

Mora Maldonado

Centre for Language Evolution
University of Edinburgh
3 Charles Street, EH8 9AD, UNITED KINGDOM
mora.maldonado@ed.ac.uk
<https://moramaldonado.github.io/>

WoS Researcher ID: G-9942-2019
Publications: 12 (+ 1 submissions)
H-Index: 4 (Source Google Scholar)
Citations: 67

Keywords: cognitive sciences, semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

2018 — Present	Postdoctoral researcher at Centre for Language Evolution. Project 'Syntax shaped by cognition: transforming theories of syntactic systems through laboratory experiments' with Jennifer Culbertson (PI).
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EDUCATION

JUNE 2018	PhD in Cognitive Sciences <i>École Normale Supérieure – ED3C</i> "Understanding semantic ambiguities" Advisors: Benjamin SPECTOR & Emmanuel CHEMLA
FEB-MAY 2016	Visiting Graduate Student Linguistics Department, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2015	Master in Cognitive Sciences <i>EHESS – ENS – Université Paris Descartes</i> THEORETICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL LINGUISTICS (First Class Honours, Rank : 3/38)
2015	École Normale Supérieure Diploma –INTERNATIONAL SELECTION ENS
2012	B.A. in Linguistics <i>University of Buenos Aires, UBA</i> (First Class Honours, GPA : 4.0)

OTHER TRAINING

29th European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information (ESSLLI) – July 2018, Toulouse, France.
27th European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information (ESSLLI) – August 2015, Barcelona, Spain.
Generative Linguistics in the Old World (GLOW) - Spring School of Linguistics April 2014, Brussels, Belgium.
EVELIN - Summer School in Formal Linguistics, University of Campinas - MIT, January 2013.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2015–2018 Ph.D. Fellowship awarded by the École Normale Supérieure (Paris, France)
2013–2015 Master's scholarship awarded by the École Normale Supérieure (Paris, France)
2011–2013 Scholarship for student research awarded by University of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

My research focuses on identifying cognitive constraints on **how human languages express meanings**. Are there learning, processing or communicative biases that can explain constraints on linguistic meaning? To get at this,

I have approached different semantic phenomena by using not only traditional linguistic tools, such as corpora studies and semantic modelling, but also a range of techniques from cognitive sciences, including priming and artificial language learning experiments, mouse-/eye-tracking paradigms and computational simulations.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OUTPUT

Learning biases and semantic universals

How do languages carve-up the semantic space into lexical categories? By means of artificial language learning experiments and computational simulations, I investigate why certain properties of meaning are more common typologically than others.

Maldonado, Mora and Jennifer Culbertson. To appear in *Linguistics inquiry*. "[Person of interest: Learning person systems](#)".

Maldonado, Mora and Jennifer Culbertson (2019). "[Learnability as a window into universal constraints on person systems](#)". In: Schloder, J., McHugh D., and Roelofsen F. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 22nd Amsterdam Colloquium*. pp. 484-493.

Maldonado, Mora and Jennifer Culbertson (2019). "[Something about 'us': Learning first person pronoun systems](#)". In: Goel, A. C., Seifart, C. M., and Freksa, C. (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*. pp. 749-755.

Understanding of ambiguous sentences

What are the interpretative processes involved in our understanding of ambiguous sentences (i.e., sentences that systematically give rise to more than one interpretation)? Using different experimental tools (acceptability judgments, structural priming and mouse-tracking recordings), I aim at assessing whether the abstract compositional mechanisms proposed by linguists to generate alternative interpretations have psychological correlates during comprehension.

Feiman, Roman*, **Mora Maldonado*** and Jesse Snedeker (2020). "[Priming quantifier scope: Reexamining the evidence against scope inversion](#)". *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 5(1), 35.

Maldonado, Mora, Ewan Dunbar and Emmanuel Chemla (2019). "[Mouse Tracking as a window into decision making](#)". *Behavioural Research Methods*. 51-3, pp. 1085-1101.

Maldonado, Mora, Benjamin Spector and Emmanuel Chemla (2019). "[Revealing abstract semantic mechanisms through priming: the distributive/collective contrast](#)". *Cognition*. 182, pp. 171-176.

