

# CURRENT ISSUES IN ASDD SEMINAR SERIES

Please complete our  
pre-seminar survey:

<https://bit.ly/autismlang1>



*Language Use in  
Autism Research:  
A Systematic  
Literature Review  
and Implications for  
Clinical Practice*



HOSTED BY THE ABCT ASDD SIG

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# **LANGUAGE USE IN AUTISM RESEARCH**

*A Systematic Literature  
Review and Implications  
for Clinical Practice*

Hannah Morton, PhD

*Oregon Health & Science University*

# OVERVIEW

Interest Poll

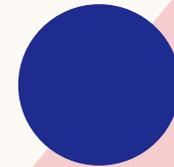
Background

Literature Review

Implications

Breakout Groups

Summary Discussion



# COLLABORATORS



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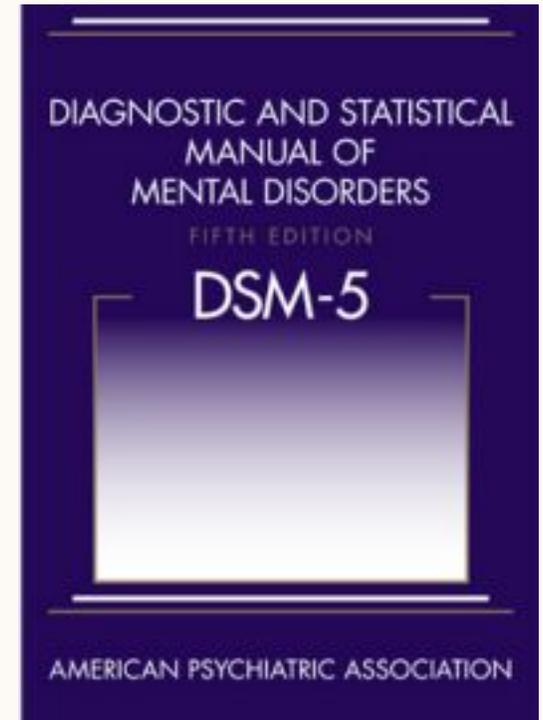


**KAIT GOULD, PHD,  
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The College of Saint Rose

# AUTISM HISTORICALLY

- Medicalized pathology
- Deficits and impairments
- Intervention



*Kapp et al., 2013; Lombardo & Mandelli, 2022; Pellicano & den Houting, 2021*

# NEURODIVERSITY

- Acceptance of difference
- Neurotype + identity
- Disability not disorder

*Botha et al., 2020, 2022; Bury et al., 2020; Dwyer, 2022; Jones et al., 2015; Kapp et al., 2013; Pellicano & Den Houting, 2021*

# LANGUAGE USE

## Medical

PFL (“with autism”)

Functioning/Severity

Intervention

Nonverbal

Special Interest

## Neurodiversity

IFL (“autistic”)

