

Timea Szarvas

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Research interests

Experimental syntax and morphology, architecture of grammar; Ā-movement, multi-gap dependencies, reconstruction, case and agreement, acceptability and coreference judgment experiments, statistical modeling of ordinal and categorical data (frequentist and Bayesian).

Languages

Akan (Niger-Congo), BCMS (Slavic), Hungarian (Uralic), Tundra Nenets (Uralic), Turkish (Turkic)

Education

University of Potsdam

07/2021 – present

PhD in Linguistics (expected December 2025)

Doctoral thesis: *Rethinking principle C reconstruction in ATB and parasitic gaps: Data-driven perspectives on the too many tools problem.*

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Doreen Georgi, Prof. Dr. Malte Zimmermann.

University of Potsdam

10/2018 – 06/2021

Master of Science in Linguistics, with distinction

MSc thesis: *Case and Agreement in Turkish nonsubject relative clauses: An experimental approach.*

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Malte Zimmermann, Andreas Schmidt. *Grade: 1,0*

University of Tübingen

10/2015 – 08/2018

Bachelor of Arts in Deutsch als Zweitsprache, General Linguistics

BA thesis: *The Impact of Serbocroatian Morphosyntax on the Acquisition of German as a Second Language*

Supervisor: Benjamin Siegmund. *Grade: 2,0*

Academic positions

Hidden Variability in Sharing Constructions

07/2021 – present

CRC 1287, University of Potsdam

Researcher (wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin)

PI: Prof. Dr. Doreen Georgi

The Limits of Variability in Extraction Asymmetries

09/2020 – 06/2021

CRC 1287, University of Potsdam

PI: Prof. Dr. Doreen Georgi

Research assistant, preparation of items and experiments.

Variation and variability in grammatical systems 04/2020 – 08/2020

University of Potsdam

PI: Prof. Dr. Doreen Georgi

Research assistant, preparation of items and experiments.

Speech Acts in Grammar and Discourse 05/2019 – 03/2020

Leibniz Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft Berlin

PI: Prof. Dr. Manfred Krifka

Student assistant, corpus and video annotation.

Computational Analysis of Learner Language 10/2017 – 07/2018

University of Tübingen

PI: Prof. Dr. Detmar Meurers

Student assistant, annotation of linguistic materials.

Tübingen School of Education 09/2017 – 07/2018

University of Tübingen

PI: Prof. Dr. Kristina Peuschel

Student assistant, transcription and annotation of spoken language.

Department of German language and literature 09/2016 – 07/2017

University of Tübingen

PI: Prof. Dr. Doreen Bryant

Student assistant, videography, transcription and annotation.

Teaching experience

Instructor 10/2024 – 04/2025

University of Potsdam

Empirical methods in grammar research: Experimental Syntax.

Experience designing and teaching a full undergraduate-level course in experimental syntax, including syllabus planning, lecture delivery, and evaluation.

Publications

– Peer-reviewed

Submitted. Reconstruction for variable binding in ATB movement. Interpretive possibilities and their theoretical implications. Joint work with A. Finholt, D. Georgi, A. Pregla, M. Privizentseva, M. Salzmann & S. Zompì.

2025. *Why we're still debating principle C reconstruction. A comparative experimental study.* In: *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 10(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.18707>

– Proceedings

To appear. *An asymmetry without theoretical consequences: Revisiting principle C reconstruction in ATB movement experimentally.* In: *Proceedings of the 55th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society.*

To appear. Diagnosing syntactic structure in ATB and RNR constructions: A reply to Larson (2013, 2014). In: *Proceedings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Joint work with Doreen Georgi, Andrew Murphy and Johannes Rothert.

2024. On reconstruction in German ATB-movement and the optimization of experimental designs. In: Sgrizzi, T., Shahbazi, A. & Tamleh, H. (eds): *Proceedings of the 32nd Conference of the Student Organization of Linguistics in Europe*, Leiden Centre of Linguistics.

