

# Adina Williams

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Personal Website

Lab Website

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Facebook, Inc.

Facebook Artificial Intelligence  
Research (FAIR)

770 Broadway

New York, NY 10003

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## EMPLOYMENT

2018–            **Facebook Artificial Intelligence Research (FAIR)**  
Postdoctoral Researcher

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## EDUCATION

2013–2018    **Ph.D. in Linguistics** from New York University  
Title: *Representing Relationality: MEG studies on Argument Structure*  
Advisor: Liina Pylkkänen  
Committee: Samuel R., Bowman, Alec Marantz, Chris Barker, Andrei Cimpian

2011–2013    **M.A. in Linguistics** from Michigan State University  
Advisor: Alan Beretta

2006–2010    **B.S. in Neuroscience** and **B.S. in Asian Languages & Cultures (Mandarin)** from  
University of Michigan

2009 summer    Soochow University  
Exchange Student (Mandarin Chinese) in Suzhou, PRC.

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## SUMMER SCHOOLS

2016            *The North American Summer School on Logic, Language, and Information (NASS-LLI)*, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

2014            *Genetics & Neurobiology of Language Summer Course*, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY

2013            *2013 Linguistic Institute*, Linguistics Society of America, Ann Arbor, MI

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## PUBLICATIONS

in press            **Williams, A.**  
A Morpho-Semantic Account of Weak Definites and Bare Singulars in English  
*Definiteness Across Languages*, Language Science Press.

- 2019 Liu, S., **Williams, A.**, Mei, H., Cotterell, R.  
On the Idiosyncrasies of the Mandarin Chinese Classifier System  
*Proceedings of the 2019 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL)*
- 2019 [Kann, K., Warstadt, A. **Williams, A.**]\*, Bowman, S. R.  
Verb Argument Structure Alternations in Word and Sentence Embeddings  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Computation in Linguistics (SCiL)*.  
\*denotes equal contribution, listed alphabetically
- 2018 Conneau, A., Lample, G., Rinott, R., **Williams, A.**, Bowman, S. R., Schwenk, H., Stoyanov, V.  
XNLI: Evaluating Cross-lingual Sentence Representations  
*Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)*
- 2018 **Williams, A.**, Nangia, N., Bowman, S. R. [link]  
A Broad-Coverage Challenge Corpus for Sentence Understanding through Inference  
*Proceedings of the 2018 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL)*
- 2018 **Williams, A.**, Drozdov, A., Bowman, S.R.  
Do Latent Tree Learning Models Identify Meaningful Structure in Sentences?  
*Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics (TACL) - Vol. 6, 1*
- 2017 **Williams, A.**, Reddigari, S., & Pylkkänen, L. (2017).  
Early Sensitivity of Left Perisylvian Cortex to Relationality in Nouns and Verbs  
*Neuropsychologia*, 100, 131-143.
- 2017 Nangia, N., **Williams, A.**, Lazaridou, A., Bowman, S.R. (2017)  
The RepEval 2017 Shared Task: Multi-Genre Natural Language Inference with Sentence Representations  
*Proceedings of RepEval 2017: The Second Workshop on Evaluating Vector Space Representations for NLP (EMNLP)*.
- 2016 **Williams, A.** (2016)  
The Syntax of the Mandarin Chinese Adpositional Imperfective  
*ConSOLE XXIV: Proceedings of the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Student Organization of Linguistics in Europe (University of York)*.

## INVITED TALKS

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- Jul 2018 Invited talk at Information Extraction and Synthesis Laboratory at the University of Massachusetts (Department of Computer Science)  
*Sentence Understanding with Natural Language Inference: A Challenging Corpus and Model Evaluation*

- Jun 2018 Invited talk at the Gradient Symbolic Computation Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University (Department of Cognitive Science)  
*Sentence Understanding with Natural Language Inference: A Challenging Corpus, Neural Networks, and Model Evaluation*
- Apr 2018 Invited talk at the Semantics Group at New York University (Department of Linguistics)  
*Representing Thematic Relations: Reconciling Neuroimaging Data with Formal Semantic Theory*
- Feb 2018 Invited talk at the Common Ground Seminar in Language and Communication Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania  
*Argument structure and the angular gyrus*
- Feb 2018 Invited talk in LING-GA 3340: Deep Learning in Semantics (Barker & Bowman) at NYU Department of Linguistics/Center for Data Science  
*Williams, Drosdov, and Bowman (2018): Do latent tree learning models identify meaningful structure in sentences?*
- Oct 2017 Invited talk at Computational Intelligence, Learning, Vision, and Robotics Laboratory (CILVR) at Center for Data Science, NYU  
*Sentence Understanding with Neural Networks and Natural Language Inference*
- Apr 2017 Invited talk at Semantics-You-Name-It at Rutgers (SURGE), Department of Linguistics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
*A Morpho-semantic Account of Weakness in English Definites and Bare Singulars*
- May 2016 Dept. of Psychology Colloquium at Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ  
*Semantic Processing in the Angular Gyrus: An MEG Investigation of Relationality*
- Mar 2016 Qualifying Paper Conference at the Department of Linguistics, NYU, NYC  
*Thematic Role Processing in the Left AG: Evidence from MEG*
- Nov 2015 Invited talk at Syntax Brown Bag, Department of Linguistics, NYU, NYC  
*A Cartographic Approach to the Syntax of the Mandarin Locative Preposition zài*
- Sep 2014 Invited talk at Neuroscience of Language Workshop at NYU Abu Dhabi  
*The Role of Left Angular Gyrus in Linguistic Composition*

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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### Talks:

- Nov 2018 Conneau, A.<sup>a</sup>, Lample, G., Rinott, R., **Williams, A.**, Bowman, S. R., Schwenk, H., Stoyanov, V.  
XNLI: Evaluating Cross-lingual Sentence Representations  
*2018 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)*, Brussels, Belgium.

