Forrest Davis

Curriculum Vitae

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▬▬▬ Employment

2023- **Assistant Professor**, *Department of Computer Science*, *Colgate University, Hamilton, NY*.

2022-2023 **Postdoctoral Associate**, *Department of Linguistics and Philosophy*, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA*.

▬▬▬ Education

2022 **PhD**, *Department of Linguistics*, *Cornell University, Ithaca, NY*.
Advisor: Marten van Schijndel
Committee Members: Dorit Abusch, Miloje Despić, John Whitman
Dissertation - *On the Limitations of Data: Mismatches between Neural Models of Language and Humans*

2020 **MA**, *Linguistics, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY*.

2017 **BA**, *Computer Science and Mathematics, Columbia University, New York, NY*.

▬▬▬ Awards

2025 Mind, Brain, and Behavior Initiative Discretionary Grant, Colgate University

2022 Sage Fellowship, Cornell University

2021 ACL 2021 Outstanding Reviewer

2020 President's Travel Fund for the Humanities, Cornell University

2019 Graduate School Conference Travel Grant, Cornell University

2019, 2018 Linguistics Department Conference Travel Grant, Cornell University

2018 Sage Fellowship, Cornell University

2017, 2016 Work Exemption Program Grant, Columbia University

▬▬▬ Publications

Journal Articles

2025 The Gap Between Humans and Language Models: Analyzing Adjective Performance

Megan Gotowski and **Forrest Davis**

Under Review *Language Acquisition*

2021 Finding Event Structure in Time: What Recurrent Neural Networks can tell us about Event Structure in Mind

Forrest Davis and Gerry T.M. Altmann

In *Cognition*, 213. 2021.

Peer-Reviewed Proceedings

2025   Discourse Sensitivity in Attraction Effects: The Interplay Between Language Model Size and Training Data

Sanghee J. Jim and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

To appear in the Proceedings of the Society for Computation in Linguistics 2025

2024   Training an NLP Scholar at a Small Liberal Arts College: A Backwards Designed Course Proposal

Grusha Prasad and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop on Teaching NLP (collocated with ACL 2024)

2023   Can Language Models Be Tricked by Language Illusions? Easier with Syntax, Harder with Semantics

Yuhan Zhang, Edward Gibson and **Forrest Davis**

Proceedings of the 2023 Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning (CoNLL 2023)

2022   Incremental Processing of Principle B: Mismatches Between Neural Models and Humans

Forrest Davis

Proceedings of the 2022 Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning (CoNLL 2022; 26%)

2021   Uncovering Constraint-Based Behavior in Neural Models via Targeted Fine-Tuning

Forrest Davis and Marten van Schijndel

Proceedings of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2021; 21.3%)

2020   Discourse structure interacts with reference but not syntax in neural language models

Forrest Davis and Marten van Schijndel

Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning (CoNLL; 23.3%)

2020   Interaction with Context During Recurrent Neural Network Sentence Processing

Forrest Davis and Marten van Schijndel

Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci 2020)

2020   Recurrent Neural Network Language Models Always Learn English-Like Relative Clause Attachment

Forrest Davis and Marten van Schijndel

Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2020; 22.7%)

2017   Linguistically Rich Vector Representations of Supertags for TAG Parsing

Dan Friedman, Jungo Kasai, R Thomas McCoy, Robert Frank, **Forrest Davis**, Owen Rambow

Proceedings of the 13th International Workshop on Tree Adjoining Grammars and Related Formalisms

Conference Proceedings

2024   What Language Models Can Tell Us About Learning Adjectives

Megan Gotowski and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America, Vol. 9, No. 1.

Presentations (reviewed by abstract)

2025 Being (an LM) and Nothingness: How Models Interpret Expletive Forms

Forrest Davis and Megan Gotowski (equal contribution)

Under Review for 50 Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, Massachusetts

2025 Humans vs. Machines: Comparing Adjective Learning Performance

Megan Gotowski and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

2025 Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2024 Rage Against the Machine: Comparing Human and Model Performance with Adjective Learning

Megan Gotowski and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

49 Boston University Conference on Language Development, Boston, Massachusetts

2024 What Language Models Can Tell Us About Learning Adjectives

Megan Gotowski and **Forrest Davis** (equal contribution)

Talk at 2024 Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Annual Meeting, New York, New York

2020 Recurrent neural networks use discourse context in human-like garden path alleviation

Forrest Davis and Marten van Schijndel

33rd Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing (CUNY 2020), Amherst, Massachusetts

2020 Categorical and gradient dimensions of stress in English compounds

Forrest Davis and Abigail C. Cohn

2020 Workshop of the Berkeley Linguistics Society (BLSW 2020), Berkeley, California

2020 The relationship between lexical frequency, compositionality, and phonological reduction in English compounds

Forrest Davis and Abigail C. Cohn

94th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA 2020), New Orleans, Lousianna

