



Aaron A. Wright

Post-Baccalaureate Research Scientist

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language cognition : (mis)communication, reactivity, & repair | culture & bilingualism

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Research Interests

I study... *language cognition* | what neural processes support language production and comprehension?

Specifically... *(mis)communication* | when, why, and how do we misunderstand each other during linguistic communication?

- *reactivity* | why does miscommunication elicit strong reactions between speakers and comprehenders?
- *repair* | how do we anticipate and resolve miscommunication during linguistic communication?

culture & bilingualism | how does linguistic experience influence language cognition and communication?

Education

2024
Wenham, MA **B.S. in Cognitive Science of Language; Minors in Psychology, French**
Gordon College Honors Institute | Kenneth L. Pike Honors
Advisor(s): Susan Bobb, Ph.D., & Jeffrey Stevenson, Ph.D.
Summa cum laude

Research Experience

† Principal Investigator

2024 - Present
Cambridge, MA **K. Lisa Yang Post-Baccalaureate Research Scholar**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology | McGovern Institute for Brain Research, Brain & Cognitive Sciences
EvLab | Advisor(s): Evelina Fedorenko, Ph.D.[†], & Agata Wolna, Ph.D.
Neuroimaging and behavioral approaches, investigating the neural bases of language and bilingualism.

2023 - 2024
Framingham, MA **Neuropsychology Research Assistant**
Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine | National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
Framingham Heart Study Brain Aging Program | Supervisor(s): Julie Joyce, Emma Müller
Psychometric data verification and clinical profile auditing, studying cognitive correlates of neurodegenerative diseases.

2023 - 2024
Wenham, MA **Research Assistant**
Gordon College School of Science and Health | Kinesiology
MRI Brass Repository Project | Advisor(s): Peter Iltis, Ph.D.[†]
Structural neuroimaging and auditory analyses for clinical and behavioral profiling of brass instrumentalists.

Publications

Peer-reviewed

1. Iltis, P. W., Frahm, J., Voit, D., **Wright, A.**, & Dever, A. (2024). A Descriptive Comparison of Oral Cavity Movements Between Brass Instrumentalists Performing Large Interval Slurs. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 39(4), 169-176. [[paper](#)]

Preprints

2. Wolna, A., **Wright, A.**, Casto, C., Lipkin, B., & Fedorenko, E. (2025). The extended language network: Language-responsive brain areas whose contributions to language remain to be discovered. *bioRxiv*, 2025-04. [preprint] [osf]

In preparation

3. Poliak, M., Wolna, A., **Wright, A.**, de Varda, A., Gibson, E., & Fedorenko, E. (in prep.). Intrinsic stimulus-related vs. contextual effects in the processing of structured and unstructured language stimuli.
4. Wolna, A., Swords, S., **Wright, A.**, Szewczyk, J. Diaz, M., Domagalik, A., Szwed, M., Wodniecka, Z., & Fedorenko, E. (in prep.). The language network, Broca's area, and motor cortex support / implement distinct stages of language production.
5. Wolna, A., **Wright, A.**, de Varda, A., Wodniecka, Z., Fedorenko, E. (in prep.). From words to stories: Engagement of language-specific and domain-general neural mechanisms in native and second language comprehension.

Posters & Presentations

* Presenting author(s) | reverse chron.

