

# ESZTER RONAI

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDRESS Northwestern University  
Department of Linguistics  
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Evanston, IL 60208

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## EMPLOYMENT

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2023– **Northwestern University, USA**  
Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics  
Affiliated Faculty, Cognitive Science Program

2022–2023 **Northwestern University, USA**  
Weinberg College Fellow, Department of Linguistics

## EDUCATION

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2016–2022 **The University of Chicago, USA**  
PhD in Linguistics  
*Thesis:* Scales, alternatives, context: Experimental investigations into scalar inference  
*Committee:* Ming Xiang (chair), Chris Kennedy, Itamar Francez

2016–2018 **The University of Chicago, USA**  
MA in Linguistics

2013–2016 **University of Cambridge, UK**  
BA (Hons) in Linguistics, *Double First Class with Distinction*

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Peer-reviewed

(\* = equal contribution)

- 2024 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. What could have been said? Alternatives and variability in pragmatic inferences. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 136: 104507. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2024.104507>
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Memory Versus Expectation: Processing Relative Clauses in a Flexible Word Order Language. *Cognitive Science*, 47: e13227. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13227>
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Laura Stigliano\*. Experimentally testing the interpretation of multiple sluicing and multiple questions in Hungarian. *The Linguistic Review* 39(3), pp. 401–423. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/tlr-2022-2092>
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Pragmatic inferences are QUD-sensitive: An experimental study. *Journal of Linguistics* 57(4), pp. 841–870. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022226720000389>
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Laura Stigliano\*. NP ellipsis bleeds allomorphy in Hungarian. *Snippets* 39, pp. 10–12. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2020-039-rost>
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Laura Stigliano\*. Adjectival sluices in Hungarian: An argument for isomorphic sources. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 38(4), pp. 1197–1210. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-020-09468-w>

- 2019 **Eszter Ronai**, Yenan Sun, Alan Yu & Ming Xiang. Integration of contextual-pragmatic and phonetic information in speech perception: An eye-tracking study. *Laboratory Phonology: Journal of the Association for Laboratory Phonology* 10(1): 20, pp. 1–15. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/labphon.186>

### Conference Proceedings

- 2023 Helena Aparicio\* & **Eszter Ronai**\*. Scalar implicature rates vary within and across adjectival scales. In Juhyae Kim et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 33rd Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference*, pp. 110-130. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/t7t8pn98>
- 2023 Alexander Göbel\* & **Eszter Ronai**\*. On the meaning of intonational contours: a view from scalar inference. In Juhyae Kim et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 33rd Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference*, pp. 439-459. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/dns0s29>
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Degree estimates as a measure of inference calculation. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 8(1), 5537. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v8i1.5537>
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Tracking the activation of scalar alternatives with semantic priming. In Tyler Knowlton et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of Experiments in Linguistic Meaning: Volume 2*, pp. 229-240. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/elm.2.5371>
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Lucas Fagen\*. Exclusives vary in strength and scale structure: experimental evidence. In Marco Degano et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 23rd Amsterdam Colloquium*, pp. 258-266.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Three factors in explaining scalar diversity. In Daniel Gutzmann and Sophie Repp (eds.), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 26*, pp. 716–733. University of Cologne. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18148/sub/2022.v26i0.1026>
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Quantifying semantic and pragmatic effects on scalar diversity. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 7(1), 5216. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v7i1.5216>
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Exploring the connection between Question Under Discussion and scalar diversity. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 6(1), pp. 649-662. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v6i1.5001>
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Laura Stigliano\*. Licensing of nominal ellipsis in Hungarian possessives. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 6(1), pp. 600-607. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v6i1.4994>
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai**\* & Laura Stigliano\*. Is multiple fronting necessary for multiple sluicing? The view from Hungarian. In Rachel Soo et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 38th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, pp. 377-385. Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville, MA.
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Calculating scalar inference under QUDs. In Maggie Baird and Jonathan Pesetsky (eds.), *NELS 49: Proceedings of the 49th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society: Volume Three*, pp. 73–86. GLSA, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- 2018 **Eszter Ronai**. Quantifier scope in heritage bilinguals: a comparative experimental study. In Sherry Hucklebridge and Max Nelson (eds.), *NELS 48: Proceedings of the 48th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society: Volume Three*, pp. 29–38. GLSA, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

### Edited Volumes

- 2019 **Eszter Ronai**, Laura Stigliano and Yenan Sun (eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. CLS.

