

Victor Gomes

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Academic Positions

Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Psychology

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

- Mentors: Jesse Snedeker and Erika Bergelson

Cambridge, MA

September 2024 -

Education

University of Pennsylvania

PHD PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY

- Dissertation: *How to Learn Nothing: Negator Learning as a Mapping Problem*
- Advisor: John Trueswell

Philadelphia, PA

Aug. 2019 - May 2024

University of Pennsylvania

M.S. IN PSYCHOLOGY

Philadelphia, PA

2021

Swarthmore College

B.A. IN PSYCHOLOGY AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE, HIGH HONORS

Swarthmore, PA

Aug. 2013 - May. 2017

Honors & Awards

2021	Paula Menyuk Award , Boston University Conference on Language Development
2020	Mellon Graduate Fellow , Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
2019	Fontaine fellow , Penn Fontaine Fellowship Program
2017	High honors in Cognitive Science , Swarthmore College
2014-2017	HHMI Summer Research Funding , Howard Hughes Medical Institute
2015	Sigma Xi induction , Sigma Xi
2013	Questbridge Scholar , Questbridge

Publications

- Gomes, V.**, Huh, Y., Yun, H., & Trueswell, J. (2026), Failure is always an option: Event failures serve as minimal discourse contexts for early negator use and inference. *Cognition*, 267, 106342.
- Falk, E., Scholz, C., Cooper, N., & **Gomes, V.** (2025). Behavior change and social influence. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, E. J. Finkel, & W. B. Mendes (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (6th ed.). Situational Press. <https://doi.org/10.70400/CGDA1887>
- LaTourrette, A., **Gomes, V.**, Tangen, K., & Trueswell, J. (2025), The development of polyseme learning under uncertainty. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 47.
- Gomes, V.** (2024), *How to Learn Nothing: Negator Learning as a Mapping Problem* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania)
- Gomes, V.** (2024), Whither Developmental Psycholinguistics? *Language Development Research*, 5(1), 144–187. <http://doi.org/10.34842/gomesllm>.
- Gomes, V.** and Doherty, R. and Smits, D. and Goldin-Meadow, S. and Trueswell, J.C. and Feiman, R. (2023), It's not just what we don't know: The mapping problem in the acquisition of negation. *Cognitive Psychology*, 145, 101592. 10.1016/j.cogpsych.2023.101592.
- de Carvalho, A. and **Gomes, V.** and Trueswell, J. (2022), English-learning preschoolers can correctly parse and interpret negative sentences to guide their interpretations of novel noun and verb meanings in the acquisition of negation. *Language Acquisition*.
- Knowlton, T. and **Gomes, V.** (2022), Linguistic and non-linguistic cues to acquiring the strong distributivity of *each*.

Gomes, V. and Huh, Y. and Trueswell, J. (2020), Not what you expect: The relationship between violation of expectation and negation in the acquisition of negation. *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*. Cognitive Science Society.

Gomes, V. and de Carvalho, A. (2019), “Look up!” Using easy words to explain how we learn hard words and other aspects of language, an interview with Lila Gleitman. *Revista Linguística*, 14(3), 12-20.

Conference Talks

Gomes, V., Huh, Y., Yun, H., Trueswell, J. (2024), Failures succeed in affirming negation: Event perception & negator learning. Talk presented at the *49th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD)*.

Gomes, V., Knowlton, T., Papafragou, A., Trueswell, J. (2022), Differentiating Universal Quantifiers by Differentiating their Domains? Talk presented at the *47th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD)*.

Knowlton, T. and **Gomes, V.** (2022), Linguistic and non-linguistic cues to acquiring the strong distributivity of *each*. Talk presented at the *Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Annual Meeting*.

Gomes, V., Huh, Y., Goldin-Meadow, S., Feiman, R., and Trueswell, J. (2021), Not as hard as it looks? Linguistic, and not conceptual, ability drives negation acquisition, Talk presented at the *46th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD)*.

de Carvalho, A, **Gomes, V.**, and Trueswell, J. (2021), English-learning preschoolers use negative sentences to constrain novel word meanings of expectation and negation. Talk presented at the *34th Annual CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing*.