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<sup>a</sup>Presented by first author.

- Jun 2018 **Williams, A.**, Nangia, N., Bowman, S. R.  
A Broad-Coverage Challenge Corpus for Sentence Understanding thru Inference  
*2018 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL)*, New Orleans, LA.
- Jun 2018 **Williams, A.**, Drozdov, A., Bowman, S.R.  
Do Latent Tree Learning Models Identify Meaningful Structure in Sentences?  
*2018 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL)*, New Orleans, LA.
- Sept 2017 Nangia, N.<sup>a</sup>, **Williams, A.**, Lazaridou, A., Bowman, S.R. (2017)  
The RepEval 2017 Shared Task: Multi-Genre Natural Language Inference with Sentence Representations  
*RepEval 2017: The Second Workshop on Evaluating Vector Space Representations for NLP (EMNLP)*, Copenhagen, Denmark.
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- <sup>a</sup>Presented by first author.
- Oct 2017 **Williams, A.**  
Does quantity processing underlie relationality effects in the left Angular Gyrus?  
*7<sup>th</sup> Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning (MACSIM 7)*, Georgetown University, Georgetown, MD
- Jun 2017 **Williams, A.**  
Microparametric Syntactic Variation in Mandarin: Predicative Adjuncts & Verbalizing ZAI  
*25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting for the International Association of Chinese Linguistics (IACL 25)*, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
- Jun 2016 **Williams, A.**  
Weakness as the Absence of NumP: The Case of English  
*Definiteness Across Languages*, UNAM Ciudad Universitaria/El Colegio Del Mexico, Mexico City, MX
- Jan 2016 **Williams, A.**  
Modificational and Predicative Uses of the Mandarin Locative Preposition *zài*  
*24<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Student Organisation of Linguistics in Europe (ConSOLE XXIV)*, York St. John & York University, York, England
- Dec 2015 **Williams, A.**  
The Mandarin Locative Preposition *zài*: A Cartographic Approach  
*The First International Workshop on Syntactic Cartography (IWSC)*, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing, PRC
- Dec 2013 **Williams, A.**  
On the Semantics and Pragmatics of English Anarthrous Singulars  
*SUNY-Yale-NYU-CUNY(SYNC)*, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- May 2013 **Williams, A.**  
The Social Uses of Rhotacization in Beijing Mandarin  
*EDGES Conference*, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Oct 2012      **Williams, A.**  
Bare Count Nominals  
*Semantics Workshop of the American Midwest and Prairies (SWAMP)*, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

**Posters:**

Jan 2017      **Williams, A. & Li, H.**  
Locative Ambiguities: PP-Shift in Mandarin Chinese and American English  
*91st Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America*, Austin, TX [poster]

Apr 2016      **Williams, A. & Pylkkänen, L.**  
Relationality in the Angular Gyrus: Evidence from MEG  
*23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society*, New York, NYC

Oct 2015      **Williams, A. & Pylkkänen, L.**  
Relationality in the Angular Gyrus: Evidence from MEG  
*7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language Annual Conference*, Chicago, IL

Oct 2015      **Williams, A. & Pylkkänen, L.**  
Relationality in the Angular Gyrus: Evidence from MEG  
*Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning (MACSIM) V*. University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Apr 2011      Mi, J., Chen, J., Steinman, C., Czik, A., **Williams, A.**, Tardif, T., & Kessler, D.  
Infant Word-learning in Chinese and English  
*University of Michigan Undergraduate Research Opportunities Spring Research Symposium*, Ann Arbor, MI

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**TEACHING**

**Guest Lectures:**

May 2019      Graduate seminar in Natural Language Understanding and Computational Semantics (Bowman & Kann)  
“Crowdsourcing for NLP”  
New York University, Center for Data Science

Feb 2019      Professional Seminar for graduate students  
“Careers outside the academy: for linguists”  
New York University, Department of Linguistics

Jan 2019      *Panelist annual career symposium*  
Women In Science and Engineering Residence Program (WISE-RP), University of Michigan

**New York University:**

- Summer 2017 Co-main instructor (with R. Laturus)  
*Language* (Introduction to Language)
- Fall 2016 Recitation instructor & grader  
*Sound and Language* (Introduction to Phonetics)  
Teaching Assistant with Maria Gouskova
- Spring 2016 Recitation instructor & grader  
*Language and Mind* (Introduction to Psychology of Language)  
Teaching Assistant with Anna Szabolcsi & Brian McElree

