

Niloofar Akhavan

San Diego, CA

RESEARCH

Language and cognition in multilingual, neurotypical aging population, individuals with Aphasia, and neurotypical developing children

EDUCATION

University of California San Diego, CA | 2017-present

Ph.D. Student, Language and Communicative Disorder

San Diego State University, San Diego, CA | 2017-present

Ph.D. Student, Language and Communicative Disorder

Ph.D. Student, Full Merit Scholarship

Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey | 2013-2016

M.A. in Psychology

M.A. Student, Full Merit Scholarship

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey | 2008-2013

Pitzer College, Claremont, CA | Jan-May 2012

B.Sc. in Psychology

B.Sc. Student, Full Merit Scholarship

AWARDS

- Dissertation Fellowship in the Cognitive, Clinical, and Neural Foundations of Language | 2021-2022
- UCSD Friend of International | 2021-2022
- Dr. David Swinney Fellowship | 2021-2022
- San Diego State University, Student Success Fee Award, Guest Speaker Event | 2020 – 2021
- Academy of Aphasia (NIH-NIDCD) Young Investigator Travel Fellowships | 2020
- San Diego State University Scholarship | 2019
- Davis Fellowship, San Diego State University | 2018
- American Speech-Language-Hearing (ASH) Foundation International Student Scholarship | 2017
- Lipinsky Family Scholarship, San Diego State University | 2017
- Koç University Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities Scholarship | 2016
- The Scientific and Technological Research Council Scholar | 2015
- International Undergraduate Student Scholarship, Middle East Technical University | 2008-2012

PUBLICATIONS

- **Akhavan, N.**, Blumenfeld, H. K., & Love, T. (2020). Auditory Sentence Processing in Bilinguals: The Role of Cognitive Control. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 898. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00898>
- **Akhavan, N.**, Göksun, T., & Nozari, N. (2018). The integrity and function of gestures in aphasia. *Aphasiology*, 32, 1310-1335
- **Akhavan, N.**, Nozari, N., & Göksun, T. (2017). Expression of motion events in Farsi, *Language, Cognition,*

and *Neuroscience*, 32:6, 792-804, DOI: 10.1080/23273798.2016.1276607

- **Akhavan, N.**, Göksun T., & Nozari, N. (2016). [Disfluency production in speech and gesture](#). In A. Papafragou, D. Grodner, D. Mirman, & J. C. Trueswell (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society* (pp. 716–721). Austin, TX: Cognitive Science Society.
- **Akhavan, N.**, Nozari, N., & Göksun, T. (2015). Motion event expressions in language and gesture: Evidence from Persian. In Noelle, D. C., Dale, R., Warlaumont, A. S., Yoshimi, J., Matlock, T., Jennings, C. D., & Maglio, P. P. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society* (pp. 60-65), Austin, TX: Cognitive Science Society.

UNDER REVIEW

- Love, T., **Akhavan, N.**, Sullivan, N., & Shapiro, L. (under review). Canonical sentence comprehension deficits in Aphasia: Evidence from eye-tracking.

IN PREPARATION

- **Akhavan, N.**, Sen, C., Baker, C., Abbott, N., Gravier, & Love, T. (in preparation). Effect of lexical-semantic cues during real-time sentence processing in aphasia.

BOOK CHAPTER

- Göksun, T., Karaduman, A., Çatak, E., & **Akhavan, N.** (2016). Language and Thought: A Neuropsychological Approach. In M. Irak (Ed.), *Information Processing in Psychopathology: From Theory to Application*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Kianfar, F., **Akhavan, N.**, Blumenfeld, H.K., & Love, T. (submitted). Comprehension of complex sentences in Persian-speaking individuals: Adaptation of The SOAP test of sentence comprehension. *Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Washington, DC [hybrid conference due to COVID-19 restrictions]*.
- Abbott, N., **Akhavan, N.**, Gravier, M., Sullivan, N., Shapiro, L., & Love, T. (2021, March). Impact of structural and functional lesions in the ventral stream on online semantic integration. *Proposal submitted to 34th CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. Pittsburg, PA (Online Convention)*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Baker, C., Abbott, N., Gravier, M., Sullivan, N., Shapiro, L., & Love, T. (2020, October). 79: The role of semantic cues on the speed of lexical activation during sentence processing in agrammatic aphasia. *Proposal accepted at the Annual Convention of the Academy of Aphasia (Online Convention)*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Sullivan, N., Pieperhoff, D., Amunts, K., & Love, T. (2020, November). 12023: The role of inferior parietal lobule in language processing: A multiple case study. *Proposal accepted at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, San Diego, CA*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Baker, C., Sullivan, N., & Love, T. (2019, March). Reducing similarity-based interference in sentence processing for individuals with agrammatic aphasia: a semantic approach. *Proposal presented at the 32nd CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing. Boulder, CO.*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Blumenfeld, H., & Love, T. (2019, March). The role of working memory and cognitive control in online sentence processing: A comparison between bilingual and monolingual speakers. *Paper presented to the annual SDSU Student Research Symposium. San Diego, CA.*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Sullivan, N., Love, T., & Blumenfeld, H.K. (2017, November). Effect of bilingualism on ambiguity resolution in object-relative sentences: Evidence from eye-tracking & cognitive tasks. *Poster to be presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Los Angeles, CA.*

