Maisy Hallam

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Education

2022 – 2026 | **PhD in Linguistics**
University of Edinburgh (Centre for Language Evolution)
Supervised by Kenny Smith, Simon Kirby, and Fiona Jordan (University of Bristol)

2020 – 2021 | **MSc with Distinction in Evolution of Language and Cognition**
University of Edinburgh
Dissertation: Investigating the effect of communication on kinship terminology with artificial language experiments.

2016 – 2020 | **MA with First Class Honours in Linguistics and English language**
University of Edinburgh
Dissertation: On the behaviour of adjective-to-noun conversion in English.

Teaching

LECTURING

2025 | **Evolution and Human Behaviour**
I was invited to deliver a guest lecture on the biological and cultural evolution of language for students in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at The University of Bristol.

TUTORING

2022 – 2025 | **Origins and Evolution of Language**
I delivered tutorials for this honours and postgraduate course on core research issues in language evolution including animal behaviour, genetics, evolutionary theory, computer modelling, and archaeology.

Online Experiments for Language Scientists
I offered one-on-one programming help to students on this honours and postgraduate course on effective experimental design and building online experiments using jsPsych. I also delivered live-coding demonstrations to the full class in order to teach new programming concepts.

2022 – 2023 | **PPLS Skills Centre: Writing**
One-on-one consultations helping undergraduate and postgraduate students improve their academic writing.

PPLS Skills Centre: Introduction to Python
Short course helping students learn to implement basic programming tasks in Python.

WORKSHOPS

2024 | **Time-travelling with Statistics: an intro to phylogenetic comparative methods for linguists**
Centre for Language Evolution annual retreat
A two-hour session introducing phylogenetic statistical analysis and its practicalities in language evolutionary research.

Publications

JOURNAL PAPERS

2025   1.   **Hallam, M.**, Jordan, F. M., Kirby, S. & Smith, K. Predictive structure emerges during the generalisation of kin terms to new referents. *PsyArxiv Preprints* (2025).

Conference Proceedings

2024   2.   **Hallam, M.**, Jordan, F. M., Kirby, S. & Smith, K. Systemic structure of kinship is shaped by evolutionary pressures. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society* (2024).

2024   3.   **Hallam, M.**, Jordan, F. M., Kirby, S. & Smith, K. Systemic structure of kinship is shaped by evolutionary pressures. *Proceedings of Evolang XV* (2024).

Presentations

Talks

Sept 2025 | **Hierarchical structure of kinship semantics derives from efficient communication principles**
Protolang 9

June 2025 | **It's all relative: Hierarchical constraints on kin term semantics**
Centre for Language Evolution seminar series

Oct 2024 | **Evolving language in the lab: constraints on how we talk about kin**
University of Edinburgh Linguistics Society

Sept 2024 | **Variation in the kin term lexicon is not predicted by population size**
Cultural Evolution Society

May 2024 | **Systemic structure of kinship is shaped by evolutionary processes**
International Conference on the Evolution of Language (Evolang XV)

Jan 2024 | **Learning systematicity in the structure of kinship**
Centre for Language Evolution seminar series

Jan 2023 | **A thousand families, all alike in terminology?**
Centre for Language Evolution seminar series

Posters

Jul 2025 | **Efficient communication drives the semantic structure of kinship terminology**
Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Jul 2024 | **Systemic structure of kinship is shaped by evolutionary processes**
Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Nov 2021 | **The Origins of Cross-Cultural Patterns in Kinship Systems**
Harvard Women in Psychology Trends in Psychology

June 2021 | **Why do you have two grandmothers but only one mother?**
Linguistics and English Language Postgraduate Conference

Funding

Academic community

CONFERENCE REVIEWS

2023 – 2025	**Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society**

EVENTS ORGANISATION

2023 – 2025	**Centre for Language Evolution Seminar** A weekly hybrid talk series with 20+ attendees.
Nov 2023	**Edinburgh Lectures in Language Evolution 2023** A four-part serial hybrid talk series with over 200 attendees.

COPYEDITING AND PROOFREADING

2019 – 2020	**Journal for the Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain (JouLAB)**
2018	**Second Language Phonology between Cognition and Use** *by Nadia Boucchioua*

OUTREACH

2025	**'Monkeys: Our Primate Family' at the National Museum of Scotland** I gave a workshop on what animal communication can tell us about human language and cognition as part of the National Museum's exhibit on primatology.
2024	**PPLS Perspectives (episode host)** A podcast exploring cutting edge research in philosophy, psychology and language sciences at the University of Edinburgh.
2022 – 2023	**Language Evolves!** A pop linguistics workshop for children at local schools organised by the Centre for Language Evolution.

Awards and recognition

2024	**Best Small Data-Driven Project** *Centre for Culture, Data and Society* For my typological work on the structure of kinship systems.
2023	**Three Minute Thesis University Finalist** *University of Edinburgh*
2020	**Patterson Prize for research in Old English** *University of Edinburgh*

Skills

Languages	English (native), British Sign Language (basic), French (basic), Italian (basic)
Programming & markup	Python, R, JavaScript, HTML, LaTeX
Data analysis	`lme4, tidyverse, pandas`
Experiments	jsPsych, Prolific
Other	Git, Microsoft Office, InDesign, Audacity