Mihaela Barokova
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EDUCATION

Boston University, Boston, MA
Ph.D. in Psychology — *May 2021*
Dissertation: "Explorations of Language and Communication in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Studies of Under-Researched and Under-Served Populations"
M.A. in Psychology — *May 2017*

Macalester College, St. Paul, MN — *May 2015*
B.A. in Psychology
Minors: Linguistics; German Studies
Summa Cum Laude

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria — *Spring 2014*
Goethe-Institut, Berlin, Germany | C1 Certificate of proficiency in German — *Jan-Feb 2014*

HONORS & AWARDS

Graduate Certificate in Teaching Writing. Boston University — *May 2020*
Graduate Writing Fellowship. Boston University — *AY 2019-2020*
Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship. Boston University — *Summer 2018, 2019*
Graduate Student Organization Travel Award. Boston University — *Spring 2018*
Research Mentoring Pair Travel Award. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association – Mentor Prof. Jill de Villiers — *Fall 2017*
Phi Beta Kappa. Macalester College — *May 2015*
Minnesota Psychological Association Donald G. Paterson Award. Macalester College – **nominee** — *Spring 2015*
Allen L. Parchem Fellowship. Macalester College (awarded annually to one student to conduct research in psychology in collaboration with a faculty member) — *Summer 2013*
Kofi Annan International Scholarship. Macalester College — *2011-2015*
Psi Chi. International Honor Society in Psychology — *Fall 2013*
Minnesota Kids Judge! Neuroscience Fair Winner for outstanding performance and lasting contribution to science education — *Dec 2012*
Macalester College Dean's List — *2012-2015*

PUBLICATIONS

Published

Barokova, M. D., Ignatova, S., & Andonova, E. (2021). A Comparison of Parent-Child Interactions of Children with Autism and Children with Typical Development. *In Proceedings from the IX International Congress of Psychology* in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Barokova, M.D., C., Hassan, S., Lee, C., Xu, M., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2020). A Comparison of Natural Language Samples Collected from Minimally and Low-Verbal Children and Adolescents with Autism by Parents and Examiners. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 63*(12), 4018-4028. https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_JSLHR-20-00343

Barokova, M.D., La Valle, C., Hassan, S., Lee, C., Xu, M., McKechnie, R., Johnston, E., Krol, M.A., Leano, J. &

Tager-Flusberg, H. (2020). Eliciting Language Samples for Analysis (ELSA): A New Protocol for Assessing Expressive Language and Communication in Autism. *Autism Research*. https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2380

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2019). Person-Reference in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Developmental Trends and the Role of Linguistic Input. *Autism Research,* https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2243

Barokova, M.D. (2019). Measuring Language Change through Natural Language Samples. In F. Volkmar (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6435-8_102486-1

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2018). Commentary: Measuring Language Change through Natural Language Samples. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 1-20.* https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1007/s10803-018-3628-4

Under Review

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (under review). How Do Parents Refer to Their Children While Playing? A Cross-Linguistic Comparison of Parental Input to Bulgarian- and English-speaking Children with ASD.

Barokova, M.D. (under review). What are the evidence-based therapies and interventions for autism? The case of WHO's Caregiver Skills Training. *In Proceedings from the V Multifacet Conference on Child Development organized by Medical University, Plovdiv.*

Kartushina, N., Mani, N., Aktan-Erciyes, A., Alaslani, K., Aldrich, N., Almohammadi, A., Alroqi, H., Anderson, L., Andonova, E., Aussems, S., Babineau, M., **Barokova, M.D.**, et al…, Mayor, J. (under review). COVID-19 Spring Lockdown as a Unique Window into Language Acquisition: What You Do (with Your Child) matters.

Bergmann, C., Dimitrova, N., Alaslani, K., Almohammadi, A., Alroji, H., Aussems, S., **Barokova, M.D.**, et al…, Mani, N. (under review). Young Children's Screen Time During the First COVID-19 Lockdown in 12 Countries.

