

Farshid Varno

About

AI Researcher, Engineer and Entrepreneur with a strong technical background and a thirst for building new technologies. Team player who strives to communicate, share, and achieve as a group.

My main work

- I'm the founder of [Varnio Technologies](#).
- I'm the top contributor of [FedSim Simulator](#)
- I'm a Research Scientist at [Institute for Big Data Analytics](#).
- I'm a doctoral candidate in [Dalhousie University](#)

Contact

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- Github: <https://github.com/fvarno>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/farshid-varno/>

Institutions

- Ph.D., Computer Science. Dalhousie University. 2017–
- M.Sc., Computer Architecture. University of Isfahan. 2012–2015
- B.Sc., Guilan University. 2008–2012.

Classes

Scroll over a class for teaching evaluations, if available.

University of Arizona

In person

- LING 300 “Introduction to Syntax”. [Syllabus](#)
- LING 150 “Language”. Teaching evaluations: [Spring 2017 Wednesday](#), [Spring 2017 Friday](#), [Fall 2016](#), [Spring 2016 10AM Section](#), [Spring 2016 11AM Section](#), [Fall 2015](#)

Online

- LING 150 “Language”.
- ESOC 210 “The History of Hacking and Open Source Culture”.

University of Georgia

- LING 2100 “Study of Language”. Teaching evaluations: [Spring 2015](#), [Fall 2014](#)
- LING 3150 “Generative Syntax”. [Syllabus](#)

Lectures

Conference Presentations

- The Evoution of the Ibero-Romance Irregular Imperfect: A Constraint-based Analysis. 2018. 28th Annual Symposium on Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literature, Language and Culture. [Video](#). [Slides \(sent\)](#).
- Scope without Syntax: Towards a Game Theoretic Approach. 2017. UofA Synsalon. [Slides](#).
- Language as Synesthesia. 2017. Tom Bever's Seminar on language and consciousness. [Video](#). [Slides](#).
- Towards Biolinguistic Clarity in Generative Syntax. 2015. The Interdisciplinary Linguistics Conference at UGA.
- Syntax is for Real! Parameterization of Head Movement in Korean and its Effects on Scope and Alternations. 2015. LSUGA Tiny Talks.
- External Possession and the Undisentanglability of Syntax and Semantics. 2015. University of Georgia Linguistics Program Spring Colloquium.
- The acquisition of *tú* and *usted* by English Speakers: A study of non-native knowledge and usage of forms of address. 2013. Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference.
- Theories of contraction: A survey of macroeconomic theories of depression. 2012. Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference.

Guest Lectures

This list is non-exhaustive. I've made available some of the slides from the talks, but in many cases I use slides only as a visual aid, so it might be unclear what I'm saying looking at the slides alone.

- Linguistics Isn't 60 Years Old!: Pāṇinian Approaches to the Syntax and Semantics of Natural Language. 2018. For Simin Karimi's *Major Works in Syntax* class. [Video](#).
- Quantifier Scopep is Just All Fun and Games! Linguistics Department Graduate Student Showcase. 2018. [Video](#).
- The Origins and Mechanics of the Greek Alphabet. 2017. For Shannon Grippando's *The Psychology of Writing Systems* class. [Handout](#).
- The Phonetics of Language. 2016. For Amy Fountain's *Language* class.
- Constituent Structure—What is it and where does it come from?. 2016. For Simin Karimi's *Introduction to Syntax* class. [Some slides](#).
- An Introduction to Minimalism. 2016. For Doug Merchant's *Generative Syntax* class. [Slides](#).
- Optimizing Structure. 2016. For Doug Merchant's *Generative Syntax* class. [Slides](#).
- Syntactic Theory and Psycholinguistics. 2015. For Doug Mercant's *Psychology of Language* class. [Slides](#).

Languages

Human

Spanish, Mandarin, Latin, some Persian and French, reading knowledge of Classical/Koiné Greek and most Romance languages, grammatical knowledge of many Indo-European languages, Korean, and others.

Machine

Python, Perl, R, PHP, Matlab/GNU Octave, bash/shell, some superficial knowledge of C, common LISP and Haskell; markup languages including LaTeX, XeLaTeX, R Markdown, HTML and CSS.

Computing

Code

- **mutt and offlineIMAP wizard.** [Github](#). A tool for setting up a fully featured personal mail system and offlineIMAP server, with GPG secured passwords, server detection and support for notmuch mail indexing and autosyncing with notification.
- shortcut-sync. [Github](#).
- **Corpus Latinum Lucae.** [Github](#). (Still in progress.) A planned Latin corpus to be searchable by regexes. Right now, I've developed a part of speech tagger based on Whitacker's WORDS and some systems for converting Latin HTML files into tagged text documents.
- **voidrice.** [Github](#). My most popular item on Github, dotfiles for an i3-gaps based Linux system. This is my personal config which is employed by LARBS.
- **LARBS (Luke's Auto-Ricing Bootstrapping Scripts).** [Github](#). [Website](#). A series of scripts that automatically configures a full-featured vim and i3-gaps-based GNU/Linux system on Arch Linux or derived distributions.