Support Needs

Accommodation

Nonspeaking

Area of Expertise

# ASDD SIG LANGUAGE USE GUIDELINES

Instead of This...	Try This!
Autism Spectrum Disorder, ASD <sup>3</sup>	Autism, autistic (the term "disorder" is unnecessarily medicalized and reinforces negative discourses that autism is wrong or needs to be cured)
Person-first language (e.g., "person with autism" or "person with ASD") <sup>2,4</sup>	Identity-first language (e.g., "autistic person"), on the autism spectrum, formally identified as autistic
High/low functioning; high/low severity or support needs <sup>2</sup>	Describe specific strengths and needs, acknowledge support needs likely vary across domains (e.g., requires substantial support to participate in unstructured recreation activities, but minimal support to complete academic work)
"At risk" for autism or ASD <sup>5</sup>	Increased likelihood/chance of autism/being autistic
Autism symptoms <sup>2</sup> and impairments <sup>3</sup>	Specific autistic characteristics, features, traits, or experiences
Treatment <sup>2</sup>	Support, services, educational strategies (when applicable)
Cure/recovery/optimal outcome <sup>2</sup>	Focus on quality-of-life outcomes that prioritize what autistic people want for themselves
Mild/moderate/severe language difficulties <sup>1</sup> ; social communication difficulties <sup>1</sup>	Specify the language difficulties or differences; describe characteristics of autistic communication
Poor reciprocity, monologues, goes off on tangents <sup>4</sup>	Uses longer conversational turns and info-dumps, characteristic of autistic communication style for sharing information and connecting with others
Blunt, abrupt, rude <sup>4</sup>	A direct communicator, uses language efficiently
High-/low-functioning autism, severe autism or severity of autism <sup>1</sup> , Level 1/2/3	Descriptions of individual characteristics (e.g., with/without intellectual disability or language impairment) or specific support needs (see above)
Deficit/Weakness <sup>1</sup>	Area of challenge, difficulty, difference
Flat affect <sup>1,4</sup>	Uses neutral facial expressions
Poor/unusual eye-contact <sup>1,4</sup>	Prefers to use reduced levels of eye-contact; eyes move around the room when speaking
