Austin German

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Research Interests

homesign & emerging sign languages, sign language typology, multimodality

Academic Appointments

2024-present   NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellow. Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago. Faculty sponsor: Diane Brentari.

Education

2024   PhD in Linguistics. The University of Texas at Austin. Thesis: *The emergence of linguistic structure in Zinacantec Family Homesign*. Supervised by Richard Meier and David Quinto-Pozos. https://doi.org/10.26153/tsw/56536

2021   MA in Linguistics. The University of Texas at Austin. Thesis: *The emergence of combinatorial structure in Zinacantec Family Homesign*. Supervised by Jenny Singleton and David Quinto-Pozos.

2018   BA in Linguistics (with Distinction) & BS in Cognitive Science. University of California, San Diego. Thesis: *Constructing space in Zinacantec Family Homesign*. Supervised by Gabriela Caballero and John B. Haviland.

Journal Publications

2024   **Austin German.** Metalinguistic discourse in an emerging sign language. *Languages* 9(7):240. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9070240 [Part of special issue "Coexpressivity, Gesture, and Language Emergence: Modality, Composition, and Creation"]

2023   **Austin German**. Abrupt grammatical change in an emergent sign language: the expression of motion in Zinacantec Family Homesign. *Diachronica*. https://doi.org/10.1075/dia.22039.ger [Part of thematic issue "The historical linguistics of signed languages"]

2023   Laura Horton, Lynn Hou, **Austin German**, & Jenny Singleton. Sign language socialization and participant frameworks in three indigenous Mesoamerican communities: A qualitative comparative study. *Research on Children and Social Interaction.* https://doi.org/10.1558/rcsi.24314

2022   Cornelia Loos, **Austin German**, Richard P. Meier. Simultaneous structures in sign languages: acquisition and emergence. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13:992589. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.992589.

2021   Gabriela Caballero & **Austin German**. Grammatical tone patterns in Choguita Rarámuri (Tarahumara). *International Journal of American Linguistics* 87:2, pp. 149-178. doi.org/10.1086/712980.

Book chapters
accepted   **Austin German**. Serial verb constructions in Zinacantec Family Homesign.

Invited presentations

2025   Austin German. *Title TBD*. UCSB Linguistics Department Colloquium. University of California, Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara, CA. April 17th.

2025   Austin German. *Lengua de señas emergente de Zinacantán, Chiapas*. 12va Reunión Nacional de Sordos e Intérpretes de LSM / Movimiento en Defensa de la Educación Bilingüe para Sordos (12th National Meeting of Deaf People and Mexican Sign Language Interpreters / Movement in Defense of Bilingual Education for the Deaf). Keynote presentation [in Mexican Sign Language]. San Cristobal de las Casas, Chis., Mexico. February 21-23.

Refereed conference presentations
Paper Presentations

2024   **Austin German.** Birth order effects on argument structure devices in Zinacantec Family Homesign. To be presented at SIGN10 [in International Sign]. University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad & Tobago. December 9-12. [Abstract in international sign: https://youtu.be/bPMtBx2BS7s?si=jW8XA3hioUR49bo-].

2024   **Austin German.** Functions and conventionalization of size-and-shape specifiers in Zinacantec Family Homesign. [Presented live in ASL with pre-recorded English voiceover]. 16th Conference of the High Desert Linguistics Society. University of New Mexico. Albuquerque, New Mexico. November 1-3.

2023   **Austin German**. Convencionalización léxica en una lengua de señas emergente de Zinacantán. Tenth Conference on Indigenous Languages of Latin America (CILLA-X). The University of Texas at Austin. November 9-11.

2022   **Austin German**. Evidence of an emergent classifier system in Zinacantec Family Homesign. Cognitive and Cultural Influences on Language Emergence. May 25-27. Virtual workshop. doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.35673.39523.

2022   **Austin German**. The emergence of combinatorial structure in Zinacantec Family Homesign. Paper presentation at the 96th Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. January 6-9. Washington, D.C. doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24768.20485

2021	**Austin German**. The emergence of segmentation in Zinacantec Family Homesign. Paper presentation at the 20th meeting of the Texas Linguistics Society. March 5-6. The University of Texas at Austin.
2019	**Austin German**. Grammatical development in a Mayan sign language. Paper presentation at the Ninth Conference on Indigenous Languages of Latin America (CILLA-IX). The University of Texas at Austin. October 10-12.
2019	Gabriela Caballero & **Austin German**. Grammatical tone patterns in Choguita Rarámuri (Tarahumara). Paper presentation at the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA). January 6-12. New York, NY.

Posters

2022	**Austin German**. Evidence of an emergent classifier system in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 14th conference on Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research (TISLR14). National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU). Osaka, Japan. September 27-29. doi.org.10.13140/RG.2.2.13434.36804
2022	**Austin German**. The roots of spatial grammar in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 14th conference on Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research (TISLR14). National Museum of Ethnology (MINPAKU). Osaka, Japan. September 27-29. doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16789.81123
2021	Lynn Y.S. Hou, Laura Horton, **Austin German**, & Jenny Singleton. (2021). Sign Language Socialization in Three Indigenous Mesoamerican Communities: A Qualitative Comparative Study. 46th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development. Virtual Conference. November 4-7.
2019	**Austin German**. Emerging functions of manual holds in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 13th conference on Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research (TISLR13). Universität Hamburg. Hamburg, Germany. September 26-28.
2018	**Austin German**. Eye gaze and simultaneous constructions in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 8th annual meeting of the International Society for Gesture Studies (ISGS8). Cape Town, South Africa. July 4-8.

