

Joshua Higdon (she/they pronouns)

heritage Spanish speakers | bilingual language processing | lexical effects on processing

Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida

PO Box 117405, Gainesville, FL, 32611, U.S.A.

(757)968-9046 • j.higdon@ufl.edu • website to come

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research investigates bilingual language processing and cognition with a focus on Spanish heritage speakers (individuals raised in a household that speaks a language different from the majority language of a society) and their language processing. I leverage methods from psycholinguistics (i.e., eye-tracking and self-paced listening tasks) and sociolinguistics (i.e., corpus-informed stimuli and research) to consider how speakers' linguistic attitudes, environmental exposure and usage of the heritage language, and other dimensions of heritage speakers' linguistic experience may modulate language production and online processing of particular subsets of the lexicon, such as reverse-predicate psychological verbs and (ir)regular verbs in the subjunctive mood. Ultimately, my research attempts to combat deficit-based narratives about Spanish heritage speakers and bilinguals at large by, instead of highlighting how they may differ from monolingual speakers, emphasizing the linguistic capabilities of Spanish heritage speakers.

EDUCATION

2022-present	Ph.D. in Spanish (Hispanic Linguistics) University of Florida (Advisors: Dr. Jorge Valdés Kroff and Dr. Imanol Suárez-Palma)
2018-2021	B.A. with honors in Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies, Cognitive Science, and Psychology in Spanish, <i>summa cum laude</i> University of Richmond (Advisor: Dr. David Giancaspro)

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS AND HONORS

FELLOWSHIPS

2022-current	Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida
---------------------	---

AWARDS

2025-2026	Whitney Koonce Memorial Award (\$2,000), University of Florida
2025	SPS Graduate Student Travel Award (\$800), University of Florida

Higdon

CV | May 2026

2024-2025	CLAS Graduate TA of the Year (\$500), University of Florida
2023-2024	O. Ruth McQuown Scholarship (\$7,000), University of Florida
2023-2024	Award for Cooperative Leadership in Teaching Spanish (\$100), University of Florida
2024	SPS Graduate Student Travel Award (\$800), University of Florida
2024	Graduate Student Council Travel Grant (\$350), University of Florida
2022-2023	Outstanding PhD Student in Spanish Linguistics (\$100), University of Florida
2022-2025	Grinter Fellowship (\$6,000), University of Florida
2021	LALIS Outstanding Major (\$100), University of Richmond
2021	<i>will*</i> Changemaker Award, University of Richmond

HONORS

2018-2021	Dean's List, University of Richmond
2021	Psi Chi Honor Society, University of Richmond
2021	Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society, University of Richmond
2020-2021	2020-2021 Humanities Fellows Scholar, University of Richmond
2020	Phi Sigma Iota Honor Society, University of Richmond
2020	Sigma Delta Pi Honor Society, University of Richmond

PRESENTATIONS

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Brown, T., Wooten, J., Lauteria, E., Nashia Graneau, N. & **Higdon, J.** 2026. Critical pedagogies in AI-mediated education: A systematic review and pedagogical implications. Paper presented at *Interface Teaching Conference 2026*. University of Florida (Gainesville, Florida). April 28–29.

Higdon, J., Mott, Z., Goás Pérez, A., Domínguez, Solera L., & Marengo-Mentor, A. 2025. Heritage speakers' online processing of future morphology. Paper presented at *The 12th National Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language*. Northwestern University (Chicago, Illinois). May 12–14.

Treadway, H., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. 2024. Disentangling grammar and experience: On the role of environmental exposure to Spanish-English code-switching. Paper presented at *UIC Bilingualism Forum*. University of Illinois at Chicago (Chicago, Illinois). October 24–25.

Higdon, J., Pagliai, V., Liu, Z. 2024. Predictability effects of Spanish-English code-switching: A part-of-speech and directionality analysis. Paper presented at Florida Yearly Linguistics Meeting. University of Florida (Gainesville, Florida). April 19–20.

