Johanna Alstott

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Education

2022–present **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**
PhD in Linguistics (in progress)

2018–2022 **Harvard College**
Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude* with Highest Honors in Linguistics
Thesis: *An experimental exploration of scalar implicature in adverbial vs. nominal quantifiers* **[LINK]**
Advisor: Kathryn Davidson

Publications

In the pipeline

Under review Alstott, Johanna & Athulya Aravind. On aspectual coercion in *before-*/*after*-clauses: Evidence from processing. **[LINK]**

Under review Alstott, Johanna & Athulya Aravind. Assessing the evidence for presupposition triggering in artificial word learning experiments. **[LINK]**

Journal articles

2025 Alstott, Johanna. *First* and *last* as superlatives of *before* and *after*. *Natural Language Semantics* 33(1):83–120. **[LINK]**

Conference proceedings (peer-reviewed abstract)

in prep Alstott, Johanna. *Next*. In *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS) 62*.

2025 Alstott, Johanna. On aspectual coercion in *before*-clauses: Evidence from processing. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 35*, 144–163. **[LINK]**

2025 Alstott, Johanna. On *very*-intensified superlatives. In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung (SuB) 29*, 30–46. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna. Scalar implicature in adverbial vs. nominal quantifiers: Two experiments. In *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS) 59*, 13–24. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna. A first semantics for *at first* and *at last*. In *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America* 9(1). **[LINK]**

2023 Alstott, Johanna. Ordinal numbers: Not superlatives, but modifiers of superlatives. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 33*, 1–20. **[LINK]**

2020 Alstott, Johanna & Masoud Jasbi. Lexicalization of quantificational forces in adverbial and determiner domains. In *Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 2001-2006. **[LINK]**

Presentations

Invited talks

2026 Alstott, Johanna. A cautionary note on word learning paradigms and presupposition triggering. Invited talk at Harvard Language & Cognition (LangCog).

2024 Alstott, Johanna. On two types of aspectual coercion and *before-*/*after*-clauses: Evidence from processing. Invited talk at the Construction of Meaning Workshop, Stanford University.

Conference talks, refereed by abstract

2026 Alstott, Johanna. *Next*. Talk presented at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS 62), University of Chicago. **[LINK]**

2025 Alstott, Johanna. Deriving 'first' and 'last' from 'before' and 'after': Evidence from Kinyarwanda. Talk presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), Philadelphia. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna. Before and after decomposing *first* and *last*. Talk presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 54), Massachusetts Institute of Technology. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna. A first semantics for *at first* and *at last*. Talk presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA 100), New York. **[LINK]**

Conference posters, refereed by abstract

2025 Alstott, Johanna. On aspectual coercion in *before*-clauses: Evidence from processing. Poster (and lightning talk) presented at Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 35, Harvard University. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna. On *very*-intensified superlatives. Poster (and lightning talk) presented at Sinn und Bedeutung 29 (SuB 29), Consorzio Universitario Mediterraneo Orientale. **[LINK]**

2024 Alstott, Johanna & Athulya Aravind. Comparing the processing of two types of durative-to-puntual coercion. Poster presented at the 37th Human Sentence Processing conference (HSP 37), University of Michigan.

2023 Alstott, Johanna. Scalar implicature in adverbial vs. nominal quantifiers: Two experiments. Poster presented at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology (SPP 49), University of Pittsburgh.

2023 Alstott, Johanna. Ordinal numbers: Not superlatives, but modifiers of superlatives. Poster (and lightning talk) presented at Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 33, Yale University. **[LINK]**

2023 Alstott, Johanna. Scalar implicature in adverbial vs. nominal quantifiers: Two experiments. Poster presented at the 59th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS 59), University of Chicago. **[LINK]**

2020 Alstott, Johanna & Masoud Jasbi. Lexicalization of quantificational forces in adverbial and determiner domains. Poster presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (CogSci 42), Virtual. **[LINK]**

Conference presentations, non-refereed

2026 Alstott, Johanna. An exceptional standard of comparison. Poster presented at the 7th Crete Summer School of Linguistics, University of Crete.

2024 Alstott, Johanna & Athulya Aravind. On two types of aspectual coercion and *before-/after*-clauses. Poster presented at the 6th Crete Summer School of Linguistics, University of Crete.

2023 Alstott, Johanna. *First* and *last*'s before and after pictures. Poster presented at the 5th Crete Summer School of Linguistics, University of Crete.

Teaching

As guest lecturer

2024 On ordinal modifiers of superlatives. Guest lecture in Intermediate Semantics, 6th Crete Summer School of Linguistics.

As graduate teaching assistant

2026 Formal Pragmatics, Crete Summer School of Linguistics *Instructors: Donka Farkas and Paul Portner*

2025 Language Acquisition, MIT *Instructor: Athulya Aravind*

2024 Language and Its Structure III: Semantics & Pragmatics, MIT *Instructor: Martin Hackl*

2024 Intermediate Semantics, Crete Summer School of Linguistics *Instructors: Rajesh Bhatt and Yael Sharvit*

2024 Introduction to Linguistics, MIT *Instructor: Donca Steriade*

2023 Introduction to Semantics, Crete Summer School of Linguistics *Instructor: Cleo Condoravdi*

As undergraduate course assistant

2022 Language, Structure, and Cognition, Harvard College *Instructor: Adam Singerman*

Service and experience

Professional service

2023-24 Co-organizer, North East Linguistics Society (NELS) 54, MIT

2023 Co-organizer, Morris Halle @ 100 Conference (M100), MIT

Departmental service

2026– MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) Department Chief Steward, Department of Linguistics & Philosophy

2025–2026 Organizer, MIT LingLunch

2024–2026 MIT Graduate Student Union (GSU) Steward, Department of Linguistics & Philosophy

2023–24 Organizer, MIT Logical Form Reading Group (LFRG)

2023–24 Student representative, MIT Syntax/Semantics Faculty Search

2023–24 Manager, MIT Working Papers in Linguistics (MITWPL)

Honors and awards

2025–2026 **Noam Chomsky Graduate Fellow in Linguistics**
Awarded to the student in each MIT Linguistics cohort who completes both General Exams first.

2022 **Sophia Freund Prize**
$1,000 prize "awarded annually to the students in the senior class of Harvard College who are graduating *summa cum laude* with the highest grade point average."

2021 **Phi Beta Kappa, Junior 24**
The "Junior 24" is Harvard's earliest PBK election, awarded to 24 out of ∼1,900 juniors.

2019–2021 **John Harvard Scholar**
Awarded to the top 5% of the class in an academic year at Harvard

2019 **Detur Book Prize**
Awarded to the top 5% of freshman class at Harvard

Languages

English native
French advanced
German intermediate with advanced reading knowledge

Skills

R advanced
LaTeX advanced