Tools I Use

I have lots of tutorials on many of these programs and tools on my [my YouTube channel](#).

Usual Workflow

I use a **vim**-based setup in a tiling window manager (**i3-gaps**). I compile documents using **R Markdown** or **LaTeX**, and **biber** for references. I prefer multimedia manipulation in the terminal with tools like **imagemagick** and **ffmpeg** for extensibility's sake. I've run Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X and GNU/Linux systems (both Debian and Arch-based varieties, as well as Void Linux).

Programs I'm familiar with.

tmux, ssh, RStudio, Blender (mostly for video-editing), Praat, Audacity, E-Prime, GIMP, pandoc, Jupyter. I've managed websites manually via ssh and vim using HTML/CSS/PHP and with tools such as Github Pages (Jekyll) WordPress via either cpanel or wp-cli. Some experience with myBB.

Writings

On the HTML version, scroll over for a summary.

- **A Critique of "Reason".** [PDF](#). A critique of the "Heuristics and Biases" approach to cognition usually associated with Kahnemann and Tversky. I argue for a variety of ecological rationality, stating that tendencies which seem irrational in experimental conditions are not in the real world, but also that heuristics and biases are all constuable as mental *models* which differ only in scale, where there are often negative returns to scale, making simple heuristics preferable to so-called "optimization".
- **Scope Without Syntax: A Game Theoretic Approach.** [PDF](#). Second qualifying paper. 2017. A Game Theoretic analysis of quantifier scope, arguing that possible scope interpretations fall out from pragmatic assumptions about speaker/hearer intention. One empirical claim is that syntactic rigidity should universally correlate with scope ambiguity, while flexible languages/constructions tend to be scopally non-ambiguous.
- **Syntax Without Syntax.** [PDF](#). First qualifying paper. 2017.

Language differences in syntactic word order can be modeled as falling out from otherwise independent prosodic constraints (modeled Optimality Theoretically). Each language has a prosodic pattern and sentential constituents are placed optimally in that template. This avoid grammar overgeneralization that occurs in Halle and Vergnaud.

- **External Possession and the Undisentanglability of Syntax and Semantics.** [PDF](#). Master's Thesis. 2015.
Many languages have external possession constructions which may be possessive datives, incorporated possessa or other types, but all with an affected possessor abide by subtly similar syntactic constraints, always disallowing EP from agentive clauses. This is argued to be due to an inherent thematic/semantic hierarchy in the "syntax".
- **Indo-European Particles and Head-Movement-driven Word Order Change.** [PDF](#). An informal squib arguing that word order differences in Indo-European languages were historically telegraphed by particle placement, and verbs moved to unify with particles. I.e. languages with initial particles gradually shifted to be VSO, languages with second position particles moved to being V2 and later SVO.
- **Scope Markings and Series Phrase Parsing.** [PDF](#). A crazy idea about scope marking, arguing that if we take a serial approach to prosodification, the vexing construction of scope marking may in fact be a repair strategy to meet a general desire of the language faculty to group together a question word with where it takes scope, based on an intuition similar to N. Richards' Contiguity Theory.
- **Syntax is Just a Phonological Construct!** [PDF](#). A precursor write-up to the "Syntax without syntax" paper above.
- **Some countercyclic problems at the nexus of phonology and syntax.** [PDF](#). A brief write-up enumerating some aspects of syntax which are tied into prosody/phonology/semantics and how generally they produce counter-cyclicity problems for Generative Grammar and any "Y-modeled" grammar.
- **Accommodating phonological structure: Extraposition, the EPP and trace effects.** [PDF](#). Probably the first "syntax is just phonology" paper I wrote, a term paper. I detail the mismatch between semantic and prosodic structure as the origin of syntactic movement, etc.

Service

University of Arizona

- Coyote Papers Editor for the 2018 Arizona Linguistics Circle.
- Creator and manager of Tom Bever's Language and Cognition Lab site: coglanglab.com.
- Arizona Linguistics Circle Peer-Reviewer 2017.
- Indo-European Reading Group Director. 2015–2016.

University of Georgia

- LSUGA Website Manager. 2014–2016.
- LSUGA Interdisciplinary Conference in Linguistics Committee Member. 2014–2015.
- Graduate Student Mentor. 2014–2015.
- Socio-Paths Sociolinguistics Reading Group Co-Director. 2014.
- Typology Reading Group Director. 2014.