In Prep

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (in prep). Exploring Cross-Linguistic Differences in Parental Input and Their Associations with Child Expressive Language in ASD: Bulgarian vs. English Comparison.

CONFERENCE POSTERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2021, May). *How do Bulgarian- and English-speaking Parents Refer to their Children with ASD?* Meeting of the International Society for Autism Research in Boston, MA.

Baker-Harvey, H., **Barokova, M.D.,** Raymond, L., La Valle, C., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2021, May). *How does Parent and Examiner Question Use Differ during Natural Language Sampling?* Meeting of the International Society for Autism Research in Boston, MA.

La Valle, C., Raymond, L., Johnston, E., **Barokova, M.D**., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2020, June). *Examining the equivalence of two semi-structured natural language protocols.* for Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders in Madison, Wisconsin.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2020, May). *A Country Profile: Bulgarian Children with ASD*. International Society for Autism Research in Seattle, WA.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2020, May). *Why Are Parents Better than Researchers at Eliciting Speech from Minimally and Low-Verbal Children and Adolescents with ASD?* International Society for Autism Research in Seattle, WA.

Pecukonis, M.G., **Barokova, M.D,** La Valle**,** C., & Tager-Flusberg. (2020, May). *Frequency of Household Book Reading May Explain SES Disparities in Expressive Language – Findings from a Nationally-Representative Sample of Children with ASD.* International Society for Autism Research in Seattle, WA.

La Valle, C., **Barokova, M.D**., Raymond, L., Johnston, E., Stowe, L., Krol, M., Leanno, J, & Tager-Flusberg, H.

(2020, March). *Language assessment in toddlers with ASD: Can measures derived from natural language samples replace scores from standardized tests and parent reports?* To be presented at the Meeting on Language in Autism in Durham, NC.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2019, May). *The Role of Linguistic Input in Person-Reference of Preschoolers with ASD.* International Society for Autism Research, Montreal, Canada.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2019, May). *A New Approach for Assessing Social Communication in ASD: ELSA.* International Society for Autism Research, Montreal, Canada.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2019, March). *The Influence of Conversational Partner on Expressive Language in Children and Adolescents with ASD.* Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, USA.

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2018, May). *The Relationship between Person Reference and Mental State Language in Preschoolers with ASD.* International Society for Autism Research, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Barokova, M. D., Hassan, S., Lee, C., Xu, M., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2017, May). *A new approach for eliciting expressive language samples: ELSA.* International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA.

INVITED TALKS & GUEST LECTURES

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Language and Early Intervention. Guest lecture for DEVM203: Language Development in Early Childhood, New Bulgarian University, May 20th, 2021

Family Needs Assessment Survey in Bulgaria. Autism Speaks Advocacy Leadership Network Conference. April 27-28, 2021

The main principles of ethical conduct: Integrity. Guest lecture for PSYB206: Ethics for Psychologists, New Bulgarian University, April 20th, 2021

What are the evidence-based therapies and intervention for autism? The case of WHO's Caregiver Skills Training. Presented at the V Multifacet Conference on Child Development organized by Medical University, Plovdiv on April 2nd, 2021

ELSA: A New Protocol for Assessing Language and Communication in ASD. Invited talk for the Language Workgroup of the Infant Brain Imaging Study (IBIS) Network on March 26th, 2021.

ELSA-A: A New Way of Assessing Language and Communication in Minimally to Low-Verbal Children and Adolescents with ASD. Invited talk as part of the "Meet the Experts" Series for COMM916: Autism Spectrum Disorders (Dr. Jill Thorson) at University of New Hampshire. March 9th, 2021

Language Difficulties in Autism Spectrum Disorder. Course in Language Development, Developmental Psychology, New Bulgarian University. January 5th, 2021

A Comparison of Parent-Child Interactions of Children with Autism and Children with Typical Development. **Barokova, M. D.**, Ignatova, S., Andonova, E. Talk at the IX International Congress of Psychology in Sofia, Bulgaria. (organized by the Bulgarian Psychological Society). November 13th, 2020

Selfhood in Autism and Typical Development. Guest lecture for PS541: Social Development, Boston University. October 22nd, 2020.