Restricted/Special interests <sup>1,2</sup>	Focused, intense, or passionate interests; Areas of interest/expertise
Meaningless/aimless/purposeless play <sup>4</sup>	Preference for parallel play and interaction
Rigid, inflexible <sup>1</sup>	Preference for sameness and routine; Consider whether is it the autistic individual, the environment around them, or both that is or are inflexible
Stereotyped behaviors <sup>4</sup>	Repetitive body movements or stimming as a form of self-regulation and communication
Aloof and disinterested, on their own agenda, in their own world <sup>4</sup>	Demonstrates a monotropic thinking style characteristic of neurodivergent children; hyperfocused on interests and difficulties shifting attention to less interesting activities; differences in preference for body language and proximity
Challenging behavior/disruptive behavior/problem behavior <sup>1,2</sup>	Meltdown (when uncontrollable behavior), stimming (when relevant), more specific description of the behavior (e.g., self-injurious or aggressive behavior)
Discussions about economic impacts of autism/autistic people or compare costs to those of potentially fatal diseases, conditions <sup>2</sup> or natural disasters	Discussions about economic impacts that situate costs in society's systemic failure to accommodate autistic people and recognize the people most affected by oppression due to this failure are autistic people (not "taxpayers"). Avoid suggesting autism is uniformly detrimental and will lead to poor outcomes.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer-reviewed autism literature in 2021 ( $n = 2,322$ )

Traditional Medical Language (TML) and Alternative  
Neurodiversity Language (ANL)

Change over time

Research topic, participant group, journal type

# LANGUAGE CODING

*Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021; Dwyer et al., 2022; Monk et al., 2022*

TML

ANL

High/low  
functioning

Special  
Interest

High/low  
support needs

Area of  
interest

"high\* function\*" OR  
"high\*-function\*" OR "low\*  
function\*" or  
"low\*-function\*"

"special interest\*" or "interest  
special\*"

"high support need\*" OR  
"low support need\*" or  
"support need\*"

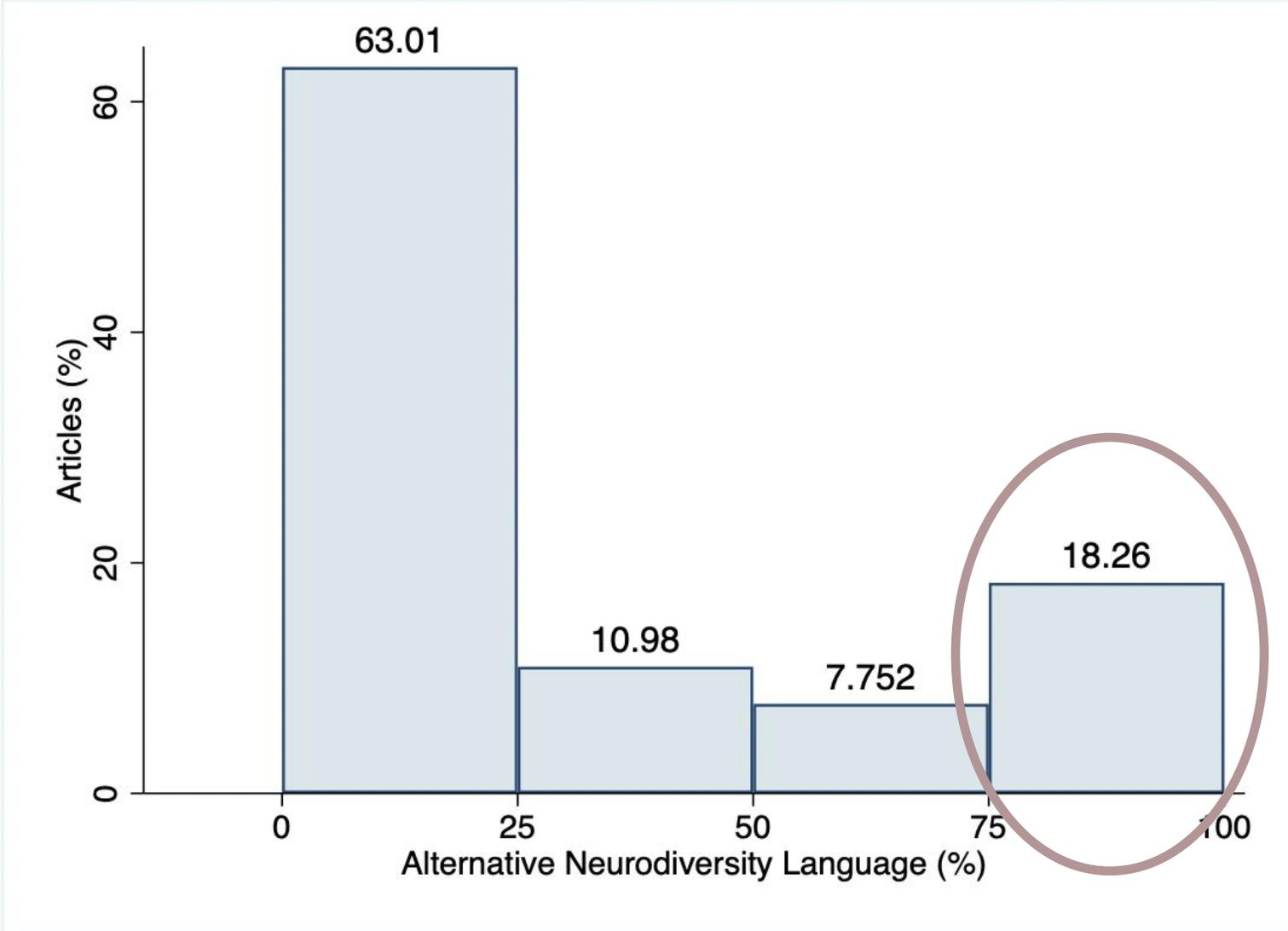
"area\* of interest" or "interest  
area\*"



