BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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NAME: Girolamo, Teresa

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): TGirolamo

POSITION TITLE: Ph.D. Candidate

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE *(if applicable)*	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of Connecticut	Postdoctoral	05/2008	Cognitive Neuroscience of Communication
University of Kansas	Ph.D.	Present	Child Language
University of Kansas	M.A.	12/2016	Child Language
Pace University	M.S.	08/2013	Special Education
University of Washington	M.A.	06/2011	International Studies
Kenyon College	B.A.	05/2008	Chinese & Spanish

A. Personal Statement

The objective of the *Pathways* program is to provide intensive training to early career scientists aiming to become independent investigators. I have the training, expertise, and commitment to successfully apply the skills learned in *Pathways* to advance my academic research career. In the short term, I aim to better understand language in racial/ethnic minority young adults on the autism spectrum by developing online measures of linguistic processing and comparing those measures to standardized test outcomes. In the long term, I aim to become an independent investigator focusing on the language abilities of minorities on the autism spectrum across the life span. My research training has provided me with the foundation to achieve these goals. As a T32 trainee in the lab of Dr. Mabel Rice, my research focused on language impairment. I gained expertise in direct behavioral assessment and longitudinal research design in a research lab consistently funded by NIH for over 20 years. A secondary lab placement with Dr. Steven Warren, who directs an NIH-funded longitudinal study on fragile X syndrome, provided me with training on intervention design for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum; a manuscript on this project is in prep. Subsequent research with Dr. Utako Minai provided me with training on psycholinguistic approaches to investigate early language acquisition and resulted in a co-authored presentation (Covey et al., 2017). As PI on several university-funded grants, I developed a protocol for assessing the language abilities of minority young adults on the autism spectrum. During 2015-2018 I built a strong partnership with a community organization that involves over 700 potential participants whose families trust me to interact with their loved ones and to provide meaningful feedback and information. I look forward to continued research efforts with this group. Participation in *Pathways* will help me successfully transition from securing a NIH-funded postdoctoral traineeship to independently securing ECR R21 funding. Reaching this next step of research success will help me become an independent investigator studying language in autism, as I aim to secure a tenure-track faculty position at a research-intensive institution and to serve as a teacher and mentor to the next generation of academic researchers and clinicians.

1. Girolamo, T., & Warren, S. (2016). A review: Community-based interventions for adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention*, Philadelphia, PA

2. Covey, L., Girolamo, T., Siew, C., Weyers, I., Yang, X., Vogt-Woodin, A., Coughlin, C., & Minai, U. (2017). Examining the role of pragmatics during children's comprehension of only: An eye-tracking study. Poster presentation, *Boston University Conference on Language Development*, Boston, MA
3. Girolamo, T., & Campos, I. (2019). Language assessment practices for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention*, Orlando, FL

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment
2021-2023 NIH Postdoctoral Trainee (T32 DC017703), *University of Connecticut*
Primary Mentor: Dr. Inge-Marie Eigsti; *Secondary Mentor*: Dr. Richard Aslin
2018-present Graduate Research Assistant (R01 DC001803), *University of Kansas*
2018 Graduate Teaching Assistant: First Language Acquisition, *University of Kansas*
2017-2018 Graduate Research Assistant (R01 DC001803), *University of Kansas*
2014-2017 NIH Predoctoral Trainee (T32 DC000052), *University of Kansas*
Primary Mentor: Dr. Mabel L. Rice; *Secondary Mentor*: Dr. Steven F. Warren

Other Experience and Professional Memberships
2020-present Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, *Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders*
2021 Language & Learning Topic Committee, *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention*
2020 Chair of Equity & Inclusion Committee, COVID-19 Design Team for Jayhawk Cloud, *University of Kansas*
2019-present Advisory Board, *Asian & Pacific Islander Speech-Language-Hearing Caucus*
2019-present Chief Information Officer Student Advisory Council, *University of Kansas*
2019-present Phi Beta Delta – Alpha Pi Chapter, *University of Kansas*
2019-2020 Autism Topic Committee, *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention*
2019-2020 Graduate Student Advisory Board, *University of Kansas*
2019 Multiculturalism Topic Committee, *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention*
2017-present Student Member, *International Society for Autism Research*
2016-2019 Secretary, *Asian & Pacific Islander Speech-Language-Hearing Caucus*
2015 Minority Student Leadership Program, *University of Kansas*
2014-present Member, *National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association*
2014-present Graduate Student Organization in Communication Science & Disorders, *University of Kansas*