Treadway, H., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. 2024. Disentangling grammar and experience: On the role of environmental exposure to Spanish-English code-switching. Paper presented at *Bilingualism in the Hispanic and Lusophone World*. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de

Higdon

CV | May 2026

- Puebla (Puebla, Mexico). January 10–12.
- Treadway, H., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. 2023. Disentangling grammar and experience: On the role of environmental exposure to Spanish-English code-switching. Paper presented at *Florida Psycholinguistics Meeting*. University of Florida (Gainesville, Florida). October 21.
- Treadway, H., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. 2023. The role of passive exposure in code-switch constraint acquisition: Analyzing L2 learners' online processing of code-switched structures in Spanish-English. Paper presented virtually at *The International Symposium on Bilingualism 14 (ISB14)*. Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia). June 26–30.
- Giancaspro, D., **Higdon, J.** 2022. Not a perfect person? Innovation in heritage speakers' knowledge of agreement morphology. Paper presented at *The 9th Annual Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language*. Florida State University (Tallahassee, Florida). February 24–26.
- Giancaspro, D., **Higdon, J.** 2021. Not a perfect person? Innovation in heritage speakers' knowledge of agreement morphology. Paper presented virtually at *The Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*. Wake Forest University (Winston-Salem, North Carolina). October 7–9.
- Higdon, J.** 2021. Frequency and regularity effects on heritage speakers' knowledge of mood in Spanish. Paper presented virtually at *The Virginia Area Linguistics (VALING) Conference*. William & Mary University (Williamsburg, Virginia). April 17.
- Higdon, J.** 2021. More than just a label: The Afterlife of HIV/AIDS in Richmond, Virginia. Paper presented virtual at *2021 Arts & Sciences Symposium*. University of Richmond (Richmond, Virginia). April 16.
- Higdon, J.** 2021. 'Quiero que mi próximo jefe no corre riesgos': Los efectos de la regularidad en la producción del subjuntivo de los hablantes de herencia. Paper presented virtually at *LALIS Senior Showcase 2021*. University of Richmond (Richmond, Virginia). April 9.
- Giancaspro, D., Perez-Cortes, S., & **Higdon, J.** 2020. Frequency and regularity effects on heritage speakers' knowledge of mood in Spanish. Paper presented at *The 7th Annual Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language*. University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, New Mexico). February 26–28.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- Higdon, J.**, Pagliai, V., & Liu, Z. 2025. Predictability effects of Spanish-English code-switching: A part-of-speech and directionality analysis. Poster presented at *The Third Workshop on Quantitative Syntax (QUASY, SyntaxFest 2025)*. University of Ljubljana (Ljubljana, Slovenia). August 26–29.
- Higdon, J.**, Pagliai, V., & Liu, Z. 2025. Predictability effects of Spanish-English code-switching: A part-of-speech and directionality analysis. Poster presented virtually at *Cog Sci 2025: Theories of the past, theories of the future*. Cognitive Science Society (hosted in San Francisco, California). July 30–August 2.
- Treadway, H., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. 2024. Disentangling grammar and experience: On

Higdon

CV | May 2026

the role of environmental exposure to Spanish-English code-switching. Poster presented at *37th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing*. University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan). May 16–18.

Giancaspro, D., Perez-Cortes, S., & **Higdon, J.** 2020. Frequency and regularity effects on heritage speakers' knowledge of mood in Spanish. Poster presented virtually at *The 12th Heritage Language Research Institute*. Pennsylvania State University (State College, Pennsylvania). June 8–11.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Higdon, J., Pagliai, V., & Liu, Z. (2025). Predictability effects of Spanish-English code-switching: A directionality and part of speech analysis. In X. Chen & Y. Wang (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Quantitative Syntax (QUASY, SyntaxFest 2025)* (pp. 83-89). Association for Computational Linguistics.
<https://aclanthology.org/2025.quasy-1.11/>.

Treadway, H. G., **Higdon, J.**, & Valdés Kroff, J. R. (2025). Disentangling grammar and experience: On the role of environmental exposure to Spanish-English code-switching. *Isogloss. Open Journal of Romance Linguistics*, 11(4), 1–27.
<https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/isogloss.519>

Giancaspro, D. & **Higdon, J.** (2024). First Things Third? Innovations in heritage speakers' knowledge of person on present perfect verb forms. *Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*, 17, 251-290. <https://doi.org/10.1515/shll-2024-2011>.

