Automated Analysis of Pragmatic Language Development in ASD

Research project
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects 1 in 59 individuals nationwide. It is associated with a distinctive communication style that affects the quality of social interaction in natural, everyday settings. The social use of language, which is called pragmatic language, has been difficult to study in the lab because research labs tend to be more sterile and controlled than real world social settings. As a result, there is still a lot to learn about pragmatic language abilities in ASD, and the impact of these abilities on everyday life.

The goal of our research is to use innovative methods to illuminate features of everyday social speech in adults with ASD with the goal of driving future intervention.

In our study, we set up natural, conversational situations so that we can better understand everyday language use in high-functioning adults with ASD and adults with typical development. We also assess other features of language and thinking abilities more broadly. We then apply novel automated computational language analysis techniques to these data, and existing data from children and adolescents with ASD, to reveal distinctive features of pragmatic language use in ASD. This study is designed to both characterize language abilities in ASD, and to inform interventions that could improve social interaction and communication skills in adults with ASD in the future.
OUR TEAM

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