

Zheng SHEN

Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies updated: March, 2025
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AREAS OF INTEREST

BROAD INTERESTS

- Theoretical and experimental syntax
- Psycholinguistics

SPECIFIC TOPICS

- Syntactic islands
- Agreement
- Coordinate structure and Right node raising
- Ellipsis

EMPLOYMENT

2020.1 – Assistant Professor
Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies
National University of Singapore

2018.5 – 2019.12 Postdoctoral Researcher
A General Theory of Multivaluation (PIs: Katharina Hartmann, Peter W. Smith)
Institut für Linguistik, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany

2017.10 – 2018.5 Postdoctoral Researcher
Graduate School on Nominal Modification (Spokesperson: Caroline Féry)
Institut für Linguistik, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany

EDUCATION

2011–2018 **University of Connecticut**, Storrs, CT, USA
Department of Linguistics
Ph.D. in Linguistics
Dissertation title: *Feature Arithmetic in the Nominal Domain*

2009–2010 **University College London**, London, UK
Department of Linguistics
M.A. in Linguistics
Thesis title: *On Focus and Topic Interaction in Mandarin Chinese*

2005–2009 **Beijing Normal University at Zhuhai**, China
Department of Foreign Languages
B.A. in English Language and Literature

GRANTS

MOE = Singapore Ministry of Education; AcRF = Academic Research Fund grant program

2025 - 2028 MOE AcRF Tier 1 - “Cross-linguistic and experimental investigation of conjunction structures”
(as PI) (160,758 SGD)

2022 - 2025.2 MOE AcRF Tier 1 - ‘Closest Agreement and Memory’ (as PI) (150,944 SGD)

2022 - 2024.7	Humanities & Social Science Seed Fund - ‘Exploring structural and non-structural approaches to <i>wh</i> -dependencies’ (PIs: Zheng Shen, Nick Huang)	(19,880 SGD)
2020 - 2025.2	Faculty start-up grant, National University of Singapore	(39,893 SGD)

PUBLICATIONS

(student and postdoc co-authors in *italic*)

ONGOING

Zheng Shen and Beth Chan. in prep. Phrasal level features in agreement production: Evidence from multiple possessors.

Zheng Shen. in prep. Syntactic and semantic restrictions on subextraction from definite DPs: Evidence from Colloquial Singapore English.

Chan, Beth and **Zheng Shen**. in prep. Conditions on *wh*-the-hell licensing: Evidence from Colloquial Singapore English.

Yoo, Myunghye and **Zheng Shen**. in revision. Conjunction in Agreement attraction: Role of attractor structure in the computation of agreement.

Shen, Zheng and *Nick Huang*. under review. The role of phases and specificity in definite islands.

JOURNAL PAPERS

Shen, Zheng and *Meghan Lim*. accepted. The definite DP island in *wh*-questions and relative clauses. *Syntax*.

Tan, Rachel and **Zheng Shen**. 2025. True *wh*-movement and *wh*-in-situ in one language: Evidence from Colloquial Singapore English. *Journal of Linguistics*. [[link](#)]

Shen, Zheng. 2023. “Conjunction Agreement and the Coordinate Structure Constraint”, *Glossa: A journal of general linguistics* 46(1), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.6382> [[link](#)]

Marušič, Franc Lanko and **Zheng Shen**. 2021. “Gender Agreement with Exclusive Disjunction in Slovenian.” *Acta Linguistica Academica*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1556/2062.2021.00443> [[link](#)]

Shen, Zheng. 2019. “The multi-valuation agreement hierarchy.” *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 4(1), 46. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.585>. [[link](#)]

Shen, Zheng. 2018. “Fragment answers and movement.” *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 36(1), pp 309-321. DOI: 10.1007/s11049-017-9372-1. [[link](#)]

BOOK CHAPTERS

Shen, Zheng. 2024. “Non-illusory linear effect in Closest Conjunct Agreement” In Anke Himmelreich, Daniel Hole and Johannes Mursell (Eds.), *To the left, to the right, and much in between: A Festschrift for Katharina Hartmann* (pp. 151-171). Frankfurt: Goethe University Frankfurt. [[link](#)].

Shen, Zheng. 2021. “Some notes on MaxShare.” In Sabine Laszakovits, Zheng Shen (Eds.), *The size of things I: Structure building* (pp. 339-362). Open Generative Syntax. Language Science Press. [[link](#)].

EDITED WORKS

Zheng Shen, Johannes Mursell, Anke Himmelreich, and Katharina Hartmann. 2025. *Glossa* special collection: Multivaluation in agreement.