2024. Unscrambling German parasitic gaps. In: Alexiadou, A., Georgi, D., Heck, F., Müller, G. & Schäfer, F. (eds): *Proceedings of the workshop on Gisbert Fanselow's contributions to syntactic theory*, Linguistische Arbeitsberichte (LAB) 96, University of Leipzig.

2022. Scope ambiguities among suffixes in Hungarian: mood and modality at LF. In: Holtz, A., Kovač, I. & Puggaard-Rode, R. (eds): *Proceedings of the 30th Conference of the Student Organization of Linguistics in Europe*, p. 102–124. Leiden Centre of Linguistics.

Talks

– Invited

2025. Title TBA. Invited talk at the Theoretical Linguistics Colloquium, University of Vienna, November 7 2025.

2025. Debunking the myth of principle C reconstruction in ATB and parasitic gaps. Invited talk at the Linguistics Colloquium, University of Bielefeld, June 11 2025.

2025. ATB = parasitic gaps? Considering inter-individual variability and the limits of principle C reconstruction. Invited talk at the Syntax Workshop, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, April 17 2025.

– Conferences

2024. PP modifiers do not reconstruct for principle C. Evidence from German wh- and ATB-movement. Poster at The 55th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 55), Yale University, October 17-18 2024.

2024. Find the gap: Diagnosing syntactic structure in ATB and RNR constructions. (with Doreen Georgi, Andrew Murphy and Johannes Rothert) Talk at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, University of Chicago, April 26-28 2024.

2024. Experimenting with principle C in German ATB movement. Poster at Linguistic Evidence 2024, University of Potsdam, February 22-23 2024.

2024. On reconstruction in German ATB movement and the optimization of experimental designs. Talk at the 32nd Conference of the Student Organization of Linguistics in Europe (ConSOLE 32), Queen Mary University of London, January 17-19 2024.

2023. On the markedness of number features in embedded free relative questions in Akan. (with Nadine Bade, Abigail Bimpeh & Jeanne Lecavelier)
Poster at the 54th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 54), University of Connecticut, June 12-14 2023.

2022. Scope ambiguities among suffixes in Hungarian: Mood and modality. Talk at the 30th Conference of the Student Organization of Linguistics in Europe (ConSOLE 30), University of Nantes, January 25-27 2022.

2020. Challenges for theories of (post-)syntactic head movement: Tense and modality in Hungarian. (with Johannes Rothert)
Poster at the 13th conference on Syntax, Phonology and Language Analysis (SinFonIJA 13), Hungarian Academy of Sciences, September 24-26 2020.

– Other

2024. PP modifiers do not reconstruct for principle C. Evidence from German wh- and ATB-movement. Poster at the CRC network meeting, University of Cologne, November 4-5 2024.

2024. On the unreliability of the principle C reconstruction test. Poster at the DGfS summer school, University of Göttingen, August 12-23 2024.

2023. Unscrambling German parasitic gaps. Poster at the Workshop on Gisbert Fanselow's Contributions to Syntactic Theory, Humboldt University Berlin, April 27-29 2023.

2022. All that glitters is not syntax. On the deceptive comfort of the arm-chair. Talk at the 9th Linguistics Meetup Berlin-Brandenburg, University of Potsdam, September 29 2022.

Additional training

– Research visits

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

04/2025

Two-week stay supported by the internal mobility grant of the CRC 1287. Participation in graduate seminars, meetings with faculty, and presentation of ongoing dissertation work in a departmental talk.

– Linguistics

The case for case features in syntax and morphology.

Compact course by Faruk Akkuş (University of Massachusetts Amherst), June 4-5 2025, University of Potsdam.

Opacity and Multidominance.

Graduate seminar by Kyle Johnson, spring 2025, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Issues at the syntax-prosody interface: Arabic varieties and beyond.