Other projects

2020	David Quinto-Pozos, Jenny Singleton, Richard Meier, Donna Altuna, Susie Tiggs, Caitie Coons, **Austin German**, Eric Hale, & Adam Sales. *86th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature; Senate Bill 54: Evaluating the performance of RDSPD students*. Report to the Texas Education Agency. University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.
2020	David Quinto-Pozos, Jenny Singleton, Richard Meier, Donna Altuna, Susie Tiggs, Caitie Coons, **Austin German**, Eric Hale, & Adam Sales. *86th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature; Senate Bill 54: Evaluating the performance of RDSPD*

students. Report to the Legislative Budget Board. University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.

2017   Gabriela Caballero, Lucien Carroll, Patrick Mullen, Sean Stein, **Austin German**, Klaus Kim & Andres Aguilar (compilation, analysis). Choguita Rarámuri annotated corpus and lexical database. [Web interface designed by Russell Horton, and further developed by Lucien Carroll]. http://field.ucsd.edu/raramuri/ (documentation available at https://github.com/ucsd-field-lab/kwaras).

Grants
2024-   National Science Foundation Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (NSF-SPRF). *The emergence of phonological structure in a family homesign system* (BCS 2404654). PI: **Austin German;** Co-PI: Diane Brentari. $170,000

2022-   National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (NSF-DDRIG).
2024   *The emergence of linguistic structure in a family homesign language* (BCS 2141436). PI: Richard P. Meier; Co-PIs: **Austin German**, David Quinto-Pozos. $15,741.

Fellowships
2023   Graduate Continuing Fellowship, UT Austin.
2022   College of Liberal Arts Provost's Competitive Continuing Fellowship
2020   Carl J and Tamari M. Tricoli Fellowship
2020   Joel Sherzer Award, Center for Indigenous Languages of Latin America, UT Austin
2018   Graduate recruitment fellowship, UT Austin.

Awards
2024   College of Liberal Arts Dean's Distinguished PhD Graduate Award

Research Experience
2020-2021   Graduate research assistant. Child Language Lab, Department of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin. P.I.: Jenny Singleton.

2020   Graduate research assistant. Department of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin. *Examining methods and standards for evaluating certain Texas regional day school program for the deaf (RDSPD) students*. P.I.: David Quinto-Pozos.

2017-2018   Undergraduate research assistant. Department of Linguistics, University of California, San Diego. *A Reference Grammar of Choguita Raramuri (Tarahumara) [ISO 639-3: tar]*. P.I.: Gabriela Caballero Hernández.

2016-2017   Undergraduate research assistant. Center for Research in Language, University of California, San Diego. *Zinacantec Family Home Sign: Structure and Socialization in the First and Second Generations of a Spontaneous Emerging Sign Language*. P.I.: John B. Haviland.

Supervision Experience

2024   Alredo Tuz Baas. *Preferencias en el uso de marcos de referencia espaciales entre los usuarios sordos y bilingües de la Lengua de Señas Maya Yucateca.* [Preferences in the use of spatial frames of references between deaf and bilingual users of Yucatec Maya Sign Language]. BA Thesis. Universidad de Oriente, Valladoid, Mexico. Supervisor: Olivier Le Guen. Readers: **Austin German**

2022-2023   Undergraduate research assistant (for credit, *ASL 357: Undergraduate Research*). Trained in sign language transcription using ELAN, with a focus on segmentation of utterances into clauses and coding word order.

2022-2023   Undergraduate research assistant (paid). Trained in sign language transcription using ELAN, with a focus on annotating classifier handshapes.

2021   Uicab, Ana Rocío. (2021). *Estudio comparativo del léxico de la Lengua de señas Maya Yucateca en tres comunidades de la Península de Yucatán: Chemax, Chicán y Trascorral.* [Comparative study of the lexicon of Yucatec Maya Sign Language in three communities of the Yucatán Peninsula: Chemax, Chicán, and Trascorral]. BA Thesis. Universidad de Oriente, Valladoid, Mexico. Supervisor: Olivier Le Guen. Readers: **Austin German** & Josefina Safar.

Teaching Experience
2024   Teaching Assistant. American Sign Language Program. UT Austin.

2022   Instructor of record. Introduction to the study of language. UT Austin.

2021   Teaching Assistant. American Sign Language Program. UT Austin.

2020   Teaching Assistant. Dying languages: what world linguistic diversity means for us. Instructor: Anthony Woodbury. UT Austin.

2019   Teaching Assistant. Introduction to the study of language. Instructor: David Quinto-Pozos. UT Austin.

2017   Teaching Assistant. English conversation and fluency. UCSD Extension English Language Institute.

Fieldwork experience
2025   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 3 weeks.
2024   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 4 weeks.
2023   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 6 weeks.
2022   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 6 weeks.
2019   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 6 weeks.
2017   Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico. 1 week.

Service
2022-2024   College of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Advisory Council, UT Austin

2022-2023   Search committee for Assistant Professor in sign language linguistics. Department of Linguistics, UT Austin.

2020-2021   Co-organizer, Friends of Uto-Aztecan Conference. (Virtual Conference).

2020-2021   Alternate Graduate Student Assembly Representative for the Department of Linguistics, UT Austin.

2019-2020   Primary Graduate Student Assembly Representative for the Department of Linguistics, UT Austin.

2018-2019   Alternate Graduate Student Assembly Representative for the Department of Linguistics, UT Austin.

2018-2019   Co-organizer. Symposium About Language and Society, Austin (SALSA) XXVII. UT Austin.

Professional Memberships
Linguistic Society of America (LSA).
Sign Language & Linguistics Society (SLLS).
Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA).

Technical Skills
Extensive experience with ELAN.
Elementary knowledge of R/RStudio.

Languages
English (native), American Sign Language (proficient), Spanish (proficient), Zinacantec Family Homesign (conversational), Zinacantec Tsotsil (elementary), Mexican Sign Language (elementary), Tagalog (heritage).