1. Wolna, A. **Wright, A.***, Casto, C., Lipkin, B., & Fedorenko, E. (2025, April). *The extended language network: Language selective brain areas whose contributions to language remain to be discovered*. [Poster Presentation]. **Patrick J. McGovern Travel & Technology Awards Poster Session**, Cambridge, MA.
2. Wolna, A. *, **Wright, A.***, Wodniecka, Z., Fedorenko, E. (2025, March). *From words to stories: Engagement of language-specific and domain-general neural mechanisms in native and second language comprehension*. [Poster Presentation]. **Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society**, Boston, MA.
3. Wolna, A. *, **Wright, A.**, Lipkin, B., & Fedorenko, E. (2024, October) *The extended language network: A large-scale characterization of language-responsive regions beyond the core fronto-temporal network*. [Poster Presentation]. **Society for Neurobiology of Language**, Brisbane, Australia.
4. Iltis, P. W., Frahm, J., Voit, D., **Wright, A. A.***, & Dever, A. R*. (2024, February). *A descriptive comparison of oral cavity movements between brass instrumentalists performing large interval slurs*. [Symposium] **North Shore Sigma Xi Research Symposium**, Wenham, MA.
5. **Wright, A. A.***, Cho, Y.*, Dominguez, M. V.*, & Williams, A. L.* (2022, April). *Influence of interactive social dynamic roles on the use of accommodative speech*. [Symposium]. **Gordon College Undergraduate Research Symposium**, Wenham, MA.
6. **Wright, A. A.***, Niles, R. K. *, & Lee, S.* (2022, April). *EEG synchrony during mental attention tasks reflects differences in cognitive processing*. [Symposium]. **Gordon College Undergraduate Research Symposium**, Wenham, MA.
7. **Wright, A. A.***, Niles, R. K. *, Dambo, L. K. *, & Szumierz, C. S.* (2021, May). *The effects of concussions on the working memory in young adult athletes*. [Symposium]. **Gordon College Undergraduate Research Symposium**, Wenham, MA.

Awards & Honors

† Competitive funding | * merit-based

2025 (Fall) **School of Science Quality of Life Grant**[†] | Massachusetts Institute of Technology

2025 (Spring)	School of Science Quality of Life Grant[†] Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2024	BCS Spot Appreciation Award* Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2023	Dick and Judy Gross Servant Leadership Scholarship^{**} Gordon College
2023	Marion Jackson Carter Endowment Award^{†*} Gordon College
2020 - 2024	Presidential Honors* Gordon College

Memberships & Affiliations

2025 - Present	Cognitive Neuroscience Society (CNS)
2021 - Present	Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology

Activities & Service

Academic investment & mentorship

2025	MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP-Bio) Pal <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> <i>Brain & Cognitive Sciences</i> Provided mentorship and academic support to undergraduate scholars hosted in BCS labs. Mentee(s): Clifton David (Brooklyn College); Polina Rafailova (Bard College)
2022 - 2024	Chapter President Psi Chi International Honors Society in Psychology <i>Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services</i> <i>Psychology</i>
2022	Club President Neuroscience Club <i>Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services & School of Science and Health</i> <i>Psychology, Neuroscience</i>
2021 - 2022	Teacher's Assistant Research Methods I (PSY156) <i>Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services</i> <i>Psychology</i>
2021	Teacher's Assistant Introduction to Linguistics (LIN201) <i>Gordon College School of Humanities and Social Sciences</i> <i>Linguistics</i>

Scientific outreach & international experience

2025	STEAM It Up! Cambridge-wide K-8 Family STEAM Night <i>Cambridge STEAM Initiative</i> Facilitated entertaining scientific activities for parents and children in the Cambridge community.
2025	MGH Aspire Summer 2025 Adventure Camp Trailblazers <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> <i>McGovern Institute for Brain Research</i> Tour of the McGovern Institute for Mass General Brigham's Aspire program for young teens identifying with ASD.
2025	Workshop, "Building a Personal Research Website" <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> <i>McGovern Institute for Brain Research, Picower Institute for Learning and Memory</i> Created and led three-part workshop series on designing a personal research website with GitHub Pages.
2023, 2025	Compass Path: Iceland <i>Reykjavík & Akureyri, Iceland</i> Relational, volunteer service for immigrant and refugee communities; organized extracurricular programming for local youth.
2023	Engage Lead: Cambodia <i>Phnom Penh, Cambodia</i> Assisted with teaching at Khmer universities, hosted IELTS prep workshops; participated in cross-cultural leadership training.

Languages

English	speaking: native reading: native writing: native
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French speaking: intermediate | reading: intermediate | writing: intermediate

Experimental Methodology & Skills

Neuroimaging & analysis (fMRI)	CONN Toolbox Connectome Workbench FreeSurfer FSL SPM
Programming languages & platforms	MATLAB Python (Visual Studio Code) R (RStudio)
Reproducible science & data	Positron Git / GitHub Quarto
Behavioral experimentation	Audacity Praat Prolific
Data visualization & design	Adobe Illustrator

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Well, that is one of the things to find out sometime. Isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive — it's such an interesting world. It wouldn't be half so interesting if we know all about everything, would it?
— *Anne of Green Gables*, L. M. Montgomery