

# TGIF

## THE NTU LINGUIST CHATROOM

### Diverging goals in the embodied interactions of minimally-speaking Autistic children

In this talk, I examine how minimally-speaking Autistic children co-produce multi-turn collaborative constructions with their parents. Parents of minimally-speaking autistic children often use routinized, multi-turn constructions as a pedagogical tool for intersubjective engagement and to expand upon their children's limited verbal output. These verbal, dialogic constructions are co-produced by parent and child with a specific interactional sequentiality and progress toward a specific outcome (e.g. "one... two... three... blow!"). Parents and their autistic children can be said to engage in dialogic resonance (Du Bois et al., 2014): a catalytic activation of affinities where a prior utterance is used as a resource for the construction of a new utterance. I ask the following research questions: 1) Can pre-established templates be identified structurally in co-constructed shared sequences? 2) What embodied resources do Autistic children use in these interactions? 3) When parent and child seem to diverge in their intended goals, what means does the child have for directing interaction in a way that favors his goal? The data comes from a corpus of video recordings of naturally-occurring family interactions involving three minimally-speaking children aged 6 and 8 years old, each with clinical diagnosis of Autism. I show how despite the verbal formulaicity and rigidity in these shared interactional sequences, Autistic children are able to use the structure of verbal constructions to produce novel embodied contributions and transform social interaction.

#### ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Rachel Chen is a PhD Candidate in Education at University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State University. Prior to her PhD, she completed a B.A. and M.A. at Nanyang Technological University, Linguistics & Multilingual Studies. In her work, Rachel uses video-based data to examine various Autistic phenomena (e.g. repetitive behavior, displays of affect) as they occur in everyday circumstances. Her most recent work addresses the role of rhythm and repetition as a mode of experience and as a modality for

joint engagement. Her work is influenced by Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics, and Embodied Cognition. Rachel's PhD is funded by the Humanities International PhD Scholarship.

#### WEBINAR ●

23 April 2021  
1:30pm - 2:30pm  
Held on Zoom

#### REGISTRATION ●

Register at  
[www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-rachel](http://www.tinyurl.com/tgif13-rachel)  
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