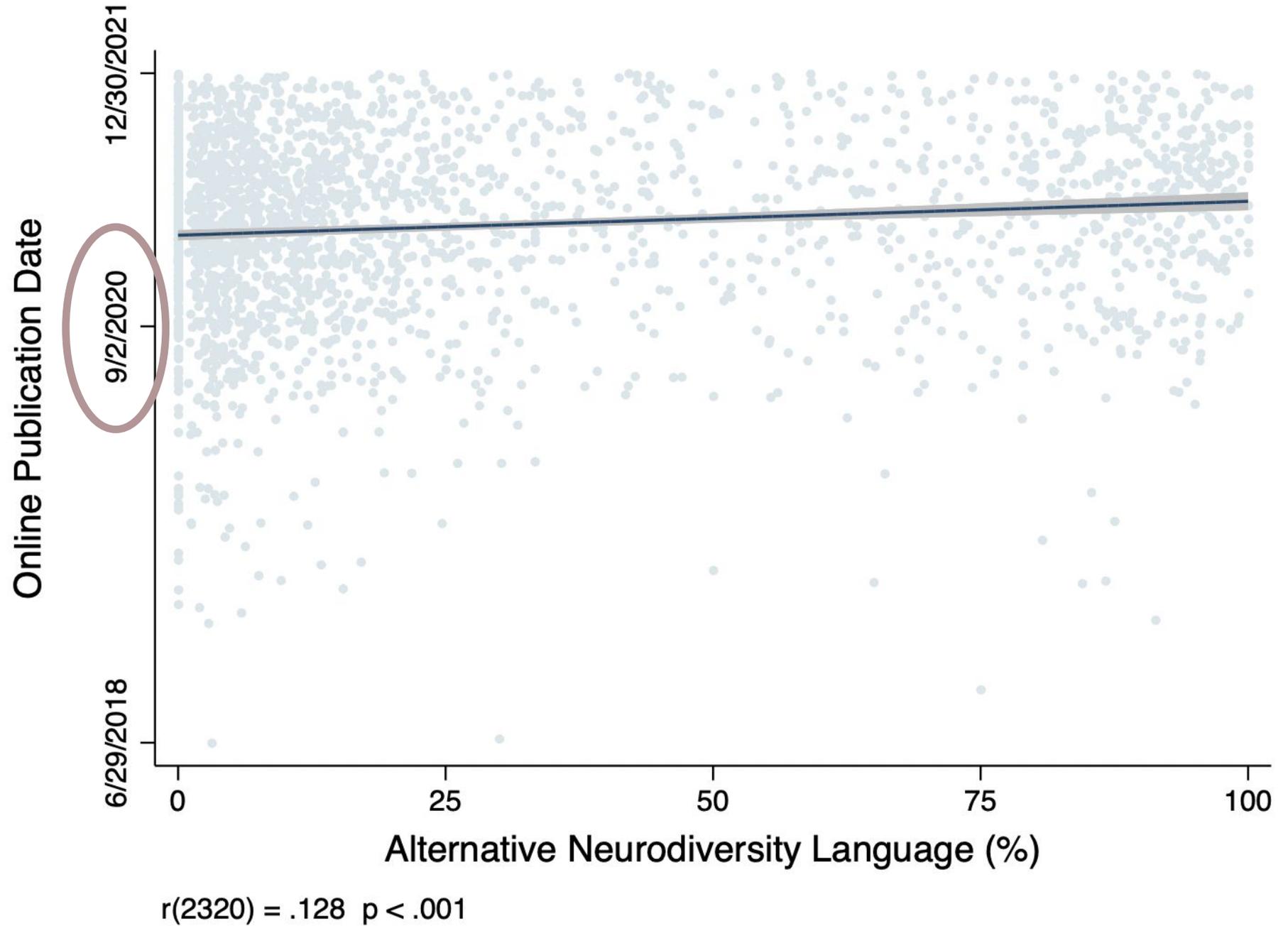
**ALTERNATIVE  
NEURODIVERSITY  
LANGUAGE %** =

$$\frac{\text{ANL Frequency}}{\text{Total Terms (ANL + TML)}} \times 100$$

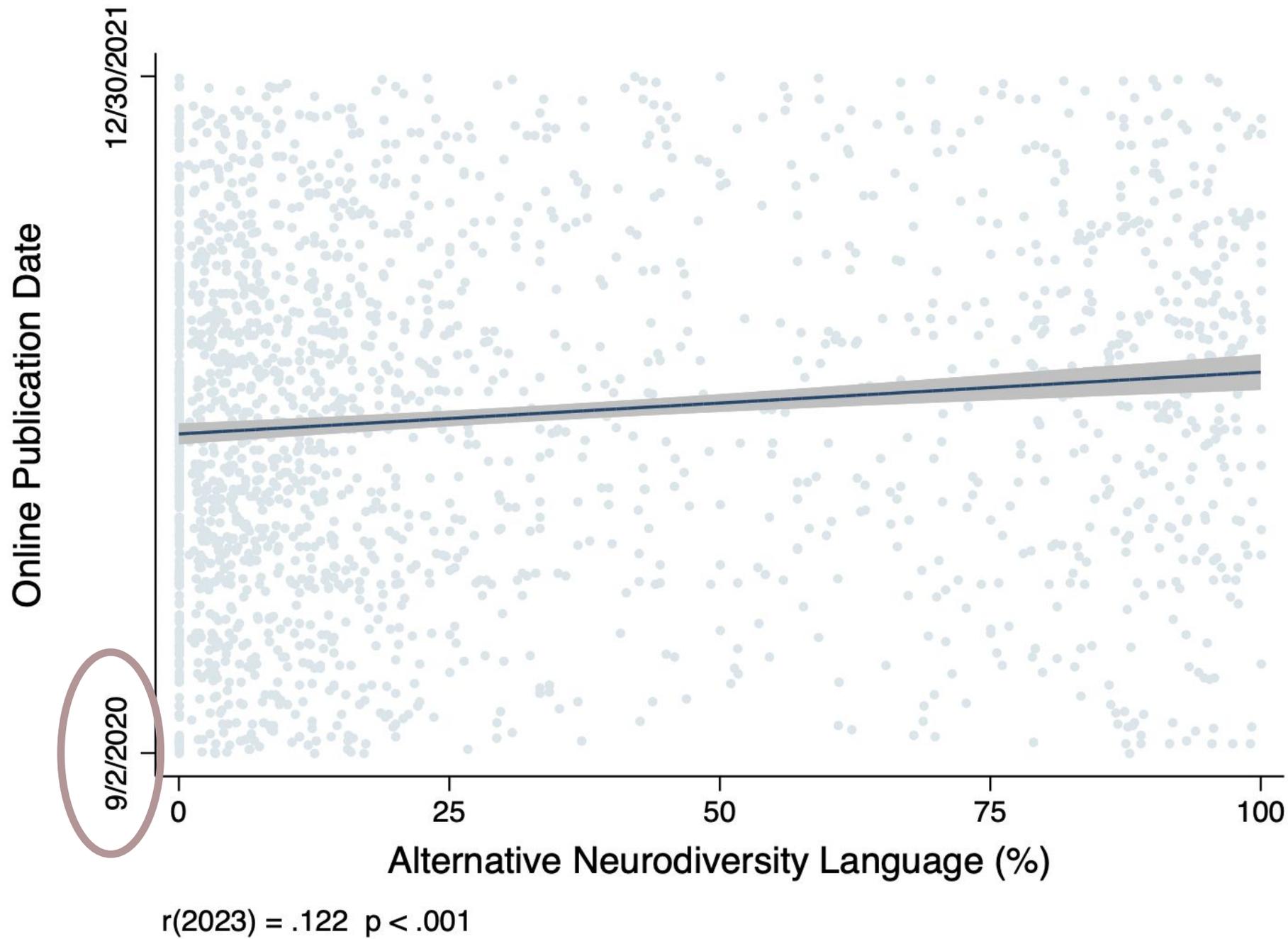
# LANGUAGE USE ACROSS ARTICLES



# ANL OVER TIME



# ANL OVER TIME



# IMPLICATIONS

- 2/3 USE PRIMARILY MEDICAL LANGUAGE
- SMALL POSITIVE CHANGE TOWARDS ANL
- EMERGING SHIFT

# IMPLICATIONS



## RESEARCH

- Research question
- Comparison groups
- Autistic voices (CBPR)
- Outcome measurement

Conversation analysis for social communication

(Yu & Sterponi, 2023)

Pacing toolkit for burnout

(McGuinness, 2021)

Reality checks for external validity (Polman et al., 2022)

# IMPLICATIONS

## GQ-ASC: Adult Women

This screening questionnaire is designed to identify behaviours and abilities in cisgender and trans women that are associated with autism.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Here is a list of questions and statements. Please read each question and statement very carefully, and rate how strongly you agree or disagree with it by circling your answer.

	Definitely disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Definitely agree
<b>Imagination and play</b>				
1. I enjoy fantasy worlds				
2. I am interested in fiction				
3. When I was 5-12 years old, I played as imaginatively as other girls				
4. When I was 5-12 years old, I had imaginary friends or imaginary animals				
5. When I was 5-12 years old, I created my own complex 'set ups' with toys				

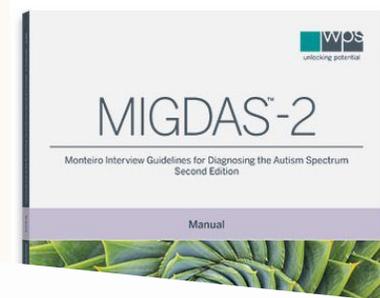
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## Centering the Inner Experience of Autism: Development of the Self-Assessment of Autistic Traits