Zheng Shen and Sabine Laszakovits. 2024. *The size of things II: Movement, features, and interpretation*. Open Generative Syntax series. Language Science Press. [[link](#)]

Sabine Laszakovits and **Zheng Shen**. 2021. *The size of things I: Structure building*. Open Generative Syntax series. Language Science Press. [[link](#)]

CONFERENCE PROCEEDING PAPERS

Shen, Zheng and Beth Chan. forthcoming. “*Wh*-island effects and *d*-linking effects in *wh*-in situ questions” *Proceedings of WCCFL* 42.

- Huang, Nick and **Zheng Shen**. 2024. "The role of main verbs in subextraction of wh-phrases from NPs" *Proceedings of GLOW in Asia* 14.
- Shen, Zheng** and Meghan Lim. 2022. "The definite DP island in *wh*-questions and relative clause." *Proceedings of WCCFL* 40.
- Shen, Zheng** and Meghan Lim. 2022. "Extraction from definite, indefinite, and superlative DPs: An experimental approach." *Proceedings of NELS* 52.
- Tieu, Lyn and **Zheng Shen**. 2022. "Children's Interpretation of Superlatives in Full and Fragment Answers." *Proceedings of BUCLD* 46. [[lingbuzz link](#)]
- Shen, Zheng**. 2021. "Agreement in Nominal Right Node Raising: An experimental approach." *Proceedings of SICOOG* 23.
- Shen, Zheng** and Peter W. Smith. 2020. "Morphological and semantic agreement beyond hybrid nouns." *Proceedings of NELS* 49.
- Smith, Peter W., Beata Moskal, Katharina Hartmann, and **Zheng Shen**. 2019. "Feature resolution, feature conflicts and the structure of *either ... or*." *Proceedings of SinFonIJA* 10.
- Shen, Zheng**. 2017. "On multi-valued Ns and Ts in number concord and agreement." *Proceedings of the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. (extended version of Shen 2017)
- Shen, Zheng**. 2017. "Multi-value asymmetry in number agreement and concord." *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics: Vol. 23. Proceedings of the 40th Penn Linguistics Conference*.
- Shen, Zheng**. 2016. "No Clash Constraint in nominal RNR number agreement." *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics: Vol. 22. Proceedings of the 39th Penn Linguistics Conference, Article 27*.
- Tieu, Lyn and **Zheng Shen**. 2016. "The littlest linguists and their superlatives: a first experiment." *Proceedings of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*.
- Shen, Zheng**. 2015. "The third reading of the most expensive photo of Abby." *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics: Vol. 21: Iss. 1, Proceedings of the 38th Penn Linguistics Conference, Article 29*.
- Tieu, Lyn and **Zheng Shen**. 2015. "Searching for absolute and relative readings of superlatives: a second experiment." *Proceedings of the 39th Boston University Conference on Language Development*.
- Hsieh, I-Ta Chris and **Zheng Shen**. 2015. "The 'Associative Reading' of DPs and the quantity vs. quality distinction." *Proceedings of The Semantics of African, Asian and Austronesian Languages* 2.
- Shen, Zheng**. 2014. "On the relative readings with NP internal focus of superlatives." *Proceedings of the 31st West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, ed. Robert E. Santana-LaBarge, 409-418. Somerville, MA: Cascadia Proceedings Project.

DISSERTATION

- Shen, Zheng**. 2018. "Feature Arithmetic in the Nominal Domain." Doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

(as the first author unless stated otherwise)

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- MAR. 2024 "Phrasal level features in agreement production: Evidence from multiple possessors" the 2025 annual meeting of Human Sentence Processing. University of Maryland. (as first author, with Beth Chan)
- SEPT. 2024 "Backgrounded Constructions are Islands for *wh*-movement but not for *wh*-in-situ" the 2024 annual meeting of the Linguistic Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. (as second author, with Beth Chan)
- "Role of attractor structures in the computation of number agreement in English" the 30th AMLaP. (as second author, with Myunghye Yoo)
- AUG. 2024 "Backgrounded Constructions are Islands for *wh*-movement but not for *wh*-in-situ" annual meeting of the Linguistic Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. (as second author, with Beth Chan)

