

Cheng Xiao

PhD Candidate, Linguistics, University of South Carolina

cxiao@email.sc.edu

<https://chengxiaocx.github.io>

Education

- 2019-present **Ph.D. in Linguistics**
University of South Carolina, United States
Dissertation: *The processing of emotional prosody and semantics in native and non-native Chinese speakers*
Committee: Jiang Liu, Rutvik H. Desai (co-chairs), Amit Almor, Svetlana Shinkareva
- 2013-2016 **M.A. in Linguistics and applied linguistics**
Wuhan University, China
Thesis: *Noun acquisition in Chinese children with autism spectrum disorder*
- 2009-2013 **B.A. in Humanities & B.Ec. in Finance**
Wuhan University, China

Academic positions

- 2023-present Graduate research assistant, Desai Lab, Department of Psychology, University of South Carolina
- 2022-2023 Graduate teaching assistant (**instructor of record**), Linguistics Program, University of South Carolina
- 2021, 2022 Graduate research assistant (summer), Linguistics Program, University of South Carolina
- 2019-2022 Graduate teaching assistant (**instructor of record**), Chinese Program, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of South Carolina

Grants

- 2023-2025 **National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant** (Ling-DDRIG), BCS-2234914 (*Doctoral Dissertation Research: The semantic effect on the processing of emotional prosody in a tone language: A neurolinguistic study*), National Science Foundation, USD 17,780.
- 2022-2023 **University of South Carolina SPARC Graduate Research Grant**, 120700-22-59283 (*Bridging meaning and sound: The effects of semantics on emotional prosody processing in Mandarin Chinese words and sentences*), University of South Carolina, USD 4,938.
- 2020-2021 **Graduate Teaching Resource Development Grant** (for enrichment of CHIN121: Elementary Mandarin Chinese, with Dan Luo), Center for Teaching Excellence, University of South Carolina, USD 400.
- 2020-2021 **Graduate Teaching Resource Development Grant** (for enrichment of CHIN321: Advance Mandarin Chinese, with Dan Luo), Center for Teaching Excellence, University of South Carolina, USD 400.

Selected awards and fellowships

02/2025	Society for Human Sentence Processing Student Travel Award (HSP 38), USD 375.
04/2024	Linguistics Program Graduate Student Summer Research Award, University of South Carolina, USD 500.
03/2024	Dr. Richard Walker Memorial Endowed Fellowship, Walker Institute of International and Area Studies, University of South Carolina, USD 5,000.
07/2023	Paula Menyuk Travel Award for the 48 th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD 48), USD 385.
05/2023	Discover USC Graduate Student Poster Award winner, University of South Carolina.
02/2023	Society for Human Sentence Processing Student Travel Award (HSP 36), USD 400.
05/2021	Linguistics Program Graduate Student Summer Research Award, University of South Carolina, USD 600.
2013-2016	Outstanding Graduate Student Fellowship, Wuhan University, tuition & living expenses.
2011	Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award winner, College of Chinese Language and Literature, Wuhan University.
2009-2013	Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award, Wuhan University, RMB 3,200.

Publications

Refereed journal articles

- Xiao, C., & Liu, J. (2024b). The perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese words and sentences. *Second Language Research*. 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02676583241286748>
- Xiao, C., & Liu, J. (2024a). Semantic effects on the perception of emotional prosody in native and non-native Chinese speakers. *Cognition and Emotion*. 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2024.2371088>
- Wang, B. X., Chen, S., Zhou, F., Liu, J., Xiao, C., Chan, A., & Tang, T. (2024). English prosodic focus marking by Cantonese trilingual children with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 67(3), 782-801. https://doi.org/10.1044/2023_JSLHR-23-00508

Refereed book chapters

- Liu, J., & Xiao, C. (2021). Tone category learning should serve tone word learning: an experiment of integrating pronunciation teaching in L2 Chinese curriculum. In Edited Volume *The acquisition of Chinese as a second language pronunciation: Segments and prosody*. Edited by Yang, Chunsheng: Springer. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3809-4_6

