

CoNLL 2026

**The 30th Conference on Computational Natural Language  
Learning (CoNLL 2026)**

**Proceedings of the Conference**

July 3-4, 2026

The CoNLL organizers gratefully acknowledge the support from the following sponsors.

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## Introduction

CoNLL is the annual conference organized by the ACL Special Interest Group on Natural Language Learning (SIGNLL), focused on theoretically, cognitively, and scientifically motivated approaches to computational linguistics and natural language processing. The 30th edition of the conference takes place in San Diego, California on July 3–4, 2026, co-located with ACL 2026.

Since its founding, CoNLL has served as a venue for computational work that engages with questions about the nature of language: how it is acquired, processed, structured, and grounded in cognition and social interaction. The conference’s emphasis on these questions has taken on renewed importance with the rise of large language models. As these models reshape NLP, there is growing interest in what they actually learn, how their behavior relates to human linguistic competence, and what theoretically informed analysis can contribute to our understanding of both. The papers in this volume reflect the range of work the community is pursuing in this context, covering computational psycholinguistics and cognition, usage-based and construction grammars, language acquisition and emergence, multimodality and grounding, typology and multilinguality, syntax, morphology, semantics, theoretical analysis and interpretation of ML models, language and the brain, and resources and tools for scientifically motivated research.

The program comprises 47 archival papers, selected from 257 submissions (18% acceptance rate), and 2 non-archival papers selected from 10 submissions (20% acceptance rate).

The program features two invited talks, by Michael C. Frank (Stanford University) and Adele Goldberg (Princeton University). Both have shaped the conversation between linguistic theory, cognitive science, and computational modeling that CoNLL was created to support.

We thank the 28 Area Chairs and 256 reviewers whose work made the program possible, particularly given the tight reviewing timeline and the high number of submissions. Our review process this year included additional checks for thematic relevance to the conference, and hallucinated references, which we credit for ensuring a scientifically oriented and high-quality set of accepted papers while reducing reviewer time.

We also thank our Publication Chairs, Katrien Beuls (Université de Namur) and Paul Van Eecke (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). To say that Paul and Katrien went above and beyond is an understatement—Thank you! We also thank our Publicity Chairs, Harish Tayyar Madabushi (University of Bath), Charlotte Pouw (University of Amsterdam), and Bastian Bunzeck (Bielefeld University) for their work promoting the conference behind the scenes. Thanks to the SIGNLL board Omri Abend and Antske Fokkens and last year’s organizers, Gemma Boleda and Michael Roth, for their guidance throughout the process. We are grateful to Google DeepMind for sponsoring the Best Paper Award.

Finally, we thank the authors and the broader CoNLL community. The work this conference exists to support depends on a community willing to pursue questions that don’t always sit at the center of the field’s attention, and we are glad to be part of one that does.

Claire Bonial and Yevgeni Berzak  
CoNLL 2026 Chairs

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hao Zhou, Jinan Zou

**Keynote Talk**  
**Comparing early language learning in children and language models**

**Michael C. Frank**  
Stanford University

**Friday, July 3, 2026, 09:15 – Room: Harbor B**

**Bio:** Michael C. Frank is Benjamin Scott Crocker Professor of Human Biology in the Department of Psychology at Stanford University and Director of the Symbolic Systems Program. He received his PhD from MIT in Brain and Cognitive Sciences in 2010. He studies children’s language learning and development, with a focus on the use of large-scale datasets to understand the variability and consistency of learning across cultures. He is a founder of the ManyBabies Consortium, and has led open-data projects including Wordbank and the ongoing LEVANTE project. He has received awards including the Troland Award from the National Academy of Sciences and the FABBS Early Career Impact award. He served as President of the Cognitive Science Society, has edited for journals including *Cognition* and *Child Development*, and is current co-Editor in Chief of the *Open Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*.

**Keynote Talk**  
**Compositionality and creativity in natural language and  
LLMs**

**Adele Goldberg**

Princeton University

**Saturday, July 4, 2026, 09:00 – Room: Harbor B**

**Bio:** Adele Goldberg is the M. Taylor Pyne Professor of Psychology at Princeton University. Her research explores the formal, semantic, social, statistical, and memory-based factors that shape how languages are learned, represented, and used. She is fascinated by what makes human language both creative and constrained, across adults and children, first and second language learners, and neurotypical and atypical populations. Her current work touches on word meaning, language change, island constraints, metaphor and emotion, good-enough language production, and the forms and functions of grammatical constructions. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a Fellow of the Linguistic Society of America, the Association for Psychological Science, and the Cognitive Science Society.

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# Program

## Friday, July 3, 2026

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09:15 - 10:30     *Keynote by Michael C. Frank*

10:30 - 11:00     *Coffee Break*

11:00 - 12:30     *Computational Psycholinguistics and Cognition*

*Evaluating Humanlike Memory Effects in Transformers Using Item Recognition Tasks*

Christian Clark and William Schuler

*Information-Theoretic Storage Cost in Sentence Comprehension*

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*Similar Predictions, Different Processes: A Multi-Level Comparison of Human and Multimodal LLM Language Prediction*

Shuqi Wang and Zhenguang Cai

12:30 - 14:00     *Lunch Break*

14:00 - 15:30     *Poster Session*

15:30 - 16:00     *Coffee Break*

**Friday, July 3, 2026 (continued)**

16:00 - 17:30     *Language Acquisition, Interpretability, Language and the Brain*

*Collocational bootstrapping: A hypothesis about the learning of subject-verb agreement in humans and neural networks*

Claire Hobbs and R. Thomas McCoy

*Cognitively Inspired Developmental Trajectories Improve Explore-Exploit Dynamics in Neural Agent Emergent Communication*

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*What Brain Data Adds to Language Model Training*

Gabriele Merlin, Omer Moussa and Mariya Toneva

**Saturday, July 4, 2026**

09:00 - 10:30 *Keynote by Adele Goldberg*

10:30 - 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 - 12:30 *Usage-based Grammars, Typology and Multilinguality*

*A Method for Learning Large-Scale Computational Construction Grammars from Semantically Annotated Corpora*

Paul Van Eecke and Katrien Beuls

*Child-directed speech facilitates production, not comprehension, in BabyLMs*

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14:00 - 15:30 *Multimodality, Grounding and Interaction*

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15:30 - 16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:00 - 17:30 *Award Session and Closing Discussion*

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