Explorations of Language and Communication in Autism. Colloquium Series for the Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology, New Bulgarian University. June 3rd, 2020 [Video recording of the seminar is available upon request]

Language Development in Autism Spectrum Disorder. Course in Language Development, Developmental Psychology, New Bulgarian University. April 9th, 2020

Understanding Self and Others. Guest lecture for PS241: Developmental Psychology, Boston University. April 18th, 2019.

Language and Theory of Mind Interplay: Evidence from Neuroscience. Meeting of Mind series. Developmental Science, Boston University. April 4th, 2019.

Collecting Natural Language Samples from Bulgarian Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Center for Autism Research Excellence, Boston University. October 22nd, 2018.

What is Autism? Autism Science Conference and Webinars. National Palace of Culture. Sofia, Bulgaria. July 14th, 2018.

How Do We Choose Evidence-Based Autism Therapies? Autism Science Conference and Webinars. National Palace of Culture. Sofia, Bulgaria. July 14th, 2018.

Language and Sense of Self in Autism. Invited talk at Minnesota Syntax and Psycholinguistics Lab. University of Minnesota. October 13th, 2017.

How Do Children with Autism Talk About Themselves and Others? Meeting of Mind series. Developmental Science, Boston University. September 27th, 2017.

Assessing Expressive Language in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Communication Sciences and Disorders Research Day Retreat. Sargent College, Boston University. May 4th, 2017.

A New Approach for Assessing Expressive Language in Autism. Developmental Science Colloquium Series, Boston University. April 19th, 2017.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & TRAINING

Center for Autism Research Excellence, Boston University *Sept 2015-present*

Graduate Researcher

Advisor: Helen Tager-Flusberg, Ph.D.

- Designed a language elicitation procedure, **E**liciting **L**anguage **S**amples for **A**nalysis (**ELSA**), for minimally verbal children and adolescents with autism
- Collected, processed (**ELAN, SALT, CLAN**) and analyzed **natural language samples** from children and adolescents with autism
- Developed **language outcome measures** derived from natural language samples
- Utilized **computational linguistic approach**es to the analysis of longitudinal transcript data from mother-child interactions (**LIWC, nltk – python**)
- Administered diagnostic and cognitive standardized assessments (**ADOS, Leiter**)
- Pilot **fNIRS experimental tasks**, and collect data for the **T**raining **E**arly **S**ocial **L**anguage in Children with **A**utism
- Maintain project database (**RedCap, Sharepoint**)
- Received training in **qualitative interviewing**

ManyBabies Demographics Project/Part of the ManyBabies collaborative projects *Spring 2021*

Co-Lead with Dr. Leher Singh

- An international collaboration aiming to create a standard and unified demographic form for researchers studying early child development across different cultures and nations
- Review the literature on demographic assessments
- Organize meetings and discussions within the ManyBabies collaborative project
- Design the demographic form and write up detailed guidelines and instructions on how to use it

World Health Organization/Autism Speaks Family Needs Assessment Survey *Spring 2020*

Local Collaborator

- Help adapt the Survey to Bulgarian context
- Organize and facilitate data collection from families with children with developmental disorders in Bulgaria in collaboration with New Bulgarian University
- The results will be used for the Global Report on Developmental Delay, Disorder, and Disability to be compiled by WHO in partnership with UNICEF and supported by Autism Speaks

Social isolation and vocabulary development: insights from families with varying SES *Spring 2020*
Local Collaborator

- Multi-site, international research collaboration with more than 25 labs from 14 countries led by the University of Oslo, Norway
- Help translate and adapt all questionnaires to Bulgarian context
- Organize and facilitate data collection from parents of children between 8 and 36 months of age in Bulgaria in collaboration with New Bulgarian University
- The results will be used to assess vocabulary change in children during the measures of social distancing due to COVID-19

Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship Project, Sofia, Bulgaria *Summer 2018; 2019*
Principal Investigator
Mentors: Helen Tager-Flusberg, Ph.D. and Elena Andonova, Ph.D.