**Michigan State University:**

- Fall 2012 & Spring 2013 Guest lecturer & grader  
*Introduction to Linguistics*  
Teaching Assistant with Karthik Durvasula
- Summer 2012 Tutor & grader  
*Introduction to Language*  
Teaching Assistant with Alan Munn
- Fall 2011 & Spring 2012 Recitation instructor & course designer  
*Literature, Culture, and Identities*  
Teaching Assistant with Hsiao-ping Wang

**Other:**

- Summer 2017 *Tutorial on crowdsourced experimentation with Amazon Mechanical Turk*  
Neurobiology of Language Laboratory, NYU

**AWARDS**

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- 2018 Google Industry Travel Grant (*Grace Hopper Celebration*, Houston, TX)
- 2017 NYU Graduate School of Arts & Science Dean's Student Travel Grant
- 2016 Student Scholarship Honorarium to attend the North American Summer School on Logic, Language, and Information (NASSLLI), Rutgers, NJ
- 2016 NYU Graduate School of Arts & Science Dean's Student Travel Grant
- 2015 Student Senators Council's Conference Fund, NYU
- 2014 Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation Scholarship, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- 2013–2018 Henry Mitchell McCracken Fellowship, NYU
- 2009 Critical Language Scholarship, U.S. State Department

## SERVICE

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### Reviewing:

*Journal Referee:* Journal of Natural Language Engineering (2018), Glossa (2016)

*Conference Proceedings & Volumes:* Association of Computational Linguistics (2018–2019), Empirical Methods in NLP (2018–2019), International Machine Learning Society (2019), North American Association for Computational Linguistics (2018–2019), North American Association for Computational Linguistics Student Workshop (2019), Definiteness Across Languages Volume (Language Science Press, 2017), ConSOLE XXIV (2016)

*Student Conference Abstract Reviewing:* NAACL-SRW 2019, MACSIM 2018 (NYU), SUNY-Yale-NYU-CUNY (SYNC) (2013–2016, 2018)

*Other Reviewing:* Great Lakes Expo for Experimental and Formal Undergraduate Linguistics (GLEEFUL) at MSU (2013), University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum (URAF) at MSU (2013)

### Administration:

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|-----------|---|
| 2017      | Panelist: Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)-Pathways Recruitment Event, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science                                     |
| 2016–2017 | Co-organizer (with M. Esipova): NYU Semantics Group Meetings  |
| 2016      | Search committee member (Computational Linguistics): NYU Department of Linguistics and the Center for Data Science  |
| 2015      | Facilitator: “Survive & Thrive” Doctoral Student Orientation, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science   |
| 2014–2016 | Secretary: <i>Linguistic Association of New York University</i> (LANYU)   |
| 2012–2013 | Student-Faculty Liaison: <i>Linguistics Student Organization</i><br>Linguistics Program, Department of Linguistics & Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages, Michigan State University |
| 2012–2013 | Department Liaison: Michigan State University Graduate Employees Union  |

### Conferences:

Program Committee: *Workshop on analyzing and interpreting neural networks for NLP* (EMNLP 2018)

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| Apr 2016 | Volunteer: <i>23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society</i> , NYC, NY                |
| Apr 2016 | Volunteer: <i>23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society</i> , NYC, NY                |
| Jan 2016 | Co-organizer: <i>Experimental Approaches to Arabic and other understudied Languages (EXAL)</i> , Abu Dhabi, UAE |

- Dec 2015 Co-organizer (with D. Duncan): *SUNY-Yale-NYU-CUNY 2015 (SYNC)* at NYU
- June 2015 Local Committee: *Roots IV* at NYU
- June 2015 Session Chair: *Roots IV* at NYU
- May 2015 Local Committee: *24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics & Workshop on Approaches to Slavic Morphology (FASL 24)* at NYU
- May 2015 Volunteer: *Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language*, Chicago, IL
- Jan 2015 Session Chair: *Experimental Approaches to Arabic and other understudied Languages (EXAL+)*, NYU Abu Dhabi
- May 2014 Local Committee: *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 24)* at NYU
- Apr 2013 Volunteer: *2013 Linguistic Society of America, Linguistic Institute*, Ann Arbor, MI

**Other:**

- 2012–present Volunteer (Mandarin Translation): *National Language Service Corps (NLSC)*

**LANGUAGES & SKILLS**

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**Natural languages:** English (native), Mandarin (near-fluent), German (beginner, beginner reading), Latin (intermediate reading), Italian (beginner reading)

**Programming languages:** Python (extensive), R (extensive), HTML (basic), HackLang/PHP (basic), MATLAB (basic)

**Data Acquisition Skills:** Magnetoencephalography (extensive), Crowd Sourcing & Amazon Mechanical Turk (extensive), Corpus Techniques (proficient), Fieldwork (Mandarin) (proficient), Electroencephalography (proficient), Eye-tracking (basic), Child Language Acquisition (basic)

**Data Analysis Software:** MNE Python, PsychoPy, MEG160, BESA, SPSS

**Other:** L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X(extensive)