

# 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 reorganization of 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](https://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](https://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 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 2025 Austin German. *Lengua de señas emergente de Zinacantán, Chiapas*. 12<sup>va</sup> Reunión Nacional de Sordos e Intérpretes de LSM / Movimiento en Defensa de la Educación Bilingüe para Sordos (12<sup>th</sup> 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]. 16<sup>th</sup> 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](https://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 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America. January 6-9. Washington, D.C. [doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24768.20485](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24768.20485)

- 2021 **Austin German.** The emergence of segmentation in Zinacantec Family Homesign. Paper presentation at the 20<sup>th</sup> 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. 14<sup>th</sup> 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](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13434.36804)
- 2022 **Austin German.** The roots of spatial grammar in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 14<sup>th</sup> 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](https://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. 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development. Virtual Conference. November 4-7.
- 2019 **Austin German.** Emerging functions of manual holds in Zinacantec Family Homesign. 13<sup>th</sup> 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. 8<sup>th</sup> 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, Valladolid, 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, Valladolid, 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).