Allison B. Ratto, PhD,<sup>1</sup> Julia Bascom,<sup>2,\*</sup> Sharon daVanport,<sup>3,\*</sup> John F. Strang, PsyD,<sup>4</sup> Laura G. Anthony, PhD,<sup>5</sup> Alyssa Verbalis, PhD,<sup>1</sup> Cara Pugliese, PhD,<sup>1</sup> Nicole Nadwodny, BS,<sup>6</sup> Lydia X.Z. Brown, JD,<sup>7</sup> Mallory Cruz, BA,<sup>8</sup> Becca Lory Hector, CAS, BCCS,<sup>9</sup> Steven K. Kapp, PhD,<sup>10</sup> Morénike Giwa Onaiwu, PhD(c),<sup>11</sup> Dora M. Raymaker, PhD,<sup>12</sup> John Elder Robison,<sup>13</sup> Catriona Stewart, PhD, OBE,<sup>14</sup> Ren Stone, BA,<sup>15</sup> Emma Whetsell,<sup>16</sup> Kevin Pelphrey, PhD,<sup>17</sup> and Lauren Kenworthy, PhD<sup>1</sup>

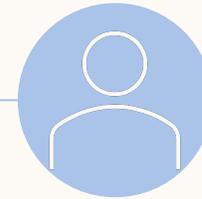


Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders (2019) 49:819–833  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3792-6>

ORIGINAL PAPER

## Development and Validation of the Camouflaging Autistic Traits Questionnaire (CAT-Q)

Laura Hull<sup>1,6</sup> · William Mandy<sup>1</sup> · Meng-Chuan Lai<sup>2,3,4</sup> · Simon Baron-Cohen<sup>3</sup> · Carrie Allison<sup>3</sup> · Paula Smith<sup>3</sup> · K. V. Petrides<sup>5</sup>



## PRACTICE

- Assessment methods
  - MIGDAS-2, CAT-Q, GQ-ASC, SAAT
- Self-report
- Strengths based
- Therapy goals

# **BREAKOUT ROOMS (5:15PM)**

Discussion questions emailed  
Please take notes!

Self-assign based on birthday  
month and focus

- Research
- Clinical
- Teaching/Administrative

# FOLLOW UP SURVEY

<https://bit.ly/autismlang2>



# The Neurodiversity Zones of Growth

