chinese: bilingual/native proficiency

Cantonese: working proficiency

Spanish, German, Brazilian Portuguese: Beginner

#### COMPUTATIONAL & ANALYTICAL

Programming: R, Python, JavaScript (inc. WebPPL), (My)SQL

Language Models: Transformers, LSTMs, RNNs, SRILM ( $n$ -grams), GloVe, word2vec

Corpora: CLAN, CHILDES, NLTK, COCA

Experimental: Data Viewer, E-Prime, E-Run, Experiment Builder, Eyelink, IbxFarm, PenController

Sound: Praat, Audacity

Others:  $\LaTeX$ , Wikitext, InDesign, Photoshop