

Language(s) in Autism:

Self-Advocate and Guardian Reports on the Relationship between Language Use, Social Skills, Family Functioning, and Mental Health

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Theoretical Background

- Many parents of autistic children are advised to use only one language when interacting with their child to simplify language acquisition and communication (Kremer-Sadlik, 2005).
- Meanwhile, many countries have multilingual (social) environments and monolingualism is difficult to implement.
- Previous research suggests that advising parents to monolingualism cannot be scientifically supported and that multilingualism is possibly even beneficial for children (on the spectrum) (Siyambalapatiya et al., 2022; Uljarević et al., 2016).
- Especially regarding family interaction, parent mental health, and cultural transmission, some research urges that forcing immigrant parents to omit their mother tongue with their child might be detrimental (Ijalba, 2016; Papoudi et al., 2021).



Research Objective

Analyze how demographic aspects and language use relate to social skills, family functioning, mental health, and quality of life.

Online Study



Participants:

Autistic self-advocates, Parents of autistic children, Non-autistic self-advocates, Parents of non-autistic children



Socio-demographic data:

gender, age, nationality, SES, IQ, diagnosis and comorbidities,



Children's Social Skills Impairment Relevant for Autism:

the Social Responsiveness Scale™, Second Edition (SRS-2)



Language use & proficiency:

11 items on language proficiency, family language use, and beliefs about language use, and cultural identity



Family Interaction:

Die Familienbögen, 40 items for general family interaction and 28 items about their own behaviour, 4-point Likert scale: "not true at all" ... "exactly true"



Parental mental health & quality of life

the WHO-5 Well-being Index, the Major Depression Inventory (MDI), and the World Health Organization Quality of Life Brief Version (WHOQOL-BREF)



PARTICIPATE!



Implications

The results of this study aim to help guide decisions on language use in autism. We hope to consequently help facilitate access to childcare, therapies and activities, and social interactions in multilingual societies.

Ijalba, E. (2016). Hispanic immigrant mothers of young children with autism spectrum disorders: how do they understand and cope with autism? *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 25(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1044/2015_AJSLP-13-0017

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Uljarević, M., Katsos, N., Hudry, K., & Gibson, J. L. (2016). Practitioner Review: Multilingualism and neurodevelopmental disorders—an overview of recent research and discussion of clinical implications. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 57(11), 1205–1217. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12596>

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