- MAY. 2024 “Islands for wh-extraction and wh-in-situ are backgrounded in Singlish” the 37th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing, the University of Michigan. (as second author, with Beth Chan)
- “Wh-island effects and d-linking effects in wh-in situ questions” the 37th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing, the University of Michigan. (with Beth Chan)
- APR. 2024 “Wh-island effects and d-linking effects in wh-in situ questions” WCCFL 42, UC Berkeley. (with Beth Chan)
- FEB. 2024 “The role of main verbs in subextraction of wh-phrases from NPs” GLOW in Asia 14, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. (with Nick Huang)
- DEC. 2023 “Processing closest agreement with disjunction subjects” AMLaP Asia 2023, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. (with Myung Hye Yoo)
- AUG. 2023 “Processing closest agreement with disjunction subjects” the 4th International Conference on Theoretical East Asian Psycholinguistics (ICTEAP-4), Seoul. (with Myung Hye Yoo)
- “Conditions on wh-the-hell licensing: Evidence from Colloquial Singapore English” the 4th International Conference on Theoretical East Asian Psycholinguistics (ICTEAP-4), Seoul. (as second author, with Beth Chan)
- MAY 2023 “Effect of creation verbs in Chinese and English.” the 29th Annual Conference of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics (IACL-29), Macau. (with Nick Huang)
- APR. 2023 “Effects of creation verbs in English and Chinese.” The Workshop on Theoretical East Asian Linguistics 13, Taiwan. (with Nick Huang)
- APR. 2023 “The definiteness effect in wh-fronting and wh-in situ languages.” GLOW 46, Vienna. (with Nick Huang)
- MAR. 2023 “Cross-linguistic differences in definiteness effects” Presented at the Workshop on Locality in Theory, Processing, and Acquisition, UPenn. (with Nick Huang)
- MAR. 2023 Evaluating information structure and semantics approaches to locality in Colloquial Singapore English. The Human Sentence Processing conference 2023.
- MAR. 2023 “Effects of creation verbs on wh-dependencies in English and Chinese.” The Human Sentence Processing conference 2023. (with Nick Huang)
- MAY. 2022 “The definite DP island in *wh*-questions and relative clauses” Presented at the 40th meeting of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL 40), Stanford University. (with Meghan Lim)
- MAR. 2022 “The definite DP island in *wh*-questions and relative clauses” Poster presented at the 35th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing, UCSC. (with Meghan Lim)
- NOV. 2021 “Extraction from definite, indefinite, and superlative NPs: An experimental approach.” Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Formal Linguistics, Fudan University. (with Meghan Lim)
- NOV. 2021 “Coordinate Structure Constraint Violating Movement and Closest Conjunct Agreement.” Talk at the 9th International Conference on Formal Linguistics, Fudan University.
- NOV. 2021 “Children’s interpretation of superlatives in full and fragment answers.” Poster presented at the 46th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD-45), Boston University. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- OCT. 2021 “Extraction from definite, indefinite, and superlative NPs: An experimental approach.” Poster presented at the NELS 52, Rutgers University. (with Meghan Lim)
- SEPT. 2021 “On CSC-violating movement in BCS.” Talk at Slavic Linguistics Society (SLS-16), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- AUG. 2021 “Extraction from definite, indefinite, and superlative NPs: An experimental approach.” Talk at the 23rd Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar (SICOGG 23), Sogang University, South Korea. (with Meghan Lim)