Honors
2020 Jayhawks Rising Student Award, *University of Kansas*
2020 Student/Trainee Workshop Award, *International Society for Autism Research*
2019 Tradition of Excellence Award, *University of Kansas Endowment Association*
2019 Student/Trainee Workshop Award, *International Society for Autism Research*
2019 Student Travel Award (R13 DC001677), *Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders*
2018 Graduate Scholarly Presentation Travel Fund Award, *University of Kansas*
2018 Student/Trainee Travel Award, *International Society for Autism Research*
2017 Graduate Student Travel Award, *University of Kansas*
2017 Research Mentoring-Pair Travel Award (R12 DC003383), *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*
2017 Student Travel Award (R13 DC001677), *Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders*
2016 Schiefelbusch Child Language Scholarship, *University of Kansas*
2016 Student Research Travel Award, *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*
2014-2017 NIH T32 Predoctoral Training Grant (T32 DC000052), University of Kansas

C. Contributions to Science

1. **Evaluation of Language Impairment:** My early career contributions focused on how speech-language pathologists and teachers evaluated and made decisions for children with specific language impairment (SLI). Previous research showed that children with SLI are under-identified, and it was unknown how educational stakeholders made clinical and educational decisions for these children. To address this gap, I

developed a novel survey on teacher educational decision-making practices for children with SLI; this work is currently under review. I also collaborated on the development of a parallel survey questionnaire on the clinical decision-making practices of speech-language pathologists for children with SLI. Results from my research provided new information on the decision-making practices of educational stakeholders for children with SLI and under-identification. These studies resulted in an oral presentation at a national conference, a co-author publication in a major journal, and a submitted manuscript.

    a. Selin, C.M., Rice, M.L., Girolamo, T., & Wang, C.J. (2019). Speech-language pathologists' clinical decision-making for children with specific language impairment. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, *50*(2), 283-207. PMID: 30969904

    b. Girolamo, T., Rice, M.L., Selin, C.M., & Wang, C.J. (2017). A national survey: Teacher identification of specific language impairment. Oral presentation, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention, Los Angeles, CA

Other Publications (currently under peer review)

    c. Girolamo, T., Rice, M.L., Selin, C.M., & Wang, C.J. (November 2020). Teacher educational decision-making for children with specific language impairment. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*

2. **Evaluation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Individuals:** I am deeply invested in improving assessments for typically developing culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with limited communicative competency. While some have claimed that because higher-order tasks are innately difficult, linguistic bias does not exist (e.g., academic writing is equally difficult for everyone), my work suggests that linguistic bias against culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, such as English learners, is present in academia. I co-authored two articles, one highlighting the need for empirical investigation of linguistic bias and one reporting results of a survey of how reviewers from communication science and disorder departments evaluate the writing of authors who have English as a first language (i.e., L1 English) versus authors who have English as an additional language (i.e., EAL). Survey respondents rated abstracts of equally good scientific quality lower when they were written in an EAL context. This study highlights the need for empirical evidence of bias in academia and has implications for understanding the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals with limited English competency. I expanded on this work by developing a study to investigate how faculty and Ph.D. candidates evaluate culturally and linguistically diverse applicants to master's programs in speech-language pathology using a holistic admissions framework. Results show that diverse applicants were rated lower than the peer from a dominant background. This work is currently under review, and a follow-up paper is in prep.

    a. Politzer-Ahles, S., Girolamo, T., & Ghali, S. (2020). Preliminary evidence of linguistic bias in academic reviewing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 47.* PMID: 33088213

    b. Politzer-Ahles, S., Holliday, J., Girolamo, T., Spychalska, M., & Berkson, K. (2016). Is linguistic justice a myth? A response to Hyland. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *34*, 3-8. PMID: 28701854

Other Publications (currently under peer review)

    c. Girolamo, T., Politzer-Ahles, S., & Ghali, S. (November 2020). Evaluation of culturally and linguistically diverse students to master's programs in speech-language pathology using criteria from a holistic admissions framework. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*

3. **Language in Minority Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum:** My primary research focus is on the assessment of language and grammatical abilities in racial/ethnic minority young adults on the autism spectrum. Previous studies have shown that outcomes in these young adults face significant challenges in post-secondary education and employment. possibly because language limits their ability to meet environmental demands. However, information on adulthood outcomes and appropriate assessment methods for this highly underrepresented group of individuals in research is limited. To address this knowledge gap, I recruited a group that is highly underrepresented in clinical research, namely Black and Latinx young adults on the autism spectrum. I invested three years building rapport with a community

organization, with the aim of conducting a longitudinal study. My work demonstrated the feasibility of using age-referenced assessments with this community and that while language was overall low, cognitive outcomes (i.e., NVIQ and working memory) were variable. A first-author publication from this study was a featured article in a newsletter for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, reaching over 200,000 members. This line of research was the focus of my Ph.D. thesis, for which I developed a remote assessment protocol during the Covid-19 outbreak through culturally responsive recruitment and retention efforts. This research provides fine-grained information on the language abilities and other life outcomes of minority individuals on the autism spectrum after they exit the educational system. Ultimately, this line of research will illuminate the "hot-spot" support needs and highlight potentially useful directions for community-based supports.