## PRESENTATIONS

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### Invited Presentations

- 2022 **Eszter Ronai.** Quantifying semantic and pragmatic effects on scalar diversity. Talk presented at the University of Edinburgh *Meaning and Grammar Research Group*, May 10.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai.** Alternatives in natural language meaning: an experimental perspective. Talk presented at the Northwestern University *Department of Linguistics*, March 7.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai.** Uncertainty in language comprehension: the view from syntax and pragmatics. Talk presented at the University of Georgia *Department of Linguistics*, January 24.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai.** Reasoning about the unsaid: psycholinguistic investigations into pragmatic meaning. Talk presented at the City University of Hong Kong *LT Research Forum*, December 2.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai.** Quantifying scalar diversity with relative entropy. Talk presented at the Cornell University *Linguistic Meaning (LiMe) Lab*, September 23.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai & Ming Xiang.** Explaining scalar diversity: Discourse context and alternative availability. Talk presented at the University of Pennsylvania *Language & Cognition Lab*, April 7.

### Refereed Conference Presentations

(\* = equal contribution; † = Northwestern student)

- 2024 Thomas Sostarics<sup>†</sup>, **Eszter Ronai** & Jennifer Cole. Relating Scalar Inference and Alternative Activation: A view from the Rise-Fall-Rise Tune in American English. Talk presented at the 3rd *Experiments in Linguistic Meaning (ELM 3)* Conference, Philadelphia, June 12-14.
- 2024 **Eszter Ronai.** Embedded scalar diversity. Poster presented at the 34th meeting of *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 34)*, Rochester, May 28-30.
- 2024 Wesley Orth<sup>\*†</sup>, Dávid Nemeskey & **Eszter Ronai**<sup>\*</sup>. Hungarian relative clause processing: Diverging results in L-maze and A-Maze. Talk presented at the 37th Annual Conference on *Human Sentence Processing (HSP 37)*, Ann Arbor, May 16-18.
- 2024 Cassandra Davenport<sup>†</sup> & **Eszter Ronai**. How many Selves are Bound? Distributivity and Number Effects in Bound Reflexives. Poster presented at the 37th Annual Conference on *Human Sentence Processing (HSP 37)*, Ann Arbor, May 16-18.
- 2024 Laura Stigliano, Marisol Murujosa, Matías Verdecchia & **Eszter Ronai**. Comparing two experimental designs for the study of subject islands in Spanish. Talk presented at the 54th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL 54), Provo, May 9-11.
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai**<sup>\*</sup> & Wesley Orth<sup>\*†</sup>. HuMaze - Testing Hungarian Relative Clause Processing in the Maze-Task. Talk presented at the *Crosslinguistic Perspectives on Processing and Learning Workshop (X-PPL 2023)*, Zurich, November 6-8.
- 2023 Thomas Sostarics<sup>†</sup>, **Eszter Ronai** & Jennifer Cole. Scalar Inference and Rise-Fall-Rise in American English: Towards a Priming Perspective. Talk presented at the *Voices in Context Workshop*, Cologne, October 12-13.
- 2023 Radim Lacina, Stavroula Alexandropoulou, **Eszter Ronai** & Nicole Gotzner. The Priming of Informationally Weaker Alternatives: Antonyms and Negation. Poster presented at the 10th *Biennial Meeting of Experimental Pragmatics (XPrag 10)*, Paris, September 20-22.
- 2023 Radim Lacina, Stavroula Alexandropoulou, **Eszter Ronai** & Nicole Gotzner. Priming Scalar Alternatives under Negation and by Antonyms in Lexical Decision. Poster presented at the 29th *Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP 29)* Conference, San Sebastian, August 31-September 2.
- 2023 Radim Lacina, Stavroula Alexandropoulou, **Eszter Ronai** & Nicole Gotzner. Which alternatives are relevant in scalar implicature processing? A priming study with antonyms and negation. Poster presented at the 45th Annual Meeting of the *Cognitive Science Society (CogSci 45)*, Sydney, July 26-29.

