Jessica M. Alexander

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Education

anticip. 2028 — **Ph.D. in Neurolinguistics**, The University of Texas at Austin
Research topic: Impact of emotional prosody on cognitive and neural function of the listener
Methodologies: electroencephalography (EEG), signal processing, machine learning, statistics
Advisor: Dr. Fernando Llanos

2004 — **B.A. in Linguistics** with distinction, Boston University, *summa cum laude*
Thesis: "Frequency, Prosody, and French Liaison: Testing Bybee's Hypothesis"
Advisor: Dr. Jonathan Barnes

Publications

Alexander, J. M. and Llanos, F. (*in review*). Disadvantages of happy prosody for sentence intelligibility and emotion recognition in vocoded speech.

Alexander, J. M. and Llanos, F. (2025). High-arousal emotional speech enhances speech intelligibility and emotion recognition in noise. *J. Acoust. Soc. Am., 157*(6), 4085-4096. doi.org/10.1121/10.0036812

Alexander, J. M. and Buzzell, G. A. (2024). Emotional Context and Predictability in Naturalistic Reading Aloud. *Emotion, 24*(3), 617-627. doi.org/10.1037/emo0001298

Conferences

Alexander, J. M. and Llanos, F. (2025, 12-14 September) Effects of emotional prosody on sentence intelligibility and emotion recognition in vocoded speech. [Poster presentation]. 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language, Washington, D.C., USA.

Alexander, J. M. and Llanos, F. (2024, 18-22 November) Benefits of emotional prosody for sentence intelligibility and emotion recognition in speech-shaped noise: acoustic and perceptual basis. [Flashtalk]. 187th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, Virtual Meeting.

Sahar, L., **Alexander, J. M.**, Buzzell, G.A. (2024, 1 April) Unfamiliarity reveals prosodic correlates of social anxiety: Evidence from naturalistic reading. [Poster presentation]. GSAW Scholarly Forum at Florida International University, Miami, FL, USA.

Alexander, J. M., Lopez-Nuñez, A., Rodriguez, B. M., Duncombe, A. N., Malykke, S. B., Buzzell, G. A. (2022, October 6-8). Effects of Lexical Valence and Emotional (In)Congruency in Naturalistic Reading Aloud. [Poster presentation]. 14th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Grants & Fellowships

2024-2025	**Scholars Lab Fellowship**, UT Austin [$3000]
2024	**Carlota Smith Fellowship**, UT Austin [$1062]
2024	**Hertz Fellowship Finalist**, Fannie and John Hertz Foundation
2001-2004	**Merit Scholarship,** Boston University [50% coverage of tuition]

Professional Experience (curated for relevance)

2021-2023   **Neural Dynamics of Control Laboratory at Florida International University**
PI: Dr. George A. Buzzell
Cognitive neuroscience research lab focused on cognitive control, self-monitoring, and social anxiety in naturalistic task settings

Lab Manager
- Organized launch activities for $2.5M NIMH grant (R01 MH131637), including hiring staff, establishing procurement lines, coordinating translations of consent forms and study questionnaires, and ensuring completion of university conflict of interest requirements from all study team members
- Contributed to the design, piloting, and drafting of successful $257K NIMH grant (R21 MH131928)
- Supported PI, graduate students, and research assistants to assure efficient timelines, clear procedures, quality of research, and overall lab organization (across GitHub, Google Drive, Slack and the FIU HPC)
- Managed IRB protocols (~10) for all active studies, including initial submission, amendments, and compliance monitoring
- Recruited, interviewed, and trained undergraduate research assistants
- Assisted with management of lab budget, including expenditure tracking and forecasting
- Facilitated NIMH research award program (R01, R21) grant applications with organizational administration and editorial feedback
- Actively collaborated in the creation of study protocols, data preprocessing, and analysis scripts

2011-2021   **Idem Translations, Inc.**
Largest independently owned translation company in the United States that specializes in serving the life sciences community, from preclinical research to postmarket surveillance

VP, Quality & Operations (2014-2021)
- Multi-functional role on geographically-diverse, 20-person team
- Facilitated daily operations and supported company-wide improvement projects
- Monitored metrics to analyze business performance and quality initiatives; translated data findings to top management to inform strategic decision-making
- Created informative, actionable reporting to highlight business strengths and opportunities
- Communicated complex quality system issues to management and production staff
- Represented production group as interface with database manager for increased data access and UX improvements to homegrown, SQL-based, project- and business-management tool
- Recruited and trained new project managers on system tools, processes, and expectations
- Oversaw recruitment and relationship maintenance for pool of 700+ freelance vendors
- Administered toolkit of technological resources available to project management team