- AUG. 2021 “A couple might not be enough for the internet.” Talk at the 23rd Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar (SICOGG 23), Sogang University, South Korea.
- MAY. 2021 “Coordinate Structure Constraint and Conjunction Agreement.” Paper presented at Agreement in Multi-valuation Constructions, Frankfurt, Germany.
- JAN. 2021 “Coordinate Structure Constraint and Conjunction Agreement.” Poster presented at LSA 2021.
- SEPT. 2020 “Gender Agreement with Exclusive Disjunction in Slovenian.” Paper presented at SinFonIJA 13, Budapest, Hungary. (shared first authorship, with Franc Lanko Marušič)
- AUG. 2020 “Person and Number Agreement with Exclusive Disjunction in German.” Paper presented at SICOGG 22, Seoul, South Korea.
- MAY. 2020 “Gender agreement with exclusive disjunction in Slovenian.” Paper presented at the 29 Annual Meeting of Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics, University of Washington. (shared first authorship, with Franc Lanko Marušič)
- MAR. 2020 “Closest Conjunct Agreement in Right Node Raising as minimized ungrammaticality.” Poster presented at the 33rd Annual CUNY Human Sentence Processing Conference, UMass, US.
- AUG. 2019 “Colliding features: two types of closest conjunct agreement.” the Alphabet of Universal Grammar, London, the U.K.
- NOV. 2018 “Morphological and Semantic Agreement with Multiple Values.” Multiple Agreement across Domains 2018 (MAD 2018), Berlin, Germany. (with Peter W. Smith)
- OCT. 2018 “Agreement in Nominal Right Node Raising: an experimental approach.” the 11th Conference on Syntax, Phonology and Language Analysis (SinFonIJA 11), Kraków, Poland.
- OCT. 2018 “Morphological and Semantic Agreement beyond Hybrid Nouns.” the 49th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistics Society (NELS 49), Cornell University. (with Peter W. Smith)
- AUG. 2018 “Agreement in Nominal Right Node Raising: an experimental approach.” the 20th Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar, Seoul, South Korea.
- APR. 2018 “Interpretive restrictions on superlatives in full vs. fragment answers.” the 41st GLOW, Budapest. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- MAR. 2018 “The agreement hierarchy and multi-valuation.” Current Issues in Comparative Syntax, the National University of Singapore.
- FEB. 2018 “Relative readings of superlatives in full vs. fragment answers: An experimental investigation.” Linguistic Evidence 2018, University of Tübingen. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- DEC. 2017 “Children can access absolute and relative readings of superlatives.” the Australian Linguistic Society 2017, University of Sydney. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- OCT. 2017 “The multi-valuation agreement hierarchy.” Resolving Conflicts Across Borders workshop & SinFonIJA 10.
- OCT. 2017 “Feature resolution, feature conflicts and the structure of either... or.” Resolving Conflicts Across Borders workshop & SinFonIJA 10. (as last author, with Peter W. Smith, Beata Moskal, Katharina Hartmann)
- SEPT. 2017 “Aiming high: children’s knowledge of absolute and relative readings of superlatives.” the 13th International Conference of the Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- AUG. 2017 “Cross-Domain Multi-Valuation as Agreement Hierarchy.” the 19th Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar.
- APR. 2016 “An asymmetry between multi-valued Ns and Ts.” the 34th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics 34.
- APR. 2016 “On multi-valued Ns and Ts in number concord and agreement.” the 52nd Annual Meeting of Chicago Linguistics Society, University of Chicago.

- MAR. 2016 “Multi-value asymmetry in number agreement and concord.” the 40th Penn Linguistics Conference, University of Pennsylvania.
- JAN. 2016 “A superlative argument for syntactic movement in fragment answer.” LSA 2016 Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- SEPT. 2015 “Fragment answers and movement - a superlative argument.” 2015 Annual Meeting of Linguistic Association of Great Britain (LAGB), University College London, London, UK.
- JUN. 2015 “Number agreement across borders in nominal RNR.” Agreement Across Borders Conference (AAB), University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia.
- JUN. 2015 “The ‘associative reading’ of DPs and the quantity vs. quality distinction.” the Semantics of African, Asian and Austronesian Languages 2 (TripleA), University of Potsdam. (as second author, with I-Ta Chris Hsieh)
- MAR. 2015 “No clash constraint in nominal RNR number agreement.” the 39th Penn Linguistics Conference, University of Pennsylvania.
- NOV. 2014 “Beyond production: searching for absolute and relative interpretations of superlatives.” BUCLD 39, Boston University. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- MAY 2014 “Investigating superlatives in the littlest linguists.” GLOW in Asia X, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- MAR. 2014 “The littlest linguists and their superlatives.” the 50th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society, University of Chicago. (as second author, with Lyn Tieu)
- MAR. 2014 “The third reading of the most expensive photo of Abby.” the 38th Penn Linguistics Conference, University of Pennsylvania.
- JUL. 2013 “Syntactic treatment of the relative reading with NP Internal focus in superlatives.” the 19th International Congress of Linguists, Geneva, Switzerland.
- FEB. 2013 “On the relative reading with NP internal focus in superlatives.” the 31st West Coast Conference of Formal Linguistics, Arizona State University.

INVITED TALKS

- JUN. 2025 Keynote speech. Experimental Studies of Language: Conference for Young Scholars. Lomonosov Moscow State University.
- APR. 2025 “Findings and puzzles on syntactic islands in Colloquial Singapore English: Experimental comparisons with Chinese and English” Invited talk at Nanyang Technological University.
- JUN. 2024 “Experimental Syntax and Cross-linguistic investigation into syntactic islands.” Invited talk at Fudan University.
- MAY. 2024 “Definite NP island effects.” Talk at Goethe University Frankfurt.
- MAY. 2023 “Specifiers and Specificity in Singlish” Talk at National Tsinghua University, Taiwan.
- NOV. 2021 “Experimental studies of extraction from NPs” Talk at National Tsinghua University, Taiwan.
- JAN. 2021 “Closest agreement in Slavic languages: Linear order or hierarchical structure.” Plenary talk at the 5th Asian Junior Linguistics Conference hosted by International Christian University.
- MAY. 2020 “What we can learn from agreement with exclusive disjunction.” Invited talk at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- NOV. 2019 “Does grammar care about linear order?” Invited talk at University of Vienna.
- APR. 2019 “What we can learn from Multi-valuation.” Invited talk at National Singapore University.

