

Sherry Yong Chen

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Research interests

Broad: Semantics/Pragmatics, Language Acquisition, Psycholinguistics

Narrow: Presupposition, focus, numeral semantics, event semantics, tense and aspect

Education

- 2017- **PhD in Linguistics**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Dissertation title: *Non-uniformity of presupposition projection: Processing and Acquisition* (Committee: Athulya Aravind, Kai von Stechow, Danny Fox)
 - National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (Award number: 2140399; Awarded amount: \$10,838)
- 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
- Prize in Linguistics, Prize in Language and Communication

Non-degree studies

- 2020-2021 *MIT Graduate Teaching Certificate*, MIT Teaching + Learning Lab
- 2020 Natural Language Processing Specialization, deeplearning.ai
- 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.
- 2013 Autumn Overseas Exchange Program. University of Melbourne.

Publications

ARTICLES & PROCEEDINGS

- Forthcoming **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Tracking down (c)overt movement with distributive numerals in Mandarin Chinese. *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Meeting of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL39)*.
- In prep **Chen, S. Y.**, Torma, C., & Aravind, A. Asymmetry in Presupposition Projection in If-Conditionals: Evidence from Acquisition. *Proceedings of the 52nd Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS52)*.
- In prep **Chen, S. Y.**, Torma, C., & Aravind, A. Non-uniformities in the Development of Presupposition Projection in If-Conditionals. *Proceedings of the 46th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD46)*.

- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.** & van Tiel, B. Every ambiguity isn't syntactic in nature: Testing a Rational Speech Act model of scope ambiguity. *Proceedings of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)* (Vol 4, pp. 254-263). ACL Anthology.
- 2020 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)*.
- 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 (NELS50)*, 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. *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, & 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 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.

Talks & posters

PEER-REVIEWED TALKS

- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.**, Torma, C., & Aravind, A. Asymmetry in Presupposition Projection in If-Conditionals: Evidence from Acquisition. Talk given at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS52). Oct 29-31, 2021. Rutgers University.
- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.**, Torma, C., & Aravind, A. Non-uniformities in the Development of Presupposition Projection in If-Conditionals. Talk given at the 46th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD46).
- 2021 **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Tracking down (c)overt movement with distributive numerals in Mandarin Chinese. Talk given at the 39th Annual Meeting of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL55).
- 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 Linguistics 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.** & 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

2021 **Chen, S. Y.** How to take things for granted: Formal representation of meaning & language acquisition. Talk given at Carlton University. November 18, 2021.

2021 **Chen, S. Y.** Asymmetry in Presupposition Projection in *If*-Conditionals: An Acquisition Perspective. Invited talk given at UC Berkeley Syntax & Semantics Circle (SSCircle). October 15, 2021.

2021 **Chen, S. Y.** Non-Uniformities in Presupposition Projection in Development. Invited talk given at the MIT Quest Workshop on Meaning Representation in Linguistics, Computer Science, & Neuroscience. September 21, 2021.

2021 **Chen, S. Y.** & van Tiel, B. Every ambiguity isn't syntactic in nature: Testing the RSA model of Scope Ambiguity. Invited talk given at the Language Processing Lab, University of Chicago. May 28, 2021.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** & Kobayashi, F. H. Comprehending *and*: Lessons from Children's Understanding of English Conjunction. Invited 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. Invited talk given at Language and Cognition (LangCog). Language Development Lab (SnedLab), Department of Psychology, Harvard University. October 22, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** Memory Retrieval in the Processing of Anaphoric Presupposition Dependencies. Invited 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. Invited talk given at Institut für deutsche Sprache und Linguistik, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. July 8, 2019.

2019 **Chen, S. Y.** The Linguistics of *One, Two, Three*. Invited 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.

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
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

2022-2023 NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, Award #2140399 (PI: Aravind; CO-PI: Chen)
2021 Paula Menyuk Award for Top-Rated Student Abstracts, Diversity Travel Fellowship, the 46th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD46)
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 (NASSLI), 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

- 2020-2021 Co-organizer, *MIT Computation and Language (CompLang) Reading Group*.
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*.
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

REVIEWING

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

TEACHING

- 2021 Spring TA for *Language Acquisition (24.904; Athulya Aravind)*, MIT
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*
2013-2015 Initiator & Editor in Chief, *HKU Journal of Undergraduate Humanities*, Faculty of Arts, HKU

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

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
Mandarin & Wu Chinese: bilingual/native proficiency
Cantonese: working proficiency
Spanish, German, Brazilian Portuguese: Beginner

COMPUTATIONAL & ANALYTICAL

Programming: R, Python, JavaScript (inc. WebPPL), (My)SQL
Corpora: CLAN, CHILDES, NLTK, COCA
Experimental: Data Viewer, E-Prime, E-Run, Experiment Builder, Eyelink, (PC)IbexFarm
Sound: Praat, Audacity
Others: \LaTeX , Wikitext, InDesign, Photoshop