

ALIYAR ÖZERCAN

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SUMMARY

Ph.D. student in Philosophy, specializing in the philosophy and cognitive neuroscience of language and mind. Holds graduate certificates in Cognitive Science, Neurobiology of Language, and Logic. The dissertation presents a fine-grained account of Theory of Mind (ToM), termed ‘sub-ToM,’ which offers a modular perspective on understanding communicative intentions of others, supported by behavioral and neurobiological studies. Author of the textbook *Symbolic Logic Manual* (2014), widely used by leading philosophy departments in Turkey, and editor of *Language, Logic, and Empirical Knowledge - Collected Papers of Teo Grünberg (1965-2005)* (2017). Manager of the Expression, Communication, and Origins of Meaning (ECOM) Research Group and co-organizer of 10 interdisciplinary conferences. Research Assistant in Neuroimaging for two years with expertise in fMRI data analysis. Recipient of the prestigious *Teaching Excellence Award* from the University of Connecticut in the first year of teaching. Consistently ranks at the top in department evaluations.

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION AND COMPETENCE

AOS: Philosophy of Neuroscience, Philosophy of Language, Neurobiology of Language, Cognitive Science

AOC: Developmental Cognitive Neuropsychology, Philosophy of Mind, Semantics, Language Acquisition, Logic

EDUCATION

University of Connecticut (UConn)

Aug. 2018 – Present

PhD in Philosophy, expected: June 2024

Storrs, CT

- Dissertation: “What do you mean? A theory on how to get on the same page when communicating”
- Committee: Emeritus Prof. William Lycan (Chair), Jonathan Phillips (Dartmouth), Richard Moore (Warwick)
- Graduate Certificates in Neurobiology of Language, Cognitive Science, and Logic

University of Connecticut (UConn)

Aug. 2018 – May 2020

MA in Philosophy

Storrs, CT

Middle East Technical University (METU)

Aug. 2013 – July 2016

MA in Philosophy

Ankara, Turkey

- Thesis: “The Maxims of Relevance Theory for Determining the Referent of a Proper Name”
- Committee: Emeritus Prof. Teo Grünberg (Chair), David Grünberg, Sandy Berkovski (Bilkent)

Middle East Technical University (METU)

Aug. 2009 – July 2013

BA in Philosophy

Ankara, Turkey

PUBLICATION

Manuscript: *Symbolic Logic Manual*, A. Özercan, 2014, METU Press, Ankara Turkey, 196 pages.

Book editor: *Language, Logic, and Empirical Knowledge - Collected Papers of Teo Grünberg (1965-2005)*, Editors: D. Grünberg and A. Özercan, 2017, METU Press, Ankara Turkey, 196 pages.

PAPERS IN PROGRESS

1. Evidentiality and its Challenge to the Propositional Theories (Under Review)

Semantics, Philosophy of Language

- Analyzing the impact of evidentiality on propositional theories in philosophy of language, proposing the concept of ‘weak forces’.

2. Sub-Theories of Mind (Under Review)

Cognitive Neuropsychology, Philosophy of Mind

- Exploring the concept of Sub-Theories of Mind as a series of modular advancements in understanding others' mental states, including Theory of Animacy, Emotion, Intention/Desire, Attention, Knowledge, and Belief.
- Presenting neurobiological and ontogenetic evidence, and comparative analyses with frameworks by Baron-Cohen, Leslie, and Wellman & Liu.

3. Propositional Attitudes (In Progress)

Philosophy of Mind, Animal Cognition, Philosophy of Language

- Investigating Sub-Theories of Mind's applicability to animal cognition, particularly in species like chimpanzees and their understanding of knowledge and intention.
- Discussing the transition from prepositional to propositional attitudes within Sub-Theories of Mind.

4. Curiosity: Descriptions, Representations, and Attitudes in Animals (In Progress)

Philosophy of Language, Epistemology

- Dissecting the nature of curiosity and its fulfillment, focusing on the representation of the unknown and exploratory behaviors in animals.
- Distinguishing between object and network curiosity, analyzing prepositional and propositional thought in animals.