- Recruited, consented, and tested all participants (N = 38)
- Carried out all aspects of data collection and processing
- Administered diagnostic and cognitive standardized assessments (**ADOS, MSEL**)
- Created and maintained project database (**RedCap**)
- Designed coding schemes for verbal parental input

Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy Course and Training, Neurophotonics Center, *Nov 2018*
Boston University *Jan 2018*

- 3-day hands-on fNIRS bootcamp covering experimental design, probe design (**AtlasViewer**), optode 3D Digitization (**Polhemus**), data analysis (**Homer2**)
- 1-day practical training on use of CW7 NIRS System, head cap placement, and data collection

Cognitive Psychology Lab and Eye-Tracking Lab, Macalester College *Sept 2013-May 2015*
Lab Supervisor/ Research Assistant
Principal Investigator: Brooke Lea, Ph.D.

- Managed all aspects of an **NSF-funded eye-tracking** (**SR EyeLink 1000**) **research lab**
- Programed eye-tracking experiments using **Experiment Builder**
- Analyzed eye-tracking data using **Data Viewer**
- Ran participants on the **eye-tracking experiments**

Cognition Research Lab, University of Vienna *March-June 2014*
Research Assistant
Principal Investigator: Prof. Dr. Ulrich Ansorge

- Used **Matlab** for programming and analyzing data

Honors Thesis Study, Psychology Department, Macalester College *May 2015*
Title: Spatial Structure of Mental Representation of Text: Testing the Embodied View of Cognition
Advisor: Brooke Lea, Ph.D.

Directed Research Project, Psychology Department, Macalester College *Dec 2013*
Title: Look at My Face: Social-Cognitive Explanations of the Cross-Race Effect
Advisor: Darcy Burgund, Ph.D.

LEADERSHIP

Conference on Early Child Development: Theory and Practice, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, *Sept 2019*

Bulgaria
Program Board and Organizing Committee Member

- Organized a two-day conference on **child development and autism spectrum disorder** in collaboration with New Bulgarian University and in partnership with UNICEF Bulgaria
- The two main goals of the conference were (1) to **promote** a better **understanding of evidence-based** research and practice; (2) to build a broad **alliance between scientists, practitioners, NGOs and parents**
- **Organized** three and **moderated** one session during the second day of the conference dedicated to autism spectrum disorder; the topics of the sessions included: Developmental Disorders, Screening and Diagnosis; Interventions and the Role of Parents; Assessment of the Effectiveness of Interventions and featured over 12 speakers
- **Reviewed abstracts** for the conference

Autism Science Conference and Webinars, National Palace of Culture, Sofia, Bulgaria. *July 2018*
Organizer

- In collaboration with Association "Autism Today" and Foundation "Step for the Invisible Children in Bulgaria," organized **a two-day international conference** on autism under the patronage of the Danish Ambassador in Bulgaria, Soren Jacobsen
- **Recruited speakers** and supervised conference volunteers
- Created the **conference schedule**
- **Advertised and promoted** the conference
- The conference received official support from the **Bulgarian Ministry of Education** and the **State Agency for Child Protection**
- It included 10 presentations from leading researchers in the field of autism, representatives of Autism Speaks, the Serbian Ministry of Health, the Bulgarian National Association of Resource Teachers, an ABA therapist, a self-advocate;

Center for Social Rehabilitation and Integration of Individuals on the Autism Spectrum, Sofia, Bulgaria *June, 2018*
Organizer/Presenter

- Organized and led a full-day parent workshop
- Delivered short presentations on topics covering autism diagnosis, communication, and behavior management
- Facilitated discussions among parents and therapists

Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, Macalester College, St. Paul, MN *March 2013*

- Completed a training in **inclusive leadership** organized by the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue

TEACHING & MENTORING

Center for Autism Research Excellence, Boston University *Sept 2015-present*
Mentor

- Mentor, train, and supervise master's students and undergraduate interns as they complete research projects at the center
- Co-lead the center's weekly journal club

WR150 Understanding Someone's Point of View: Theory of Mind and Language *Spring 2020*

WR120 Understanding Someone's Point of View: Theory of Mind Reconsidered, Boston University *Fall 2019*

Course Instructor

- Create course syllabus, prepare lesson plans
- Teach 3 times a week and hold office hours
- Create and grade all assignments
- Created course website on **BlackBoard**

PS101 General Psychology, Boston University *Spring 2021*
PS101 General Psychology, Boston University *Fall 2020*
PS241 Developmental Psychology, Boston University *Spring 2019*
PS241 Developmental Psychology, Boston University *Fall 2018*
PS325/326 Personality/Social Experimental Psychology, Boston University *Spring 2016*
PS101 General Psychology, Boston University *Fall 2015*

Teaching Fellow

- Hold weekly discussion sections and office hours
- Help prepare tests and design grading rubrics for assignments
- Grade tests and writing assignments

Developmental Psychology Master's Program, New Bulgarian University *Spring 2020*

Mentor

- Co-mentor 2 master's students as they complete their master's theses
- Co-mentor 3 master's students as they complete required internships for the program

Cognitive Psychology Lab and Eye-Tracking Lab, Macalester College *Sept 2013-May 2015*

Lab Supervisor/ Research Assistant

- Supervised the productivity of **11 undergraduate research assistants**
- Supervised undergraduates' independent eye-tracking research projects

Psychology Department, Macalester College *Fall 2014*

First-Year Course Writing Assistant

- Provided writing assistance to first-year students
- Served as a peer mentor and helped first-year students transition to life in college

SERVICE

UNIVERSITY

Provost's Office Graduate Student Advisory Board, Boston University *AY 2019-2020*
Graduate Student Representative *AY 2018-2019*
Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, Boston University *AY 2017-2018*
Academic Conduct Committee, Boston University *AY 2017-2018*
Academic Policy Committee, Boston University *AY 2016-2017*
Graduate Student Organization, Boston University *AY 2016-2017*
Graduate Student Member

DEPARTMENTAL

Developmental Science Prospective Students Interview Day, Boston University *AY 2018-2019*
Student Coordinator *AY 2017-2018*
Developmental Science Colloquium Committee, Boston University *AY 2016-2017*

Student Coordinator

PROFESSIONAL

Autism *Fall 2020, Spring 2021*

Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders *Fall 2019, Spring 2020*

Reviewer

Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research *Spring 2018*

Reviewer for special issue

Boston University Conference on Language Development

Conference Handbook Copy Editor *Oct 2017*

Student Session Chair *Nov 2015*

Association for Psychological Science

Graduate Student Reviewer *Spring 2017*

Consortium on Autism and Sign Language, American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Student Chair *Dec 2015*

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Fraser – Minnesota's largest provider of autism services, St. Paul, MN *Spring 2015*

Developmental Trainee

- Worked in a day treatment classroom with a small group of children with autism
- Participated in the planning and implementation of the objectives for the children

University Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment in Neurology and Psychiatry "St. Naum," Sofia, Bulgaria *July-August 2014*

Intern

- Participated in a **training** in neuropsychological assessment for cognitive changes
- Administered **tests intended to assess cognitive abilities and evaluate personality traits** (Mini Mental State Examination, Isaac's Set Test, Raven's Test, Thematic Apperception Test, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory)

SKILLS

- English (fluent), Bulgarian (fluent), German (effective operational proficiency)
- Proficient in statistical analysis and software (**SPSS, Mplus, R**)
- Basic use of **Python** and **LIWC** for computational linguistic analyses
- Support **iMovie**, **GarageBand**, **HandBrake**, **Photoshop**, **Google SketchUp**

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Association for Psychological Science
International Society for Autism Research
Society for Research in Child Development