Aaron A. Wright
Post-Baccalaureate Research Scientist

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

Last updated: Feb 24th, 2026

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

Competitive Funding

† Awarded | * Applied | x Declined

2025	**NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program***	National Science Foundation
2025 (Fall)	**School of Science Quality of Life Grant**† ($2,000)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2025 (Spring)	**School of Science Quality of Life Grant**† ($2,000)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2021 - 2024	**Resident Advisory Grants**† ($20,390)	Gordon College

Awards & Honors

† Funding awarded

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

| 2024 | **BCS Spot Appreciation Award** |

Gordon College

2023	**Dick and Judy Gross Servant Leadership Scholarship**[†]
2023	**Marion Jackson Carter Endowment Award**[†]
2023 - 2024	**Charles Diehm Scholarship**[†]
2022 - 2024	**Wycliffe Scholarship**[†]
2022 - 2024	**Kenneth L. Pike Honors**
2020 - 2024	**Presidential Honors**
2020 - 2024	**Harold John Ockenga (President's) Scholarship**[†]

Teaching Experience & Mentorship

Invited talks

2026   **Wright, A. A.** (2026, March). *Functional characterization of language processing in the human brain.* Neuroscience of Language (PSY380) guest lecture. Gordon College School of Psychology and Human *Services*, Wenham, MA.

Positions

2023 - 2024   **Residence Life Fellow**
Gordon College Residence Life | Office of Student Life

2021 - 2024   **Resident Advisor, Apartment Coordinator**
Gordon College Residence Life | Wilson, Ferrin, & Rider Halls

2021 - 2022   **Teaching Assistant, Peer Mentor** | The Great Conversation (COR107 / COR110)
Gordon College School of Humanities and Social Sciences | The Great Conversation (First-year writing seminar)

2021 - 2022   **Teaching Assistant** | Research Methods I (PSY156)
Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services | Psychology

2021   **Teaching Assistant** | Introduction to Linguistics (LIN201)
Gordon College School of Humanities and Social Sciences | Linguistics

Activities & Service

Academic investment & mentorship

2025   **MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP-Bio) Pal**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Brain & Cognitive Sciences
Provided mentorship and academic support to undergraduate scholars hosted in BCS labs.
*Mentee(s): **Clifton David** (Brooklyn College); **Polina Rafailova** (Bard College)*

2022 - 2024   **President** | Psi Chi International Honors Society in Psychology (Gordon College Chapter)
Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services | Psychology

2022   **President** | Psychology & Neuroscience Clubs
Gordon College School of Psychology and Human Services & School of Science, Technology, and Health | Psychology, Neuroscience

Scientific outreach & international experience

2025   **STEAM It Up! Cambridge-wide K-8 Family STEAM Night**
Cambridge STEAM Initiative
Facilitated entertaining scientific activities for parents and children in the Cambridge community.

2025   **MGH Aspire Summer 2025 Adventure Camp Trailblazers**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology | McGovern Institute for Brain Research
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"**
Massachusetts Institute of Technology | McGovern Institute for Brain Research, Picower Institute for Learning and Memory

Created and led three-part workshop series on designing a personal research website with GitHub Pages.

2023, 2025	**Compass Path: Iceland**

Reykjavík & Akureyri, Iceland

Relational, volunteer service for immigrant and refugee communities; organized extracurricular programming for local youth.

2023	**Engage Lead: Cambodia**

Phnom Penh, Cambodia | *Royal University of Law and Economics, National University of Management*

Assisted English teachers at Khmer universities; led IELTS prep workshops; participated in cross-cultural leadership training.

Additional training

2023	**TESL/TEFL Certificate**

Common Grace Linguistic and Educational Services

Contact: jstevenson@commongracellc.com | (509) 306-1339 [Alt.: jeffrey.stevenson@gordon.edu | (978) 867-4293]

Experimental Methodology & Skills

* Currently learning

Neuroimaging & analysis (fMRI)	CONN Toolbox | Connectome Workbench | FreeSurfer | FSL | SPM
Programming languages & platforms	MATLAB | Python (Visual Studio Code) | R (RStudio) | Julia*
Agent-based Modeling (ABM)	Mesa* | Agents.jl*
Probabilistic programming	Gen.jl* | PyMC*
Reproducible science & data	Positron | Git / GitHub | Quarto
Behavioral experimentation	Audacity | Praat | Prolific | jsPsych*
Data visualization & design	Adobe Illustrator

Selected Coursework

* Audit/listener (completed course work without formal credit)

Cognitive & behavioral neuroscience	Lab in Psycholinguistics*, Language and Meaning in Minds, Brains, & Machines*, Cognitive Science*, Language in the Mind and Brain*
Mathematics & machine learning	Linear Algebra*, Introduction to Machine Learning*, Computational Cognitive Science*, Introduction to Neural Computation*
Computer/Data science & statistics	Introduction to Programming, Data Science I & II

Memberships & Affiliations

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

Languages

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

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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