5. Effects of Reward in Alzheimer's (Waiting for funding confirmation for the last batch of participants)

Cognitive Neuropsychology, Neuroimaging

- An fMRI study examining neural responses to reward stimuli in Alzheimer's patients, exploring alterations in the reward system.
- Currently analyzing the second batch of participant data, awaiting funding for the final batch. Collaboration project.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Group Manager

December 2018 – Present

University of Connecticut - Expression, Communication, and Origins of Meaning Group

Storrs, CT

- Co-organized 10 interdisciplinary international conferences. Keynote participants include:
 - *Expression, Language, Music 2* (2024) (Ani Patel, Paul Boghossian, Phillippe Schlenker)
 - *Kinds of Consciousness* (2024) (Jonathan Birch, Elizabeth Schechter)
 - *Millikanfest* (2023) (Fran cois Recanati, David Papineau, Robyn Carston, Josh Armstrong, Dan Dennett)
 - *Kinds of Action* (2023) (Lucy O'Brien, John Schwenkler)
 - *Expression, Language, Music* (2022) (Tecumseh Fitch, Kathleen Higgins, Ray Jackendoff, Jerrold Levinson, Isabelle Peretz)
 - *Kinds of Expression* (2022) (Henrike Moll, Eli Alshanetsky)
 - *ELM* (2021 - postponed to 2022)
 - *Kinds of Mindreading* (2021) (Jonathan Phillips, Helen Tager-Flusberg)
 - *Kinds of Knowledge* (2020) (Alex Byrne, Kristin Andrews)
 - *Communication, Context, Conversation* (2019) (Robyn Carston, Danielle Matthews, Mandy Simons)
- Facilitated 55 talks by distinguished speakers, fostering an environment for scholarly exchange. Notable speakers include:
 - William Snyder, Letty Naigles, Robyn Carston, Disa Sauter, Ani Patel,
 - Peter Gardenfors, Richard Moore, Jonathan Prather, Crispin Wright,
 - Emily Myers, Peter Langland-Hassan, Cameron Buckner, Jill de Villiers, and others
- Successfully obtained diverse funding sources through proficient grant writing skills and effective resource management.

Inst. for the Brain and CogSci (IBACS) Fellowship on NIH - NSF Grants

May 2022 – Aug 2022

University of Connecticut - IBACS

Storrs, CT

- Awarded a \$5,000 summer fellowship for graduate research in topics relevant to Brain and Cognitive Sciences.

- Participated in an intensive multi-week grant-writing workshop focusing on NIH F31 or F32 applications, gaining expertise in effective grant proposal composition.
- Engaged in a mock NIH review panel, reviewing peer applications to understand grant evaluation processes.
- Completed the scientific portion of an NIH F31 or F32 grant application by the end of the workshop, enhancing skills in scientific communication and funding acquisition.
- Gained insights into NSF GRFP and NRSA application processes.

Research Assistant in Neuroimaging

Jul 2019 – Aug 2021

IBACS (The CT Inst. for the Brain and CogSci) and BIRC (Brain Imaging Research Cent.)

Storrs, CT

- Conducted comprehensive data analysis, including DICOM sorting, BIDS conversion, fMRIPREP preprocessing, quality control, and group level analysis using FSL and Freesurfer.
- Performed advanced neuroimaging analyses such as Functional Connectivity and Amplitude of Low-Frequency Fluctuations (ALFF) using xcpengine.
- Specialized in designing and implementing experimental procedures for fMRI and EEG studies using PsychoPy.
- Trained in MRI usage, adhering to safety protocols and ensuring effective operation for brain research studies.
- Trained in EEG usage, complementing the neuroimaging techniques applied in research projects.
- Developed and maintained documentation resources, providing essential guidance for Python-based experiments.
- Supported researchers in using BIRC facilities for experimental setup and data management.