- 2023 Alexander Göbel\* & **Eszter Ronai\***. On the meaning of intonational contours: a view from scalar inference. Poster presented at the 33rd meeting of *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* (SALT 33), New Haven, May 12-14.
- 2023 Helena Aparicio\* & **Eszter Ronai\***. Scalar implicature rates vary within and across adjectival scales. Poster presented at the 33rd meeting of *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* (SALT 33), New Haven, May 12-14.
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Alexander Göbel\*. Intonation affects rate of scalar inferences: production and perception data from English. Poster presented at the 36th Annual Conference on *Human Sentence Processing* (HSP 36), Pittsburgh, March 9-11.
- 2023 Lucas Fagen\* & **Eszter Ronai\***. Testing variation across exclusive modifiers. Talk presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 97), Denver, January 5-8.
- 2023 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Degree estimates as a measure of inference calculation. Talk presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 97), Denver, January 5-8.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Lucas Fagen\*. Exclusives vary in strength and scale structure: experimental evidence. Poster presented at the 23rd *Amsterdam Colloquium* (AC 2022), Amsterdam, December 19-21.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Tracking the activation of scalar alternatives with semantic priming. Short talk presented at the 2nd *Experiments in Linguistic Meaning* (ELM 2) Conference, Philadelphia, May 18-22.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Degree estimates predict likelihood of scalar inference. Talk presented at the 96th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 96), Washington, DC, January 6-9.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Overt exhaustification, but not discourse context, reduces scalar diversity. Talk presented at the 96th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 96), Washington, DC, January 6-9.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Three factors in explaining scalar diversity. Talk presented at *Sinn und Bedeutung 26* (SuB 26), Cologne [virtual], September 8-10.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Quantifying scalar diversity: a first look. Talk presented at the 27th *Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing* (AMLaP 27) Conference, Paris [virtual], September 2-4.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Scalar diversity in discourse contexts. Poster presented at the 4th *Experimental Pragmatics in Italy* (XPRAG.it 4) Conference, Turin [virtual], July 8-9.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Exploring the connection between Question Under Discussion and scalar diversity. Talk presented at the 95th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 95), San Francisco [virtual], January 7-10.
- 2021 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Licensing of nominal ellipsis in Hungarian possessives. Talk presented at the 95th Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 95), San Francisco [virtual], January 7-10.
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Question availability as a predictor of scalar diversity. Poster presented at the 26th *Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing* (AMLaP 26) Conference, Potsdam [virtual], September 3-5.
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Variation in the size of nominal ellipsis in Hungarian: evidence from nouns and pronouns. Talk presented at the 22nd *Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar* (SICOGG 22), Jinju [virtual], August 12-14.
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Interpretation cannot determine the source of multiple sluicing in Hungarian. Talk presented at the 3rd *Experimental and Corpus-based Approaches to Ellipsis Conference* (ECBAE 3), Florence [virtual], July 15-17.
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Accounting for syntactic complexity in Hungarian relative clauses. Poster presented at the 33rd Annual *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing* (CUNY 33), Amherst [virtual], March 19-21.
- 2020 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Is multiple fronting necessary for multiple sluicing? The view from Hungarian. Talk presented at the 38th *West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* (WCCFL 38), Vancouver, March 6-8.