Maldonado, Mora, Benjamin Spector and Emmanuel Chemla (2017). "[Priming methods in semantics and pragmatics - Commentary on Branigan and Pickering](#)". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. 40, p. 303.

Maldonado, Mora, Emmanuel Chemla and Benjamin Spector (2017). "[Priming plural ambiguities](#)". *Journal of Memory and Language*. 95, pp. 89-101.

Kriz, Manuel and **Maldonado, Mora** (under review). "[An experimental note on distributivity and scope](#)".

Cross-linguistic variation

How cross-linguistic variation can inform semantic theories? There are a number of domains where the universality of semantic properties are just assumed on the basis of English. Part of my work aims at exploring the cross-linguistic challenges faced by those generalizations.

Maldonado, Mora (2020). "[Plurality and d-linking in Spanish interrogatives](#)". *Journal of Semantics*. 37-1, pp. 145-170.

Anvari, Amir*, **Mora Maldonado*** and Andrés Soria Ruiz* (2019). "The puzzle of Reflexive Belief in Spanish". In Espinal, M.T., Castroviejo, E., Leonetti, M., McNally L., and Real-Puigdollers, C. (Eds.). *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* 23. pp. 57–74.

INVITED TALKS

- Nov. 2019 "Semantic Universals: processing and learnability". LingLunch at Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle. Paris, France.
- July 2019 (with Jennifer Culbertson). "Person of interest: Testing the learnability of person/number systems". *The Alphabet of Universal Grammar*. British Academy. London, UK.
- May 2019 "Semantic Universals: processing and learnability". Laboratoire Dynamique Du Langage. Lyon, France.
- Nov. 2018 "An experimental approach to plurality". Linguistic Research Seminar in Ulster University. Belfast, UK.
- Nov. 2017 "Priming as a window to the distributive/collective ambiguity". The 11th meeting of Paris-Amsterdam-London Logic Meetings of Young Researchers (PALLMYR 11). University College of London, London, UK.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

M. Maldonado and J. Culbertson (2019). Learnability as a window into universal constraints on person systems. Oral presentation at the 22nd Amsterdam Colloquium. Amsterdam, Netherlands.

M. Maldonado, C. Saldana, and J. Culbertson (2019). Learning biases in the relative order of person and number markers. Oral presentation at NELS 50. Cambridge, MA.

M. Maldonado and J. Culbertson (2019). Something about 'us': Learning first person pronouns. Oral presentation at the 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society. Montréal, Canada.

M. Maldonado, A. Martin and J. Culbertson (2019). An experimental approach to inferences to the standard in comparative constructions. Poster at workshop on The semantics of gradable adjectives (XPRAG-ADJ19). Cologne, Germany.

A. Anvari, M. Maldonado, and A. Soria Ruiz (2018). Reflexive belief, (anti-)factivity and neg-raising in Spanish. Oral presentation at 23rd Sinn und Bedeutung, Barcelona, Spain.

M. Maldonado (2018). Priming semantic representations: An experimental approach to plurality. Oral presentation at Szklarska Poreba Workshop. Szklarska, Poland.

A. Anvari, M. Maldonado, A. Soria Ruiz (2018). Reflexive belief in Spanish. Poster presentation at Szklarska Poreba Workshop. Szklarska, Poland.

M. Maldonado, E. Chemla and B. Spector (2018). Priming as a window to the collective/distributive ambiguity. Poster presentation at Linguistic evidence. Tübingen University, Germany.

M. Kriz and M. Maldonado (2018). An experimental note on distributivity and scope. Poster presentation at Linguistic evidence. Tübingen University, Germany.

M. Maldonado (2017). Strong plurals in Spanish interrogatives. Poster presentation at 22nd Sinn und Bedeutung. Potsdam University, Potsdam, Germany.

M. Maldonado (2017). Plurality and D-linking in Spanish interrogatives. Oral presentation at CONSOLE 25. Leipzig University, Leipzig, Germany.

M. Maldonado, E. Chemla, and B. Spector (2015). Priming evidence for a covert distributivity operator. Poster presentation at NELS 45. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, USA.