Research Assistant

Jul 2014 – Aug 2016

METU - Laboratory for Computational Ontology

Ankara, Turkey

- Engaged in the project “In Pursuit of the Missing Premise,” identifying what is missing to complete a theory
- Explored the intersection of ontology and cognitive science to develop a nuanced understanding of agency and decision-making processes in artificial intelligence systems.
- Contributed to theoretical research that bridges philosophical ontology with computational models, enhancing the conceptual framework for understanding cognitive processes in AI.

INVITED TALKS

“Prepositional Minds,” February 2024, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“Sub-Theories of Mind,” December 2023, Middle East Technical University, Department of Cognitive Science, Ankara, Turkey.

“Sub-Theories of Mind,” December, 2023, Bilkent University, Department of Psychology, Ankara, Turkey.

“How to Beat Dr. Frankenstein?” at Institute for the Brain and Cognitive Sciences, October 2020, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“Evidentiality and Its Challenge to the Propositional Theories” at Boğaziçi Linguistics Circle, December 2019, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey.

“Indexicality of Proper Names” at Altman Lab, September 2019, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

PRESENTATIONS

“Representations, Descriptions, and Prepositional Attitudes in Animals” at International Society for the Philosophy of the Sciences of the Mind (ISPSM), December 2023, Online.

“XII Edition Workshop of Philosophy of Biology & Cognitive Sciences,” November 2023, University of Málaga, Spain.

“Sub-Theories of Mind,” November 2023, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“Representations, Descriptions, and Prepositional Attitudes in Animals” at 14th Annual Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference, May 2023, Northwestern University, Illinois.

“Third-Person to First-Person: Understanding Others’ Mental States” at First-Person Science of Consciousness Conference, May 2023, University of Witten.

73rd New Mexico Texas Philosophical Society Meeting, April 2023, University of Texas at El Paso, Texas.

“Why would you say that?” October 2022, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“How to satisfy your curiosity?” May 2022, Institute for the History & Philosophy of Science & Technology Conference, Toronto, Canada.

“How to satisfy your curiosity?” April 2022, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“Evidentiality and Its Challenge to the Propositional Theories,” December 2020, University of Connecticut, Connecticut.

“How to Satisfy Your Curiosity,” in *IHPST Graduate Conference*, May 2022, University of Toronto, Toronto, CA.

“Animal Curiosity,” in *Bleen Conference*, October 2019 UConn, Storrs, Connecticut.

“Bir Hatanın Peşinde” (In Pursuit of a Mistake) in *2. ODTÜ Lisansüstü Felsefe Öğrencileri Konferansı (2nd METU Philosophy Graduate Students Conference)*, December 2017, METU, Ankara, Turkey.

“Dinleyici İçin Kurallar” (The Maxims of the Audience) in *1. ODTÜ Lisansüstü Felsefe Öğrencileri Konferansı (1st METU Philosophy Graduate Students Conference)*, May 2016, METU, Ankara, Turkey.

“In Pursuit of the Missing Premise,” co-authored with O. Akçelik, in *British Logic Colloquium 2015*, September 2015, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK.

AWARDS & GRANTS

UConn Conference Award (\$2,000)	May 2023
Provost’s Teaching Excellence Award	June 2019
Winner of Akbank’s One Million New & Profitable Customer Project Contest (\$100,000)	May 2012
ECOM Research Fellowship times (4 times) (\$4,500)	2019 – 2023
UConn Doctoral Fellowship (3 times) (\$4,750)	2019, 2023
ELM Fellowship (3 times) (\$4,600)	2020, 2022, 2023
UConn Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (\$2,500)	2022
IBACS and BIRC Summer Fellowship (3 times) (\$15,000)	2020 – 2022
Visiting Research Grant (to UC Davis) (\$5,000)	2015
Laboratory for Computational Ontology Travel Grant (\$1,000)	2015

