Eli Sharf

Department of Linguistics
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Education

University of California, Santa Cruz *2021 - 2027 (expected)*
Ph.D. Candidate, Linguistics
Thesis: Apposition in Question-based Conversational Dynamics
Committee: Pranav Anand, Donka Farkas, Jess Law, Maziar Toosarvandani (chair)

Brown University *2012 - 2016*
B.A., Linguistics (with Honors); B.A., Computer Science
Thesis: First and Second Person Pronouns in Q'anjob'al (Maya)
Advisor: Scott AnderBois

University of California, Berkeley
Summer courses in Artificial Intelligence (2015), Logic (2012)

Professional Experience

Google *August 2018 - July 2021*
Computational Linguist, Google Assistant NLU
Developed semantic representations of user intents and created Natural Language Understanding (NLU) models that map user queries to those representations.

Adecco at Google *September 2016 - August 2018*
Associate Linguist
Provided linguistic expertise and high quality training data for machine learning to multiple technical teams across Google's natural language processing projects.

Publications

Journal Articles

Sharf, E. The strategic relevance of appositives. *under review*

Conference Proceedings

Knick, E.* & **Sharf, E.*** On focus and the perfect aspect. *2026*
In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* (Vol. 30, pp. 572-589).
(* = first author)

Sharf, E. Parenthetical 'say' as a window into sincerity and commitment. *2025*
In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* (Vol. 29, pp. 1449-1465).

Sharf, E. What appositives can tell us about names and definite descriptions. *2024*
In *Proceedings of the Amsterdam Colloquium, 2024* (pp. 330-336).

Sharf, E. Restrictive modifiers in parenthetical positions. *2024*
In *Proceedings of North East Linguistics Society 54.* (pp. 181-191).

Presentations

Peer-Reviewed

Kogan, M.*, **Sharf, E.***, Suarez Soto, C.*, Hernandez, G., Hernandez-Melchor, V., Szerwo, L., Dunkell, S., Anand, P., Robles, N., & Silva-Robles, F. Multilingualism, Identity, and Community: Collaborative Research on Indigenous Mexican Languages *2026*

in California's Central Coast. Talk at Imagining America (IA) National Gathering, UC Davis, October 23, 2026.

Knick, E.*, & **Sharf, E.*** On focus and the perfect aspect. *2025*
Talk at Sinn und Bedeutung 30. Goethe University Frankfurt, September 26, 2025.

Sharf, E. What appositives can tell us about names and definite descriptions. *2024*
Talk at Amsterdam Colloquium 2024. University of Amsterdam, December 20, 2024.

Sharf, E. Parenthetical *say* as a window into sincerity and commitment. *2024*
Talk at Sinn und Bedeutung 29, Consorzio Universitario Mediterraneo Orientale, September 18, 2024.

Sharf, E. Restrictive Modifiers in Parenthetical Positions. *2024*
Poster (Alternate Talk) at North East Linguistics Society 54, MIT, January 27, 2024.

Sharf, E. Deixis and Restrictive Modification. *2022*
Talk at California Universities Semantics and Pragmatics Colloquium 13, UCLA, May 6, 2022.

Invited

Knick, E.* & **Sharf, E.*** On focus and the perfect aspect. *2026*
Talk at Construction of Meaning Workshop, Stanford, April 29, 2026.

Knick, E.* & **Sharf, E.*** On focus and the perfect aspect. *2025*
Talk at Syntax and Semantics Circle, UC Berkeley, September 12, 2025.

Sharf, E. What appositives can tell us about referential expressions. *2024*
Talk at Construction of Meaning Workshop, Stanford, November 14, 2024.

Sharf, E. What appositives can tell us about referential expressions. *2024*
Talk at NYU Semantics Group, New York University, April 26, 2024.

Understudied Languages

A'ingae

Santa Cruz, CA *August 2026 - present*
Built an online A'ingae dictionary for use by community members and researchers.
https://diccionario-aingae.vercel.app/

Berkeley, CA *November 2020 - December 2020*
Implemented a multi-lingual option for LingView, a web interface for viewing glossed ELAN and FLEx files. Used by researchers on A'ingae (https://cofan-aldp.github.io/LingView/).

Santiago Laxopa Zapotec (Otomanguean)

Santiago Laxopa, Oaxaca, Mexico *September 2026*
Spent two weeks in Santiago Laxopa, Oaxaca, filming oral histories and interviews with speakers of Santiago Laxopa Zapotec for a museum exhibit at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History. Part of The Humanities Institute's Oaxacan Languages of the Transnational Central Coast project.