Graduate seminar by Faruk Akkuş and Kristine Yu, spring 2025, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Artificial neural networks and natural language syntax.

Graduate seminar by Brian Dillon, spring 2025, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Advanced Syntax.

Graduate seminar by Rajesh Bhatt, spring 2025, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The autonomy of syntax – Syntax as a mediator between PF and LF.

Compact course by Susi Wurmbrand (Paris Lodron University Salzburg), January 15-17 2025, University of Potsdam.

Harmonic Serialism.

Compact course by Gereon Müller (University of Leipzig), October 7-9 2024, University of Potsdam.

Binding.

Course by Rajesh Bhatt (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), August 12-16 2024, DGfS summer school, University of Göttingen.

Features in grammar.

Course by Hedde Zeijlstra (University of Göttingen), August 12-16 2024, DGfS summer school, University of Göttingen.

Introduction to distributed morphology.

Course by Andrew Murphy (University of Southern California), August 12-16 2024, DGfS summer school, University of Göttingen.

Movement, Locality and Spell-out.

Course by Željko Bošković (University of Connecticut), August 12-16 2024, DGfS summer school, University of Göttingen.

Middles, impersonals, implicit arguments, and reflexive clitics.

Compact course by Benjamin Bruening (University of Delaware), June 19-21 2024, University of Potsdam.

Judgement experiments. What, how, and what does it mean.

Workshop by Sam Featherston (University of Tübingen), November 10 2023, University of Potsdam.

Agreement Systems.

Course by Elena Anagnostopoulou (University of Crete) & Ümit Atlamaz (Boğaziçi University), July 15-28 2023, CreteLing summer school, University of Crete.

Intermediate Syntax.

Course by Caroline Heycock (University of Edinburgh), July 15-28 2023, CreteLing summer school, University of Crete.

Dissimilation: Destroyer of clauses.

Course by David Pesetsky (MIT), July 15-28 2023, CreteLing summer school, University of Crete.

Introduction to syntax.

Course by Norvin Richards (MIT), July 15-28 2023, CreteLing summer school, University of Crete.

– Methods & academia

Proposal Writing. How to create promising grant applications.

Workshop, November 19 2024, University of Potsdam.

Ordinal models.

Workshop by João Veríssimo (University of Lisbon), March 26-27 2024, University of Potsdam.

Reviewing: How to write a review.

Workshop by Doreen Georgi and Martin Salzmann, June 19 2023, University of Potsdam.

The road from linguistics to data science and tech.

Workshop, March 13 2023, University of Potsdam.

Leadership skills for female researchers.

Workshop, November 10&17 2022, University of Potsdam.

Introduction to Bayesian data analysis.

Course by Shravan Vasishth & Anna Laurinavichyute, September 12-16 2022, 6th Summer School on Statistical Methods for Linguistics and Psychology, University of Potsdam.

Introduction to Bayesian data analysis.

Course by Shravan Vasishth, Anna Laurinavichyute & Paula Lissón, September 6-10 2021, 5th Summer School on Statistical Methods for Linguistics and Psychology, University of Potsdam.

Skills

Coding: R (proficient), Python (familiar), jsPsych (basic)

Typesetting: L^AT_EX, HTML

Annotating Tools: ELAN, Praat, Exmaralda, MaxQDA.

Other tools: Github, OSF

Languages: Hungarian (native), German (native), English (fluent), Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian (basic), Latin (basically gone)

Service & outreach

PhD representative (CRC 1287, University of Potsdam) 01/2023 – present
Representing the doctoral cohort in program-wide meetings and decisions; organizing community events and mentoring sessions; supporting peers in resolving conflicts and throughout negotiations with faculty; contributing to graduate policy discussions within the collaborative research center.

Summer School Understanding and Modelling Linguistic Variability

Member of the organizing committee of an international summer school within the CRC 1287, University of Potsdam, August 21-25 2023.