Work in progress

- Xiao, C., Liu, J., Shinkareva, V. S., Yang, X., Desai, R.H. (submitted). Knowing and feeling: The role of semantic valence in emotional prosody perception for L2 Chinese learners. Preregistration link: <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/7JTWX>

- Xiao, C.**, Arheix-Parras, S., Johari, K., Riccardi, N., Desai, R.H. (manuscript available upon request). Effects of thematic and taxonomic semantic neighbors in anterior temporal lobe stimulation.
- Arheix-Parras, S., **Xiao, C.**, Crouse, C., Riccardi, N., Johari, K., Desai, R.H. (manuscript available upon request). The role of anterior temporal lobe in reading: a tDCS study.
- Yang, X., Gao, C., **Xiao, C.**, Riccardi, N., Desai, R.H. (in preparation). Psycholinguistic constructs underlying words in naturalistic listening.

Other publications

- Wang, B. X., Chen, S., Zhou, F., Liu, J., **Xiao, C.**, & Chan, A. (2023). Declarative or declarative question? —On the acoustics of English prosody of Hong Kong trilingual children with autism spectrum disorder. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 153(3_supplement), A289-A289. <https://doi.org/10.1121/10.0018879>
- Luo, H., Zhao, S., Luo, J., Tan, Xin., Ruan, G., Chen, Y., ..., **Xiao, C.**, ..., & Zhu, Y. (2018). *Comprehensive dictionary of Chinese poetry rhythms*. Zhonghua Book Company. ISBN 978-7101129779. (in Chinese)
- Tang, C., Luo, X., Zhan, Y., Li, H., Mo. Y., Zhang, Wen., Sun, D., Zhang, Xue., Liu, Y., **Xiao, C.**, Yuan, Yu., & Xin, Wen. (2017). *Chinese characters and calligraphy* (Guangdong province calligraphy textbook series, Book 3). Guangdong Education Publishing House. ISBN 978-7554815625. (in Chinese)
- Tang, C., Luo, X., Zhan, Y., Li, H., Mo. Y., Zhang, Wen., Sun, D., Zhang, Xue., Liu, Y., **Xiao, C.**, Yuan, Yu., & Xin, Wen. (2017). *Chinese characters and calligraphy* (Guangdong province calligraphy textbook series, Book 4). Guangdong Education Publishing House. ISBN 978-7554815632. (in Chinese)
- Xiao, C.** (2017). The language acquisition strategy for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 10, 35-37. (in Chinese)

Presentations

Invited talks

- 2025 Language and emotion in L1 and L2 brain, Second Language Acquisition Reading Group at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, February 20.
- 2024 The perception of emotional prosody in L2 Chinese learners, special session on second language acquisition at *the Linguistics Conference at the University of Georgia* (LCUGA 2024), Athens, GA, February 17.

Conference presentations

- 2025 Neural processing of emotional prosody in native and non-native Chinese speakers, 38th *Annual Human Sentence Processing Conference* (HSP 38), College Park, MD, March 27-29.
- 2024 Semantic neighborhood effects with anterior temporal lobe stimulation, *Society for the Neurobiology of Language 16th Annual Meeting* (SNL 2024), Brisbane, Australia, October 26.
- 2024 The perception of emotional prosody in novice and advanced L2 Chinese learners, 37th *Annual Human Sentence Processing Conference* (HSP 37), Ann Arbor, MI, May 16.