- 2020 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Interpreting multiple sluicing: Experimental evidence from Hungarian. Talk presented at the 19th Meeting of the *Texas Linguistics Society* (TLS 19), Austin, February 14-15.
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Clausal ellipsis has an isomorphic source: Evidence from Hungarian adjectival sluicing. Talk presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the *Linguistics Association of Great Britain* (LAGB 2019), London, September 9-12. \*Best Student Abstract Award\*
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. The interplay of memory and expectation in Hungarian relative clause processing. Talk presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the *Linguistics Association of Great Britain* (LAGB 2019), London, September 9-12.
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Sluicing and pseudosluicing in Hungarian. Talk presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the *Chicago Linguistic Society* (CLS 55), Chicago, May 16-18.
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Relative clause processing in a flexible word order language: Evidence from Hungarian. Poster presented at the 32nd Annual *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing* (CUNY 32), Boulder, March 29-31. \*Student Travel Award\*
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai\*** & Laura Stigliano\*. Adjectival sluices in Hungarian: An argument for isomorphic sources. Talk presented at the 43rd Annual *Penn Linguistics Conference* (PLC 43), Philadelphia, March 22-24.
- 2018 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Computing implicatures under QUDs. Talk presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of the *North East Linguistic Society* (NELS 49), Ithaca, October 5-7.
- 2018 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Processing quantity implicatures under QUDs. Poster presented at the 24th *Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing* (AMLaP 24) Conference, Berlin, September 6-8.
- 2018 Yenan Sun, **Eszter Ronai**, Alan Yu & Ming Xiang. The role of contextual-pragmatic information in speech perception: an eye-tracking study. Poster presented at the 31st Annual *CUNY Conference on Human Sentence Processing* (CUNY 31), Davis, March 15-17.
- 2018 Yenan Sun, Laura Stigliano, **Eszter Ronai**, Amara Sankhagowit, Anisia Popescu, Alan Yu & Ming Xiang. The role of contextual-pragmatic information in speech perception: an eye-tracking study. Poster presented at the 92nd Annual Meeting of the *Linguistic Society of America* (LSA 92), Salt Lake City, January 4-7.
- 2017 **Eszter Ronai**. Quantifier scope in heritage bilinguals: a comparative experimental study. Poster presented at the 48th Annual Meeting of the *North East Linguistics Society* (NELS 48), Reykjavík, October 27-29.

### Other Presentations

- 2022 **Eszter Ronai**. Quantifying semantic and pragmatic effects on scalar diversity. Talk presented at the Institut Jean-Nicod *LINGUAE Seminar*, May 12.
- 2022 **Eszter Ronai**. Tracking the activation of scalar alternatives with semantic priming. Talk presented at the Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle *LingLunch*, April 20.
- 2019 **Eszter Ronai**. The interplay of memory and expectation in Hungarian relative clause processing. Talk presented at the *Chicago Area Sentence Processing Meeting*, Chicago, June 21.
- 2018 **Eszter Ronai** & Ming Xiang. Computing implicatures under QUDs. Talk presented at the *Chicago Area Psycholinguistics Meeting*, Chicago, June 15.
- 2017 **Eszter Ronai**. Quantifier scope in heritage bilinguals: a comparative experimental study. Talk presented at the *Semantics Workshop of the American Midwest and Prairies* (SWAMP 2017), East Lansing, October 14.

## GRANTS & AWARDS

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### External

- 2020-2022 National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant  
*Tracking alternatives: Experimental investigations into focus and scalar inference*  
BCS-2041312, Co-PI with Ming Xiang (\$13,773)
- 2020 Labex 'Empirical Foundations of Linguistics' mobility grant (€4050 ≈ \$4470)

### The University of Chicago

- 2021-2022 Mellon Foundation-University of Chicago Dissertation Completion Fellowship (\$28,000)
- 2021-2022 Affiliated Doctoral Fellow, Franke Institute for the Humanities
- 2021 Council on Advanced Studies Graduate Student Research Grant (\$4150)
- 2019-2022 International House Graduate Fellowship (\$3000; awarded yearly)
- 2019 Three Minute Thesis Competition, 1st Runner-up
- 2018 GRAD Global Impact Internships Award (\$4000)
- 2017-2020 Graduate Research Aid Initiative in Linguistics Award (awarded yearly)