Gomes, V., Huh, Y. and Trueswell, J. (2020), Not what you expect: The relationship between violation of expectation and negation. Talk presented at the *42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Invited Talks

Gomes, V. (Oct. 24, 2025), Does *not* compute? The development of real-time negation processing. *Integrated Language Science and Technology Seminar, University of Pennsylvania*.

Gomes, V. (Feb. 2, 2025), More senses, more problems: The development of polyseme learning under uncertainty. *Language and Cognition Colloquia, Harvard University*.

Gomes, V. (April 5, 2024), What sorts of violations of expectations lead to negation? *Cesana-Arlotti Lab, Yale University*.

Gomes, V. (Oct. 2, 2023), Is there nothing in your head? What word learning has to do with observation. *Firestone Lab, Johns Hopkins University*.

Gomes, V. (June 3, 2023), It's not just what we don't know: The mapping problem in the acquisition of negation. *LaPsyDÉ, Paris Cité University*.

Gomes, V. (March 26, 2020), Not as hard as it looks? *Integrated Language Science and Technology Seminar, University of Pennsylvania*.

Conference Posters

Gomes, V., Smolyar, I., Tangen, K., & LaTourrette, A. (2025), The development of polyseme learning under uncertainty. Poster to be presented at the *50th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*.

Novak, D., **Gomes, V.**, Coppola, M., Snedeker, J., & Kocab, A. (2025), The emergence of negation in Nicaraguan homesign systems. Poster to be presented at the *50th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*.

LaTourrette, A., **Gomes, V.**, Tangen, K., & Trueswell, J. (2025), The development of polyseme learning under

uncertainty. Poster presented at the *47th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.

LaTourrette, A., **Gomes, V.**, Tangen, K., & Trueswell, J. (2024). Similarity is an uneven guide to meaning: The development of cross-situational polyseme learning. Poster presented at *The California Meeting on Psycholinguistics*.

Gomes, V., Huh, Y., Yun, H., and Trueswell, J. (2024), Failure teaches success: Linking real-time event processing & production with negation. Poster presented at the *37th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*.

Gomes, V., LaTourrette, A., Tangen, K., and Trueswell, J. (2023), Similarity is an uneven guide to meaning: Developmental differences in cross-situational polyseme learning. Poster presented at the *48th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*.

Gomes, V., Doherty, R., Smiths, D, Goldin-Meadow, S., Trueswell, J., and Feiman, R. (2023), It's not just what we don't know: The mapping problem in the acquisition of negation. Poster presented at the *49th Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology*.

Gomes, V. (2023), How to think negative thoughts (to learn negators with). Poster presented at *9th meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Colloquium of Studies in Meaning*.

Gomes, V., Goldin-Meadow, S., Trueswell, J., and Feiman, R. (2020), Observing negation: Artificial and Naturalistic Human Simulation Paradigms. Poster presented at the *45th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*.

Other Experience

RESEARCH

University of Pennsylvania Language Learning Lab

RESEARCH SPECIALIST & LABORATORY MANAGER

- PIs: John Trueswell & Lila Gleitman

Swarthmore College EEG Lab

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

- PIs: Les Sikos & Amanda Elam

Swarthmore Psycholinguistics Lab

RESEARCH ASSISTANT AND THESIS STUDENT

- PI: Daniel Grodner

Swarthmore College Neurobehavioral Psychopharmacology Lab

HEAD UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHER

- PI: Allen Schneider

Philadelphia, PA

Apr. 2018 – Aug. 2019

Swarthmore, PA

Feb. 2015 - May. 2017

Swarthmore, PA

May. 2015 - May. 2017

Swarthmore, PA

Aug. 2013 - May. 2017

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Lila R. Gleitman Undergraduate Summer Program in Interdisciplinary Mind & Brain Studies (mindCORE)