GRADUATE COURSES

Semantics and Philosophy of Language

- Semantics I - Magdalena Kaufmann (UConn)
- Semantics II - Magdalena Kaufmann (UConn)
- Semantics of Perspective - Magdalena Kaufmann (UConn)
- Propositional Theories of Meaning in Philosophy of Lang. - Teo Grünberg (METU)
- Force and Content - Lionel Shapiro (UConn)
- Heretic Approaches to Natural Language Semantics - Hanti Lin (A) (UC Davis)
- Vagueness - Adam Sennet (A) (UC Davis)
- Non-Ideal Philosophy of Language - Lynne Tirell (UConn)
- Events and Their Names - Sun Demirli (Boğaziçi)

Cognitive Neuroscience

- Foundations in Neuropsychology - John Salamone & Deborah Fein (UConn)
- Foundations in Neurobiology of Language - Jim Magnuson (UConn)
- Structure, Acquisition and Processing of Language - William Snyder (UConn)
- Cognitive Neuroscience of Language - Emily Myers & Nicole Landi (UConn)
- Neurobiology of Typical & Atypical Cog. & Lang. Dev. - Letty Naigles & Inge-Marie Eigsti (UConn)
- Research Methods and Statistics for Cognitive Science - Murat Cakir (A) (METU)
- Neuroimaging Methods - Roeland Hancock (UConn)

Logic

- Modal Logic - Keith Simmons (UConn)
- Philosophy of Logic & Mathematics - Ahmet Çevik (METU)

Philosophy of Mind

- Mind and Consciousness - William Lycan (UConn)
- Philosophy of Curiosity - İlhan İnan (Boğaziçi)
- Expressing and Saying - Dorit Bar-On (UConn)
- From Concepts to Event Representation - Gerry Altmann (UConn)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages: Python, R (basic)

Developer Tools: Git, Docker, Google Cloud Platform, Visual Studio, PyCharm

Neuroimaging Tools: PsychoPy, BIDS-Tools, fMRIPrep, mriqc, FSL, Freesurfer, xcpengine

Statistics Tools: JASP

Grant Writing: NSF - NIH grant writing, Internal funding application, L^AT_EX

Learning Management Systems (LMS): Canvas, Blackboard

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Principal Instructor (16 sections)

Neuropsychology | 4 sections Summer 2022, 2023, 2024
Phillips Academy Andover

Social Psychology | 2 sections Summer 2022 & 2024
Phillips Academy Andover

Philosophy and Logic | 1 sections Spring 2024
UConn Stamford

Philosophy and Social Ethics | 5 sections 2020 – 2023
UConn Storrs, UConn Hartford & UConn Waterbury

- Taught at UConn Waterbury, Fall 2023
- Taught at UConn Hartford, Spring 2023
- Taught at UConn Storrs, Summer 2021
- Taught at UConn Storrs, Summer 2020

Problems of Philosophy | 3 sections 2021 – 2022
UConn Storrs, UConn Hartford & UConn Waterbury

- Taught at UConn Waterbury, Fall 2022 & Fall 2021
- Taught at UConn Storrs, Summer 2022
- Taught at UConn Hartford, Spring 2022

History of Science | 1 sections 2017
Bartın University (Turkey)

Teaching Assistant (16 sections)

Philosophy and Logic | 2 sections Spring, 2019
UConn Storrs

Problems of Philosophy | 4 sections Fall, 2018
UConn Storrs

Introduction to Logic | 2 sections Fall, 2017
Bartın University (Turkey)

Logic I 2 sections <i>Bartın University (Turkey)</i>	Fall, 2017
Logic II 2 sections <i>Bartın University (Turkey)</i>	Spring, 2018
Introduction to Logic 2 sections <i>METU (Turkey)</i>	Fall, 2012 & 2013
Modern Logic I 2 sections <i>METU (Turkey)</i>	Spring, 2013 & 2014
Modern Logic II 2 sections <i>METU (Turkey)</i>	Fall, 2014 & 2015

REFERENCES

Emer. Prof. Dr. Bill Lycan

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Prof. Dr. Mitch Green

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