Sara Blalock Ng

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Research

Existing computational methods of language modeling rely on paradigms derived from written language data. My research interest is highlighting what linguistic information is unique to the speech signal, and how that can be used to improve computational understanding of natural language. I am a member of the Signal, Speech and Language Interpretation (SSLI) Lab in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the University of Washington. I am currently supported by US National Science Foundation, grant IIS-1617176.

Current Projects:

- Lexical features as predictors of vowel reduction
- Modeling summarizing statistics of prosody across dialogue turns
- Tacit speaker representations of sesquisyllables in English

Recent Projects:

- Transformers with prosodic cues to detect speech disfluencies in text
- Attitudinal trends in Diaspora Hoisanwa
- Digitizing of narratives in Salish languages (under departmental research assistanceship)

Education

2017-   University of Washington
           3rd-year Ph.D. student: Computational Linguistics
           Advisors: Drs. Richard Wright and Mari Ostendorf

2013-2017 University of Utah
           Honors Bachelor of Arts: Linguistics
           Advisor: Dr. Abby Kaplan
           Thesis: Musical Text-Setting as Evidence for Syllabification of Highly Moraic Structures in English
           Bachelor of Science: Applied Mathematics
           TESOL: Teaching English to Students of Other Languages Certificate

Presentations

2018   *Musical Evidence for Syllabification Patterns of Highly Moraic Structures in English*
        Linguistic Society of America, with Abby Kaplan and Joselyn Rodriguez
        poster
2017   *Musical Evidence for Syllabification Patterns in English*
        University of Utah Student Conference in Linguistics, with Jenica Jessen & Joselyn Rodriguez
        short talk
2017   *Musical Evidence for Syllabification Patterns of Highly Moraic Structures in English*
        Undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Utah, with Jenica Jessen
        poster

Teaching

Primary Instructorships

2020 Summer	LING 473: Basics For Computational Linguistics

Teaching Assistanceships

2019 Spring	CSE 472: Introduction to Computational Linguistics
2018 Fall	LING 570: Shallow Processing Techniques for Natural Language Processing
2018 Spring	LING 269: Swearing and Taboo Language

Gradership

2020 Winter	LING 451: Phonology I
2019 Spring	LING 452: Phonology II
2019 Winter	LING 451: Phonology I

Curriculum Development

2019 Winter	Staff assistanceship converting LING 553 (Experimental Phonetics), LING 550 (Phonetics I), and ASL Program course materials to online format

Guest Lectures

2019 25 Oct	LING 550 (Phonetics I): *Reading Spectrograms*
2019 21 Aug	LING 473 (Compling Basics): *Formal Grammars & Parsing*
2019 23 May	LING 200 (Intro. Linguistics): *What is Computational Linguistics?*

Awards

2018	Travel Scholarship for Second Ethics in Natural Language Processing Workshop *North American Chapter of the ACL*
2017	Top Scholar Award *University of Washington Graduate School*
2017	UROP Small Grant *University of Utah Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program*
2013	President's Scholarship (full-tuition) *University of Utah*

Service

2019-20	**President**, Linguistics Society of the University of Washington (LSUW)
2020	**Organizing Committee Member**, Northwest Linguistics Conference (NWLC)
2020	**Reviewer**, NWLC
2020	**Proctor**, North American Computational Linguistics Open Competition
2020	**Consultant**, Undergraduate senior capstone in speech translation
2018-19	**Vice President**, LSUW
2019	**Student Volunteer**, North American Chapter of the ACL

Work Experience

2019	Summer Intern, Computational Linguistics, Google
2016-2017	Speech Transcriber, CaptionCall
2014-2017	Mathematics Tutor

Skills

Computer Languages

- Python (fluent)
- R (fluent)
- HTML/CSS/JavaScript (fluent)
- Java (basic)
- Matlab (basic)

Machine Learning

- pytorch
- tensorflow
- Scikit-learn

Linguistic Tools

- Praat
- NLTK
- Kaldi

Natural Languages

- French (working)
- Spanish (basic)
- Hoisanwa Chinese (heritage)