### University of Cambridge

- 2016 Sidney Allen Prize
- 2015-2016 Myra Curtis Award (awarded yearly)
- 2015-2016 Sparke Third-Year Scholarship
- 2014-2016 Anne Jemima Clough Prize (awarded yearly)
- 2014-2015 Linguistics Ambassador
- 2014-2015 Chadburn Second-Year Scholarship

## TEACHING & ADVISING

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### Ph.D. thesis chair

Cassandra Davenport TBD (in progress)

### Ph.D. thesis committees

Michael Dover	TBD (in progress)
Devin Johnson	TBD (in progress)
Thomas Sostarics	Testing the Compositionality of Intonational Meaning (in progress)
Kate Sandberg	The Interpretation of Prosodic Prominence Conveying Contrast and Intensity (2024)

### Qualifying Paper committees

Austin Keen	TBD (in progress)
Raef Khan	TBD (in progress)
Devin Johnson	Predicting a Licensor in the Processing of English Reflexives (2023)



### **Instructor at Northwestern University**

SPRING 2024 Seminar in Linguistics: Alternatives in Linguistic Meaning  
SPRING 2023 Seminar in Pragmatics  
WINTER 2023 Experimental Pragmatics

### **Instructor at the University of Chicago**

AUTUMN 2020 Psycholinguistics

### **Teaching Assistant at the University of Chicago**

SPRING 2021 Course Design and College Teaching (Instructor: Joseph Lampert)  
WINTER 2020 Psycholinguistics (Instructors: Jeffrey Geiger, Ming Xiang)  
AUTUMN 2019 Introduction to Linguistics (Instructors: Itamar Francez, Alan Yu)  
AUTUMN 2018 Structure of Hungarian (Instructor: Adam Singerman)

### **Writing Pedagogy at the University of Chicago**

WINTER 2021 Writing Intern  
*Language and the Human (Instructor: Robert Marineau)*  
2019–2020 ESL/EAL Writing Tutor  
*English Language Institute, The University of Chicago*  
WINTER–SPRING 2019 College Core Writing Tutor  
*Writing Program, The University of Chicago*

### **Other**

SPRING-SUMMER 2020 Research Assistant  
*Chicago Center on Democracy*  
WINTER–SPRING 2019 Research Mentor  
*Sapir Scholars Program, The University of Chicago*  
JUNE–JULY 2015 Research Assistant  
*Hungarian Academy of Sciences (PI: Anna Babarczy)*  
2014–2019 Linguistics Mentor (to high school students)  
*Milestone Institute of Advanced Studies, Hungary*

## SERVICE & ACTIVITIES

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- 2017– Ad hoc reviewing  
Journal: *Glossa Psycholinguistics*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Journal of Semantics*,  
*Language and Cognition*, *Linguistics Vanguard*, *Journal of Memory and Language*, *Second  
Language Research*  
Conference: *Chicago Linguistic Society*, *Linguistic Society of America*, *Annual Conference  
on Human Sentence Processing*, *Experiments in Linguistic Meaning*
- 2022–2023 Steering Committee member  
*Philosophy & Linguistics Workshop (PhLing)*, Northwestern University
- 2019–2021 Elected Student Representative  
*Department of Linguistics*, *The University of Chicago*
- 2018–2021 Co-founder and Co-coordinator  
*Language Evolution, Acquisition & Processing Workshop*
- 2017–2018 Conference Organizer  
*54th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS 54)*

## NON-DEGREE STUDY

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- 2020 College Teaching Certificate  
Chicago Center for Teaching, USA
- 2018 Humanities Common Core Writing Program Training  
The University of Chicago, USA
- 2017 29th European Summer School in Logic, Language, and Information  
University of Toulouse, France

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS

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- LANGUAGES Hungarian: native  
English: near-native  
German: intermediate (B2)  
Russian: beginner (A1)
- COMPUTING R, Ibex, E-Prime, PsychoPy,  $\LaTeX$ , MS Office