2019 Effects of lexical frequency and compositionality on phonological reduction in English compounds

Forrest Davis and Abigail C. Cohn

The 25th Architectures and Mechanisms of Language Processing Conference (AMLaP 2019), Moscow, Russia

2019 The pragmatics of single wh-in situ questions in English

Forrest Davis

93rd Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA 2019), New York, NY

Invited Talks

2024 Neural Language Models are not Models of Human Linguistic Knowledge

CSoL, University of Toronto

2023 Neural Language Models are not Modeling Human Linguistic Behavior

FALCoN Lab, University of Georgia

2023 Principle B, Processing, and Neural Models of Language

UMass Amherst

2023   Principle B, Processing, and Neural Models of Language

Language and Cognition Group, Harvard University

2022   What do Neural Models of Language Actually Model?

University of Sheffield

2021   Investigating Competing Training Signals in Language

Stanford University

2019   Recurrent Neural Network Syntactic Representations in Linguistic Contexts

University of Connecticut

2019   Language as a science

Peddie School

Teaching

Fall 2025	CORE S119 - Language as Human Nature	Colgate
Fall 2025	COSC 410 - Applied Machine Learning	Colgate
Spring 2025	COSC 482 - Independent Research: Music Recommendation	Colgate
Spring 2025	COSC 482 - Independent Research: Mass Personalization	Colgate
Spring 2025	COSC 492 - Independent Research: Using Machine Learning Models to Delineate Tree Crowns in Aerial Imagery of Forests in Siberia	Colgate
Spring 2025	COSC 410 - Applied Machine Learning	Colgate
Fall 2024	COSC 482 - Independent Research: Spanish Dialect Identification	Colgate
Fall 2024	COSC 482 - Independent Research: Modeling Agreement Errors	Colgate
Fall 2024	COSC 426 - Natural Language Processing	Colgate
Fall 2024	COSC 101 - Introduction to Computing I	Colgate
Spring 2024	COSC 482 - Independent Research: Semantic Composition in Chinese LLMs	Colgate
Spring 2024	COSC 101 - Introduction to Computing I	Colgate
Spring 2024	COSC 410 - Applied Machine Learning	Colgate
Fall 2023	COSC 101 - Introduction to Computing I	Colgate
Fall 2023	COSC 480 - Topics in Computer Science: Natural Language Processing	Colgate
Spring 2023	Special Seminar: Topics in Computational Linguistics	MIT
Fall 2022	Special Seminar: Methods in Computational Linguistics	MIT
Spring 2022	Superlinguistics: Comics, Signs and Other Sequential Images	Cornell University
Spring 2021	Introduction to Cognitive Science	Cornell University
Spring 2021	Pragmatics	Cornell University
Fall 2020	Language and Law	Cornell University
Spring 2020	Computational Linguistics	Cornell University
Fall 2019	Guest Lecture, Phonology I: Prosodic representation of English compounds	Cornell University
Fall 2019	Introduction to Syntax and Semantics	Cornell University
Spring 2019	Pragmatics	Cornell University
Spring 2019	Computational Linguistics	Cornell University
Fall 2018	Introduction to Linguistics	Cornell University

Mentoring

Undergraduate Research at Colgate University

Fall 2025	Renzo Cruzado '26, Jacob Denekamp '26, Chenyun Liu '27
Spring 2025	Erika Heng '25, Saran Duncan '25, Sophia Goffe '25 (Honors Thesis)
Fall 2024	Jaanhvi Agarwal '25, Kayla Mistica '25
Spring 2024	Shafi Islam '24

Service

2025-2028	Council for Faculty Development committee member
2024-2025	Mind, Brain and Behavior Initiative committee member
2024	NAACL 2024 Student Research Workshop Mentor
2023-2025	CS Bytes Coordinator, Colgate University
2023-	Academic Liaison for Women and Men's Swimming and Diving, Colgate University
2019	Senior Editor of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 29)
2018–2019	Graduate Student Representative on New Faculty Hiring Committee
2018	Junior Editor of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 28)
2018	Annual Meeting for the North East Linguistics Society (NELS 49) Committee Member
2017–2019	Cornell Linguistics Circle web admin

Reviewing

Area Chair/Meta-reviewer	**CogSci** 2024, 2025
Conferences	**ACL** 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 **CoNLL** 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 **EMNLP** 2021, 2022, 2023 **HSP** 2023 **Penn Linguistics Conference** 2023, 2024, 2025 **LSA** 2023, **COLM** 2024, 2025 **NAACL SRW** 2024
Journals	Cognition, Glossa Psycholinguistics, Computational Linguistics, Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics

Technical Skills

Programming Languages	Python, C, C++, Matlab, R, Java, AWK, HTML
Human Languages	English, French (Intermediate), Hindi/Urdu (Intermediate)

Updated

Last Updated August 26, 2025