Director, Quality (2012-2014)
- Built data funnels and developed analytics to shift organization from intuition- to fact-based decision-making
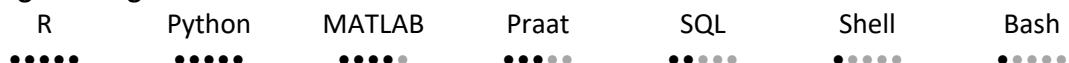
- Rewrote full set of operational procedures in order to achieve certification to two additional ISO standards
- Forged group dynamic obsessed with getting every detail right in the service of our customers

Project Manager (2011-2012)
- Managed life sciences translation projects (quotation, budgeting, schedule, vendor coordination, client interface)

2007-2011 **Self-Employed Translator and Editor**
- Managed all aspects of sole proprietorship, translating French-to-English and Chinese-to-English documents with a focus on marketing copy, creative content, and literary endeavors
- Edited creative English content for grammar, style, voice, and readability
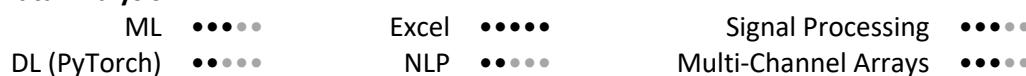
Skills (1 dark circle = basic familiarity; 5 dark circles = capabilities exceeding standard competence)
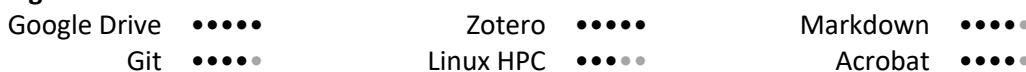
Programming:

R	Python	MATLAB	Praat	SQL	Shell	Bash
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●○	●●●○○	●●○○○	●○○○○	●○○○○

Data Analysis:

ML	●●●○○	Excel	●●●●●	Signal Processing	●●●○○
DL (PyTorch)	●●○○○	NLP	●●○○○	Multi-Channel Arrays	●●●○○

Organization:

Google Drive	●●●●●	Zotero	●●●●●	Markdown	●●●●○
Git	●●●●○	Linux HPC	●●●○○	Acrobat	●●●●●

Data Collection:

REDCap	SONA	PsychoPy	Pavlovia	Gorilla
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●○	●●●●○	●●●○○

Presentation:

ggplot	Word	PowerPoint	InDesign	WordPress	Quarto
●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●○○○
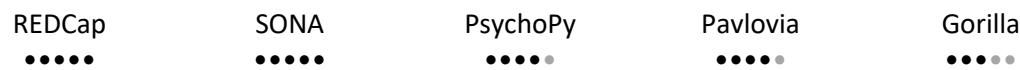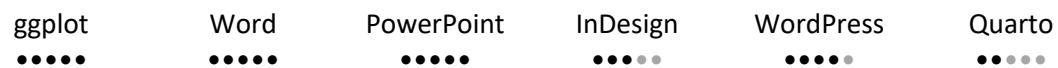
Languages:
- English ●●●●● (native)
- French ●●●●● (fluent)
- Mandarin ●●●○○ (intermediate, spoken & written)

Honors & Awards

2004 **BU College Prize and MFLL Award for Excellence**, Boston University

2004 **Phi Beta Kappa** induction

2004 **Shmuel Traum Translation Prize,** Boston University [translations from Colette's *La femme cachée*]

2003 **Barbara Argote Junior Award in Linguistics,** Boston University

2003 **Phi Sigma Iota** induction

Service/Volunteering

2026	"Working with Color in Data Visualizations Using R and ggplot2," workshop presenter
2025	"Making Beautiful Plots in R's ggplot2," workshop presenter
2024-pres.	Cognition and Natural Sensory Processing Initiative (CNSP), volunteer organizer
2024-pres.	UT Austin College of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Advisory Council, nominated member
2023-pres.	Neuroling Resources (compilation of open, neurolinguistic datasets), curator
2023-pres.	Skype a Scientist, volunteer scientist

Relevant Coursework

University of Texas at Austin (2023-present)
- Matrix and Tensor Algorithms for Data
- Programming and Data Analysis for Modern Neuroscience
- EEG Methods in Psycholinguistics
- Computational Methods in Linguistics
- Anatomy and Physiology of the Auditory System
- Speech and Audio Processing
- Prosody and Tone
- Bilingual Brain
- Phonetics
- Neurolinguistics
- Syntax
- Phonology
- Semantics

Online Continuing Education (2021-2022)
- Basic Statistics (Coursera)
- Inferential Statistics (Coursera)
- Fundamentals of Neuroscience: The Electrical Properties of the Neuron (HarvardX)
- Fundamentals of Neuroscience: Neurons and Networks (HarvardX)
- Fundamentals of Neuroscience: The Brain (HarvardX)
- Neuromatch Academy, Computational Neuroscience (July 11-29, 2022)

(Last updated: 2026-02-13)