Giancaspro, D., Perez-Cortes, S., & **Higdon, J.** (2022). (Ir) regular mood swings: Lexical variability in heritage speakers' oral production of subjunctive mood. *Language Learning*, 72(2), 456-496. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12489>.

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND INTERNSHIPS

RESEARCH

2023-present

Member: Computational Linguistics Lab
(PI: Dr. Zoey Liu), University of Florida

- Data visualization and analysis:
 - Data analysis: generalized linear mixed effect models, bootstrapped calculations of proportions of code-switches
 - Data visualization: box plot creation using ggplot2 (RStudio package)

Higdon

CV | May 2026

- Corpus processing and analysis
 - Processing of the Bangor Miami Corpus with *python*
 - Mentorship and support of undergraduate lab members with research projects
- 2022-present Member and Graduate Student Project PI: Bilingual Sentence Processing Lab (PI: Dr. Jorge Valdés Kroff), University of Florida**
- Experimental design and programming (Experiment Builder; E-Prime; Praat; Qualtrics; Google Forms)
 - Eye-tracking: reading; Visual World Paradigm
 - Behavioral: proficiency measures; cognitive batteries
 - Supervision of (under)graduate research assistant teams conducting eye-tracking and behavioral data collection, coding, and analysis
 - Eye-tracking pre-processing and analysis (Data Viewer; Get Reading Measures; R Studio)
 - Mentorship of undergraduate independent research (behavioral, eye-tracking)
- 2025-2026 Graduate Research Assistant, Lower Division Program (PI: Dr. Jennifer Wooten), University of Florida**
- Participant in review article on critical AI pedagogy in academia
 - Review of abstracts and full texts to ensure relatedness to research topic via Covidence
 - Assessment creation for online sections of SPN1130 and 1131
 - Design and planning of the SPS Major Event, a departmental recruitment event with over 500 attendees
 - Assistance in accessible material creation to ensure compliance with the American Disabilities Act
 - Collaboration with Lower Division Lead Instructors to support program management
- 2022-2026 Member: Spanish Heritage Language Research Lab (PI: Dr. Diego Pascual y Cabo), University of Florida**
- Experimental design and programming (Gorilla and Qualtrics)
 - Behavioral: online forced-choice task, survey data; picture naming; category fluency; personal social network
 - Statistical analysis: generalized linear mixed effect models, z-scores, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, etc.)
 - Lab co-manager along with MA María Domínguez (2025-Higdon)

2026)

- Project manager: Heritage Speaker Future Morphology Project (2024-2026)
- Supervision and mentorship of (under)graduate lab members with experimental design and data collection

2020-2022

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Department of Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies (Advisor: Dr. Elizabeth Kissling), University of Richmond

- Transcription of L2 learner data; analysis of telicity in L2 aural production
- Proficiency measure: coding of Elicited Imitation Task data for L2 learners
- Training of other undergraduate research assistants in Elicited Imitation Task protocol
- Data organization and visualization via Google Sheets

2019-2023

Undergraduate Co-Investigator, Department of Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies (Advisor: Dr. David Giancaspro), University of Richmond

- Experimental design and data collection
 - Experimental design: Stimulus presentation via PowerPoint, corpus-informed frequency constraints for experimental stimuli
 - Behavioral: aural production data collection, auditory comprehension data collection, semi-structured sociolinguistic interview, proficiency measures
- Data coding: Elicited Imitation Task proficiency data
- Data organization and structuring (Microsoft Excel, R Studio)

2019-2021

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Department of Latin Psychology (Advisor: Dr. Matthew Lowder), University of Richmond

- Data collection
 - Eye-tracking (reading, visual world)
 - Behavioral measures and proficiency tasks
- Training of fellow undergraduate research assistants on eye-tracking data collection
- Mentoring of undergraduate research assistants on psycholinguistic methodology and psycholinguistic literature

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Higdon

CV | May 2026

2026	Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning: CIRTL Associate, University of Florida
2026	Inclusive Mentoring Academy for Graduate Education, University of Florida
2025	Preparing Future Faculty, University of Florida
2023	Center for Teaching Excellence Certificate: Principles of Inclusive Teaching, University of Florida
2022	Center for Teaching Excellence Certificate: Great Teaching- TA Edition, University of Florida