- 2024 Knowing is feeling: The role of semantic valence in emotional prosody perception for L2 Chinese learners, *2024 GSLING Student Research Symposium at the University of South Carolina*, Columbia, SC, April 13.
- 2023 Semantic effects on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese: facilitation for L1 speakers versus interference for L2 learners, *48th Boston University Conference on Language Development* (BUCLD 48), Boston, MA, November 4.
- 2023 The emotional prosody perception of native speakers and L2 learners: an examination of semantic congruence effect, *Florida Psycholinguistics Meeting 2023* (FPM 2023), Gainesville, FL, October 21.
- 2023 *What you say vs. how you say it*: the semantic effect on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese words and sentence, *Discover USC 2023 at the University of South Carolina*, Columbia, SC, April 21.
- 2023 The semantic effect on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese, *2023 GSLING Student Research Symposium at the University of South Carolina*, Columbia, SC, April 8.
- 2023 The semantic effect on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese words and sentences, *Conference of the Institute for Mind and Brain at the University of South Carolina 2023*, Columbia, SC, March 17.
- 2023 Bridging sound and meaning: the semantic effect on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese, *36th Annual Human Sentence Processing Conference* (HSP 36), Pittsburgh, PA, March 10.
- 2022 The perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese words and sentences, *2022 GSLING Student Research Symposium at the University of South Carolina*, Columbia, SC, March 18.
- 2022 The perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese, *96th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 96), Washington, DC, January 8.
- 2021 The effect of language experience on the perception of emotional prosody in Mandarin Chinese, *1st International Conference on Tone and Intonation*, Sonderborg, Denmark, December 8.
- 2018 The mini-corpus analysis of the language of autistic children, *4th Corpus Linguistics Conference in China*, Wuhan, China, June 2.
- 2018 Inquiry into the language acquisition of autistic children, *1st Neurolinguistics Conference in China*, Xuzhou, China, July 1.

Teaching experience

Linguistics

Instructor of record, Linguistics Program, University of South Carolina

Spring 2023 LING 301/ENGL 389: The English Language

Fall 2022 LING 101: Introduction to Language

Guest lecturer, Linguistics Program, University of South Carolina

Fall 2024 LING 474/PSYC 474: Cognitive and Social Aspects of Bilingualism (on accent)

Spring 2023 LING 300/PSYC 300: Introduction to Language Sciences (on phonetics)

Teaching Chinese as a second language

Instructor of record, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of South Carolina

Spring 2020	CHIN 322: Advanced Mandarin Chinese II
Fall 2019	CHIN 321: Advanced Mandarin Chinese I
Spring 2022	CHIN 222: Intermediate Mandarin Chinese II
Fall 2022	CHIN 221: Intermediate Mandarin Chinese I
Spring 2021	CHIN 122: Basic Proficiency Mandarin Chinese
Fall 2020	CHIN 121: Elementary Mandarin Chinese

Teaching English as a second language

Tutor, International Accelerator Program, University of South Carolina

2019-2020 Academic English writing and speaking for ESL students

Supervising experience

2023-present	Sidney Crouse (Neuroscience, undergraduate), Desai Lab
2023-2024	Rachel Gulczinski (Biology, undergraduate), Desai Lab
2024	Abbie Scoby (International Business and Finance & French), Linguistics Program
2024	Mira Flyorova (Philosophy, undergraduate), Linguistics program
2022-2024	Katia Boyet (Psychology & Statistics, undergraduate), Desai Lab

Ad-hoc reviewing

Journal	Scientific Reports
Conference	Discover USC 2024, Psychology and Neuroscience, undergraduate section.

Service

2023-present	Graduate fellowship peer mentor, National Fellowship office at the University of South Carolina.
2024	Graduate enrichment committee member, Linguistics Program at the University of South Carolina.
2023	Professional development workshop leader, <i>Creating Research Posters 101</i> for GSLING Student Research Symposium at the University of South Carolina.
2020-2021	Course module designer, prosodic-enhanced course module for the Chinese Program and Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of South Carolina.
2016-2017	Editor, series of Chinese calligraphy textbooks (12 books) for primary school students, all authorized by the Bureau of Education in Guangdong Province, and each book sells more than 100,000 copies.

Research skills

Tools	AFNI, Audacity, E-Prime, fMRIPrep, FSL, Praat, Python, Qualtrics, R, RStudio, Unix
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Methods Behavioral measures, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), High-definition transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (HD-tDCS)

Languages English, Mandarin Chinese (native), Xiang Chinese

Memberships

Society for Human Sentence Processing

Society for the Neurobiology of Language