



Department of  
Linguistics and Modern Languages

語言學及現代語言系

# Can Autistic Children Match Their Typically Developing Peers? The Case of Focus Comprehension and Production

**Prof. Haoyan GE**  
**Hong Kong Metropolitan University**

**Date:** October 17, 2023 (Tuesday)  
**Time:** 4:30pm - 6:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)  
**Venue:** Lecture Theatre 4, Lee Shau Kee Building,  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



## Abstract

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by deficits in social interaction, along with a propensity to engage in repetitive behaviours or have restricted interests. Autistic children often exhibit language impairments and delays. In this talk, I will present how 5- to 9-year-old Cantonese-speaking autistic children use syntactic and prosodic cues to comprehend and produce an information structure (i.e., focus), compared to their typically developing peers matched in receptive vocabulary, nonverbal IQ, working memory and maternal education. I will further discuss the role of bilingual exposure and cognitive abilities in shaping autistic children's performance.

## Speaker

Dr. Emily Ge is currently Assistant Professor at Hong Kong Metropolitan University. She obtained her MPhil and PhD in Linguistics from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research focuses on language development in typical and atypical populations, including autistic children, bilingual children and second language learners. She has served on 10 research grants (three funded by RGC) as principal investigator or co-investigator. Her work has appeared in top-tier SSCI-indexed journals, including *Autism*, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Applied Psycholinguistics*, and *First Language*. Dr. Ge is also qualified to administer and code the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule Second Edition (ADOS-2) (a gold-standard instrument for diagnosing autism) for clinical and research reliability.

**All Are Welcome**

Enquiries

Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, CUHK.

Tel: (852)3943 7911 Fax: (852)2603 7755 E-mail: lin@cuhk.edu.hk