TEACHING AND WORKSHOPS

COURSES

Summer B 2026	SPN 1130 Online: Beginning Spanish I Course instructor, 1 section, University of Florida
2025-2026	SPN 2340: Reading and Writing for Heritage Speakers Course instructor, 2 sections (1 per semester), University of Florida
Summer B 2025	SPN1131 Online: Beginning Spanish II Course instructor, 1 section, University of Florida
Spring 2025	SPN 1601: Accelerated Review for Heritage Speakers Course instructor, 1 section, University of Florida
2024-2025	SPN1131: Beginning Spanish II Lead instructor, 1 section, University of Florida
2023-2024	SPN 3700: Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics Course instructor, 2 sections (1 per semester) University of Florida
2023- 2024	SPN 1131: Beginning Spanish II Course instructor, 2 sections (1 per semester) University of Florida
2022-2023	SPN 1130: Beginning Spanish I Course instructor, 5 sections (2 per semester, 1 Summer B 2023), University of Florida
Fall 2021	LAIS 151: Spanish for Advanced Beginners Teaching assistant, 1 section, University of Richmond
Fall 2019- Fall 2020	LAIS 151: Spanish for Advanced Beginners Teaching assistant, 3 sections (1 per semester), University of Richmond

WORKSHOPS

2025	Psycholinguistic research on heritage Spanish bilingualism Workshop organizer and presenter, Fall 2025 IDS2935: Just English? class (Instructor: Dr. Emily Hind), Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies,
------	--

Higdon

CV | May 2026

- University of Florida
- 2024 Empowering diverse learners in the L2 Spanish classroom**
Roundtable co-organizer and presenter, presented the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) 2024, hosted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2024 Empowering diverse learners in the L2 Spanish classroom**
Workshop co-organizer and presenter, 2024 Lower Division orientation (organized by Dr. Jennifer Wooten), Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Richmond
- 2023 El lenguaje inclusivo y la equidad de género en la lengua española**
Workshop organizer and presenter, Spring 2023 SPN4930: Revolving Topics-Language, Race, and Racism class (Instructor: Dr. Diego Pascual y Cabo), Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida
- 2023 El lenguaje inclusivo y la equidad de género en la lengua española**
Workshop organizer and presenter, Spring 2023 SPN1601: Advanced Review for Heritage Speakers class (Instructor: MA Jade Sierra), Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida
- 2022 Inclusive language and LGBTQIA+ inclusion in world language teaching**
Workshop organizer and presenter, Fall 2022 FOL6943: World Language Teaching Methods class (Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Wooten), Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida
- 2021 Inclusive language roundtable**
Roundtable presenter, RCS DEI Workshop Series (organized by Dr. Carmen DeLorenzo), Department of Romance and Classics Studies, Michigan State University

SERVICE

INTRAMURAL SERVICE

- 2026-2027 Graduate Student Council Representative**
Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida
- 2025-2027 Vice President, Organización de estudiantes graduados del español**
Spanish Graduate Student Association (OEGE), University of Florida
- 2025 Panelist, Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation**
UF Graduate School, University of Florida
- 2025 Senior Project Faculty Mentor for Juliana Guerrero**
Department of Computer Science, University of Florida
- 2024 Senior Project Faculty Mentor for Matthew Huyhn**

Higdon

CV | May 2026

2023-present	Department of Computer Science, University of Florida Mentor of incoming graduate student OEGE, University of Florida
2023-2024	Treasurer, Organización de estudiantes graduados del español OEGE, University of Florida
2022-2024	Creator of materials for Lower Division Spanish Materials Creation Group, Lower Division Spanish, University of Florida
2020-2021	Member, Student President Council Department of Music, Ohio Wesleyan University
2020-2021	Founder of the LGBTQIA+ Equity Summit Office of the President, University of Richmond
2020-2021	Creator of LGBTQIA+ inclusive Spanish materials Department of Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies, University of Richmond
2020	Student consult for LGBTQIA+ equity while studying abroad Office of International Education, University of Richmond

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2026	Co-organizer of event with Terwilliger Elementary School Language Day with Terwilliger Elementary School, University of Florida
2025	Volunteer co-organizer of eye-tracking demonstrations Language Day, Cade Museum for Creativity and Invention