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Philadelphia, PA

Summers 2020-Fall 2023

College of Physicians, Mütter Museum

OUT4STEM PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Philadelphia, PA

Nov. 2018 - 2023

Nautilus Magazine

EDITORIAL INTERN

New York, NY

Aug. 2017 - May. 2018

Teaching

University of Delaware, Language and Cognitive Science

Newark, DE

GUEST LECTURER

- LING890: Studies in Linguistics, Dr. Hafri (Fall 2023 & 2024)
 - Guest seminar on AI ethics
 - Guest lecture on word learning and observation
- LING444: First Language Development, Dr. Beltrama (Fall 2024)
 - Guest lecture on word learning
- CGSC170: Introduction to Cognitive Science, Dr. Knowlton (Spring 2025)
 - Guest lecture on contemporary AI approaches and ethics

University of Pennsylvania, Psychology Department

Philadelphia, PA

GUEST LECTURER

- PSYC1777: Introduction to Developmental Psychology, Dr. Brannon (Fall 2018)
 - Guest lecture on Syntactic Development
- LING0750: Language & Thought (Spring 2021 & 2022, Fall 2023), Dr. Trueswell
 - Guest lectures on Bilingualism and Sign Language

University of Pennsylvania, Psychology Department

Philadelphia, PA

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Sept. 2018 - 2023

- PSYC1777: Introduction to Developmental Psychology (Fall 2018)
- PSYC1340: Introduction to Perception (Fall 2020)
 - Designing materials
 - Weekly two-hour-long recitation
- LING0750: Language & Thought (Spring 2021 & 2022, Fall 2023)
- COGS1001: Introduction to Cognitive Science (Fall 2021)
 - Designing materials
 - Weekly hour-long recitation
- PSYC1440: Social Psychology (Spring 2023)
 - Designing materials

University of Pennsylvania, mindCORE

Philadelphia, PA

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Summers 2020 - 2023

- Designing and running week-long "coding for experiments" bootcamp (R, Python)
- Designing 10-week summer seminar on topics in cognitive science (perception, language, emotions, social reasoning, and neuroscience)
- Leading and facilitating seminar discussions
- Teaching research poster design and presentation skills

College of Physicians, Mütter Museum

Philadelphia, PA

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Nov. 2018 - 2023

- Designing curricula for year-long afterschool program
- Designing and giving talks, labs, and project-based workshops
- Assistance and mentoring in college prep
- Examples of talks and workshops:
 - Introduction to Coding
 - * Introduction to general compsci concepts and Python. Students make simple dialogue-tree chat & a car with Lego Mindstorms.
 - The Science of Sound
 - * Learning how we perceive sound with the help of a synthesizer, theremin, and drum machine.
 - The Scientific Method: Science & Trust
 - * Through the lens of alchemy (and counterfeiting), the scientific method is introduced as a standard system for applying skepticism.
 - What is Linguistics?
 - * Starting with sound & working up to meaning, we survey different ways language & communication are researched scientifically.
 - The Great Verb Game
 - * Game-based introduction to psycholinguistics research. Students learn about challenges different words pose to language learners.
 - Sociolinguistics: Language & Identity
 - * How does how we identify shape how we speak, and vice-versa? We discuss how language differences arise, with a focus on Philly.
 - Behind "the Algorithm"
 - * We explore how machine learning shapes what we see online, as well as its limitations and how it can recreate existing biases.
 - Introduction to Interview Skills for Journalism
 - * A series of sessions on how to conduct interviews, from research to practicing interpersonal skills key to interviewing.

Committees

2019-2021	Organizer , Integrated Language Sciences & Technology (ILST) Seminar
2019-2024.	Student Representative , mindCORE Education Committee
2021-2023	Member , (Ad-Hoc) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Committee, Mütter Museum College of Physicians
2023	Founding Co-Chair , Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Committee, College of Physicians