

Mihaela Barokova

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Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Boston University
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EDUCATION

Boston University, Boston, MA

Ph.D. in Psychology

Expected 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 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

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

Barokova, M.D., & Tager-Flusberg, H. (2019). Person-Reference in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Developmental Trends and the Role of Linguistic Input. *Autism Research*, doi: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. doi: 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. doi:10.1007/s10803-018-3628-4.

CONFERENCE POSTERS

- La Valle, C., Raymond, L., Johnston, E., **Barokova, M.D.**, & Tager-Flusberg, H. (accepted for June, 2020). *Examining the equivalence of two semi-structured natural language protocols. 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. (accepted for May, 2020). *A Country Profile: Bulgarian Children with ASD*. International Society for Autism Research in Seattle, WA.
- Barokova, M.D.**, & Tager-Flusberg, H. (accepted for May, 2020). *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, H. (accepted for May, 2020). *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. (accepted for March, 2020). *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.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 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, **Eliciting Language Samples for Analysis (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 approaches** 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 **Training Early Social Language in Children with Autism**
- Maintain project database (**RedCap, Sharepoint**)
- Received training in **qualitative interviewing**

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**)

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 assess vocabulary change in children during the measures of social distancing due to COVID-19

Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy Course and Training, Neurophotonics Center, Boston University Nov 2018
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, Bulgaria Sept 2019
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**

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 3 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

Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Fall 2019

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

Dec 2015

Student Chair

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