- **Akhavan, N.**, Göksun, T., Kazemi, R., & Nozari, N. (2016, October). Integrity and function of gestures in aphasia. *Poster presentation, 54th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Aphasia, Llandudno, North Wales, UK.*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Göksun T., & Nozari, N. (2016). [Disfluency production in speech and gesture](#). *Poster presented at the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society. Austin, TX.*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Nozari, N., & Göksun, T. (2015, July). Motion event expressions in language and gesture: Evidence from Persian. *Poster presented at 37th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society. Pasadena, CA.*
- Sarıçimen, I., Ölmez, B., Başçı, A., **Akhavan, N.**, Erciyes, A., & Göksun, T. (2016, January). The role of nonverbal behavior during book reading on language development. *Poster presented at CEU Conference on Cognitive Development conference (BCCCD), Budapest, Hungary*
- **Akhavan, N.**, Özer, D., Altınok, N., Ger, E., Liskowski, U., Küntay, A., & Göksun, T. (2015, January). Infant point following predicts later language development: Evidence from Turkish. *Poster presented at CEU Conference on Cognitive Development conference (BCCCD), Budapest, Hungary.*
- Özer, D., **Akhavan, N.**, Altınok, N., Savaş, Ö, Liskowski, U., Küntay, A., & Göksun, T. (2015, March). Pointing the right way: The role of infant and caregiver gestures on language development in Turkish. *Poster presented at Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD), Philadelphia, PA.*
- Sahin, B., Leichtman, M. D., **Akhavan, N.** (2012, January). The Effect of Mother's Self-Construal on Memory Characteristics of Iranian Mother-Child Conversations. *Poster presented at CEU Conference on Cognitive Development conference (BCCCD), Budapest, Hungary.*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

University of California San Diego | San Diego State University | 2017-present

Research Associate

- Investigating the real-time language processing of individuals with and without language impairment to develop language and cognitive intervention models

Undergraduate Mentor

- Mentored and led 10 undergraduate students by providing clear research goals and plans

Teaching

- Instructor of a course on Communication Disorders in Children and Adults, developed series of lectures, implemented a student-centered model that prioritized students' needs and challenges. Designed interactive modules to foster students' creative thinking skills.
- Co-Instructor of a course on Introduction to Language Sciences, developed lectures and taught 117 students with mixed abilities.
- Invited guest lecturer in graduate level course, Seminar in Foundations of Language Science
- Teaching assistantship for courses in Cognitive Sciences Department

Graduate Student Representative

- Organized bi-monthly scientific events and workshops
- Secure funding for hosting guest faculty scholars and facilitating their visits

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, USA | 2018-2020

International Issues Board Member

- Worked internationally and established relationships with speech, language, and hearing organizations around the world to plan conventions abroad
- Established ASHA International Conference Partnerships for 2021 to 2025

Research related Services | 2020

- Peer-reviewing for journal of Cognition, PLOS ONE

Koç University, Turkey | 2013-2016

Research Assistant

- Investigated the types of inputs that are important for children language acquisition by conducting task-based experiments (social robots, and decorated rooms) and surveys with 50 children and their families
- Investigated how language shapes human event-perception by conducting interviews and creating personas based on large-scale language data from 60 healthy adults and 30 individuals with communication disorders

Teaching Assistant

- Teaching assistantship for 10 courses including Human Perception and data analysis

Ability First, Claremont, CA | May-July 2012

Volunteer Researcher

- Interacted with children with developmental disabilities to design programs which would help them achieve their independence

Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Turkey | 2011-2012

Research Assistant Intern

- Worked with social workers and psychologists and designed cognitive and emotional training games for institutionalized children

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Recovery and Trauma-Informed Care | 2020-2022

QUALIFICATIONS

- Exceptional critical and analytical thinking skills to conduct empirical studies to deliver actionable recommendations.
- Skilled in designing studies with children, adults, and those with physical, cognitive, and language disabilities.
- Excellent communication skills from lecturing students, preparing presentations and reports for academic and industrial professionals, and publishing manuscripts in scientific journals.

SKILLS

- Language: Farsi (Native), English (Fluent), Turkish (Fluent)
- Tools: R, Python, E-prime, SPSS, Microsoft Office, Qualtrics
- Statistical Methods: ANOVA, Multilevel, Multivariate, Regression, Clustering

REFERENCES

Tracy Love-Geffen
Joint SDSU/UCSD Doctoral
Program in Language and
Communicative Disorders
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of Psychology, Koç
University, Turkey
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Sciences,
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