VI Workshop In Generative Grammar, Comahue University, Argentina. 2013. "El costo de procesamiento en la

planificación de estructuras de orden no canónico. M. Maldonado, D. E. Shalom, and Y. Sevilla.

Y. Sevilla, M. Maldonado and D. E. Shalom (2013). Measuring processing cost in Spanish sentence planning. Poster presentation at 11th International Symposium of Psycholinguistics, Cognitive Neuroscience and Psycholinguistics Lab. University of La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.

Language and Neuroscience Conference, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil. 2012. Looking for computational cost in sentence planning: An eye movements study. Y. Sevilla, M. Maldonado and D. E. Shalom.

Xth Argentine Conference of Neuropsychology. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2012. Poster. Understanding clitics in a case of agrammatic aphasia. V. Jaichenco, Y. Sevilla, M.E. Sanchez, M. Maldonado and Y. Grodzinsky.

Y. Sevilla, D. E. Shalom and M. Maldonado (2012). Eye Movements and grammatical sentence production planning in Spanish. Poster presentation at VIth International Workshop on Language Production. New York, USA.

XIII Conference of the Linguistic Society of Argentina. San Luis, Argentina. 2012. "La incrementalidad jerárquica en la codificación gramatical. Un estudio de movimientos oculares". M. Maldonado, Y. Sevilla and D. E. Shalom.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

Graduate minicourse (with Andrés Soria Ruiz): *Experimental approaches to plurals and gradable adjectives*. Institute of Philology, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. 11-12th November 2019.

Guest lectures on semantic universals

Course: *Universals of Language*. Instructor: Jennifer Culbertson (reference: jennifer.culbertson@ed.ac.uk) MSc Evolution of Language and Cognition. University of Edinburgh. Fall term 2019.

Teaching assistant (TA)

Course: *Introduction à la linguistique*. Instructor: Salvador Mascarenhas salvador.mascarenhas@ens.fr. Master in Cognitive Sciences, ENS-EHESS-Paris V. Fall term 2017.

Teaching assistant (TA)

Course: *Introduction à la linguistique*. Instructors: Benjamin Spector and Salvador Mascarenhas. Master in Cognitive Sciences, ENS-EHESS-Paris V. Fall term 2017.

Teaching assistant (TA)

Course: *Neurolinguistics*. Instructors: Virginia Jaichenco and Yamila Sevilla (reference: yamilasevilla@gmail.com). University of Buenos Aires. Fall term 2011.

High School Instructor

Spanish Grammar and Literature. Reference: Néstor Abramovich (nestor@colegiodelaciudad.org) Colegio de la Ciudad (Buenos Aires, Argentina). 2011-2013

STUDENT SUPERVISION

Phd supervision

Marc Meisezahl (expected 2022, University of Edinburgh)

MSc supervision

Erik Gröningsson (2019, University of Edinburgh)

Robin Kepple (2019, University of Edinburgh)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Event organization: Edinburgh Summer School on Artificial Language Learning (University of Edinburgh, Aug. 2020), ESSLLI 2020 Workshop *Experimental approaches to language universals in structure and meaning*,

ESSLLI 2017 Student Session (co-chair), CSSP Paris 2017.

- Funding agency reviewing: National Science Foundation (USA).
- Journal reviewing: *Natural Language Semantics*, *Journal of Memory and Language*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, *Semantics and Pragmatics*, *Glossa*, *Linguistics and Philosophy*
- Conference reviewing: Go Romance, CogSci, NELS, ForJa, LAGB, XPrag, SuB25, ESSLLI Student Session (2017, 2020).
- Lab-related responsibilities: Member of PPLS Diversity Committee (University of Edinburgh, present), weekly organization and communication of lab-meetings (LSCP, 2015- 2017), responsible Amazon Mechanical Turk Chair (2016-2018)

SKILLS

Technical

PYTHON, \LaTeX , R, IBEX, HTML, GIMP, JavaScript, EyeLink, Adobe Illustrator, Git

Linguistic Skills

SPANISH: Native

FRENCH: Intermediate (B2)

ENGLISH: Advanced (TOEFL: 105/120)