Santiago Laxopa, Oaxaca, Mexico *July 2023*
Spent two weeks in Santiago Laxopa, Oaxaca, running an experiment under NSF Grant BCS-

2019804. Supervised by Maziar Toosarvandani.

Santa Cruz, CA *January 2023 - July 2023*
Collaborated with a speaker of Santiago Laxopa Zapotec under the UC Santa Cruz Zapotec Language Project. Supervised by Maziar Toosarvandani.

Q'anjob'al (Maya)

Providence, RI *February 2015 - June 2016*
Worked with a speaker of Q'anjob'al for Honors Thesis. Supervised by Scott AnderBois.

Honors and Awards

Oaxacan Languages Public Fellowship *2025 - 2027*
The Humanities Institute, UC Santa Cruz

Regents Fellowship *2021 - 2022*
UC Santa Cruz Linguistics Department

Magna Cum Laude *2016*
Brown University
Highest honors.

Sigma Xi *2016*
Brown University

Premium in Linguistics *2016*
Brown University Linguistics Department
Awarded to one senior.

Distinguished Thesis Prize Nomination *2016*
Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences (CLPS) Department, Brown University

Phi Beta Kappa *2015*
Brown University
One of 32 juniors selected.

Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Fellow *Summer 2014*
U.S. Department of Education
Studied Sanskrit at the AIIS Sanskrit Language Intensive in Pune, India.

Teaching & Mentoring

Mentor: Oaxacan Languages Project *Winter, 2025 - Spring, 2027*
UC Santa Cruz

Instructor: Pedagogy of Linguistics *Fall, 2025*
UC Santa Cruz

Fellow: Graduate Pedagogy Fellows Program *Winter, 2025*
UC Santa Cruz

Curriculum Development: Semantics 1 *July 2024 - December 2024*
UC Santa Cruz

Applying to Grad school workshop *March, 2023*

UC Santa Cruz

Teaching assistant

Ling 50: Introduction to Linguistics	Grant McGuire	*Spring 2025*
Ling 172: Psycholinguistics 2	Dustin Chacón	*Winter 2025*
Ling 53: Semantics 1	Pranav Anand	*Fall 2024*
Ling 116: Semantics 2	Roumyana Pancheva	*Spring 2024*
Ling 53: Semantics 1	Jess Law	*Winter 2024*
Ling 80C: Language, Society, and Culture	Jaye Padgett	*Fall 2023*
Ling 171: Psycholinguistics 1	Amanda Rysling	*Spring 2023*
Ling 53: Semantics 1	Jess Law	*Winter 2023*
Ling 80M: Language and Indigeneity in Mesoamerica	Ryan Bennett	*Fall 2022*

Service

Co-coordinator, SPLAP! Reading Group *2022 - 2026*
UC Santa Cruz
Co-coordinate weekly reading group on semantics, philosophy of language, and pragmatics.

Graduate Communications Lead *2022 - 2023*
UC Santa Cruz
Manage the biweekly department news letter and web-blog, WHASC. Set up Department LinkedIn for Alumni outreach.

Events Committee *2022 - 2023*
UC Santa Cruz
Manage transportation logistics for UC Santa Cruz Linguistics Department Colloquia.

Linguistics Department Undergraduate Group (DUG) Coordinator *2015 - 2016*
Brown University
Coordinate events serving the entire department as well as its undergraduate body.

Research Assistantships

Investigating the dynamics of coordinated questions *Summer 2023*
UC Santa Cruz
Helped Haoze Li design and create materials for judgment study investigating how coordinated questions are dynamically interpreted, with a focus on anaphora in the second conjunct to dependencies introduced by the first: e.g., 'which boy$_i$ took which course$_j$ and how did he$_i$ do in it$_j$?'.

Decomposing effects of *focus* on real-time processing *Summer 2022*
UC Santa Cruz
Joint work with Morwenna Hoeks, supervised by Amanda Rysling & Maziar Toosarvandani. Investigation of real-time processing of *focus* in discourse using the Maze paradigm.

Sanskrit NLP Research Intern *Summer 2015*
UC Berkeley
Supervised by Alberto Todeschini. Developed and implemented algorithm in Python for Sanskrit word segmentation (sandhi and compound resolution).

Undergraduate Published Papers

Nirgatasakhiśukavilāpah: The Lament of the Parrot at his Friend's Departure. *April 2015*
Brown Classical Journal, Department of Classics at Brown University.

The Voice of Fortunatus: The Medieval Poet's Use of the Elegiac Couplet in Poem 3.18. *April 2014*
Brown Classical Journal, Department of Classics at Brown University.

Skills

Programming Languages:
C++, Python, R, SQL (proficient)
Java, HTML, Javascript (familiar)

Natural Languages:
English (first language)
Sanskrit, Latin (reading)
Spanish (intermediate)
Q'anjob'al, San Martín Peras Mixtec, Santiago Laxopa Zapotec (fieldwork)