- FEB. 2019 “What we can learn from Multi-valuation.” Invited talk at McGill University.
- OCT. 2018 “Multi-valuation and the Language Level of the Agreement Hierarchy.” Talk at Rutgers University.
- JUL. 2018 “Multi-valuation and the Agreement Hierarchy.” Invited talk at University of Tübingen.
- OCT. 2017 “Three projects in the nominal domain.” Colloquium talk for the Research Training Group ‘Nominal Modification’, Goethe University Frankfurt.
- SEPT. 2017 “Multi-valuation as the Agreement Hierarchy: typology and experiments.” Invited talk at Goethe University Frankfurt.
- AUG. 2017 “Fragment answers and movement.” Invited talk at Dongguk University.
- JUL. 2016 “Multi-Valuation in Nominal Right Node Raising Constructions and its Implications.” Invited talk at Ritsumeikan University, Japan.
- JUN. 2016 “Multi-Valuation in Nominal Right Node Raising Constructions and its Implications.” Colloquium talk at National Tsinghua University, Taiwan.

TEACHING

ADVISING

- 2025 Daiwan Gong. PhD Qualifying Examination committee.
- 2025 Mingyuan Yang. PhD Qualifying Examination committee.
- 2024 Beth Chan Hui Fang. Topics in Singlish locality. MA Thesis, NUS. (expected Jul. 2024)
- 2022 Meghan Lim. Bridging effects of verbs of creation. MA Thesis, NUS.
awarded Wang Gungwu Medal and Prize for ‘Best MA Thesis in the Social Sciences and Humanities’ (2022-23)
- 2022 Rachel Tan Poh Yin. Optional wh-movement in Colloquial Singapore English. Honours Thesis, NUS.
- 2021 Beth Chan Hui Fang. Right Peripheral Fragments in Colloquial Singapore English: An Experimental Approach. Honours Thesis, NUS.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

- 2025-2026 EL3201 Syntax
SEMESTER 1 EL4880D Experimental Syntax
- 2024-2025 EL3201 Syntax
SEMESTER 2 EL5101 Grammatical Analysis
- 2024-2025 No teaching - HSS Faculty Research fellowship
- SEMESTER 1 EL4201 Experimental Syntax
2023-2024
- SEMESTER 2 EL3201 Syntax
2023-2024 EL4201 Experimental Syntax
- SEMESTER 2 GEX1019/GET1036 Logic of Language
2022-2023
- SEMESTER 2 EL3201 Syntax
2022-2023 EL5101 Grammatical Analysis
- SEMESTER 1 GET1036 Logic of Language
2021-2022
- SEMESTER 2 EL3201 Syntax
2021-2022 EL4880D Experimental Syntax
- SEMESTER 1

2020-2021 EL4201 Advanced Syntax
 SEMESTER 2 EL4880D Experimental Syntax
 2020-2021 EL3201 Syntax
 SEMESTER 1

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT (AS INSTRUCTOR)

SPRING 2017 The Science of Linguistics (Ling 2010Q)
 FALL 2015 The Science of Linguistics (Ling 2010Q)
 WINTER 2014 Language and Mind (Ling 1010)
 FALL 2014 The Science of Linguistics (Ling 2010Q)
 FALL 2013 The Science of Linguistics (Ling 2010Q)

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

- Linguistics Association of Great Britain
- Linguistic Society of America

REVIEWING

2024 WCCFL 42 | SICOOG 2024
 2023 Natural Language and Linguistic Theory * 1 | Glossa * 1 | WCCFL 41 | NELS 53 | ConSOLE 31
 2022 Natural Language and Linguistic Theory * 1 | Glossa * 1 | Glossa Psycholinguistics * 1 | LSA2022 | GLOW 45 | NELS 52
 2021 Natural Language and Linguistic Theory * 1 | Glossa * 1 | International Journal of Chinese Linguistics * 1 | GLOW 44 | WCCFL 39 | AMC workshop
 2020 Semantics and Pragmatics * 1 | International Journal of Chinese Linguistics * 1 | Glossa * 1 | NELS 51
 2019 NACCL 32 | CLS 55
 2018 Nature Language and Linguistic Theory * 1 | Journal of Linguistics * 1 | CLS 54 | NELS 49
 2015 Nature Language and Linguistic Theory * 1
 2014 The Linguistics Review * 1
 2013 Nature Language and Linguistic Theory * 1

OTHER

FOUNDER Lingalert.com