    a. Girolamo, T., & Rice, M.L. (2019). Lessons learned: Assessment practices for diverse adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Oral presentation, American Speech-Language Hearing Association, Orlando, FL

    b. Girolamo, T., Rice, M.L., & Warren, S.F. (2020). Assessment of language abilities in minority adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and extensive special education needs: A pilot study. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *29*(2), 804-818. PMID: 3232427

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

Ongoing Research Support

n/a

Completed Research Support

New Century Scholars Graduate Student Scholarship, *American*   09/2016
Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation
The project evaluated the state of community-based interventions for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum and developed an approach for building a community partnership to investigate language abilities in this population.
Role: PI

E. Additional Information: Extramural Research Support Currently Under Review

n/a

F. Additional Information: Extramural research Support Currently Not Funded

Health and Medical Research Fund, Hong Kong Government   12/01/2017
How Autism Spectrum Disorder affects auditory and linguistic processing in Cantonese speakers
The goal of this study is to determine auditory and linguistic processing in Cantonese-speaking children on the autism spectrum.
Role: Co-PI

G. Additional Information: Intramural Research Support

Doctoral Student Research Award, *University of Kansas*   11/01/2020-05/01/2021
Language abilities and other life outcomes in racial/ethnic minority young adults with autism
This project aims to compare language abilities to other outcomes of minority young adults with autism.
Role: PI

Child Language Doctoral Program Fund Award, *University of Kansas*   07/07/2020-05/01/2021
Language abilities in racial/ethnic minority young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder
This project aims to characterize the language abilities of minorities with autism using a comprehensive protocol of standardized tests.

Role: PI

Graduate Studies Research Support Award, *University of Kansas*   05/15/2018-04/30/2019
Language assessment in racial/ethnic minority adolescents and young adults with autism
This project tested the efficacy of language assessment for minority adolescents and young adults with autism.
Role: PI

Child Language Doctoral Program Fund Award, *University of Kansas*   05/15/2017-06/14/2018
Recruitment of racial/ethnic minority adolescents and young adults with autism in research
This project developed an approach for recruiting minorities with autism in research.
Role: PI

To the Pathways Selection Committee,

Thank you for considering my application. I am a Ph.D. candidate in Child Language at the University of Kansas and anticipate graduating in Spring 2021. My objective is to become an independent, externally funded investigator focusing on the language abilities in racial and ethnic minorities on the autism spectrum across the life span.

To do this, I use behavioral methods. While I primarily study the language abilities of minority young adults on the autism spectrum, other areas informing this work are the evaluation of children with language impairment and the evaluation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. My research has been presented at the Symposium for Research in Child Language Disorders, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention, and the International Society for Autism Research Annual Meeting. I have one published first-author paper, which was a featured article in *ASHA Now*, three co-authored papers, two first-author papers under review, and two first-author papers in preparation.

My long-term career goal is to be a tenured faculty member at a research-intensive institution. As a NIH T32 pre-doctoral trainee in Language Impairments and Minority Student Leadership Program alumna, I received outstanding mentorship through research training and culturally responsive leadership experiences. Now, I seek such mentorship for the next stage of my career. In Spring 2021, I will begin an NIH T32 postdoctoral traineeship in the Cognitive Neuroscience of Communication. During this time, I aim to obtain a NIDCD ECR R21 and to develop my research into a research program through a five-year plan. These steps will help me become a competitive applicant for a faculty position. I know that *Pathways* will provide me with the skills to achieve these goals. Thank you again for your consideration.

Best,

Teresa Girolamo, M.S.

My research examines the language abilities of individuals with limited communicative competency, focusing on language in autism. Little is known about the language abilities of racial/ethnic minority (hereafter, minority) young adults on the autism spectrum (Durkin et al., 2015), despite the importance of language abilities in predicting the transition from school to adulthood (Johnson et al., 2010; Law et al., 2009) and of child language in autism in predicting later outcomes (Howlin et al., 2004, 2013). Further, individuals on the autism spectrum face challenges in young adulthood, with most experiencing unemployment and a failure to enroll in postsecondary education (Shattuck et al., 2012). Thus, this knowledge gap has both clinical and real-world implications. To address this gap, I study the language abilities of minority young adults on the autism spectrum using findings from linguistics and behavioral methods. Other areas of research which have informed this work include the evaluation of individuals with language impairment (LI) and of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. My long-term career goal is to be an independent investigator who develops longitudinal knowledge of language in minorities on the autism spectrum across the life span.

As a T32 predoctoral trainee in LI, my early career contributions explored the evaluation of individuals with LI. Epidemiological research reveals that children with LI are largely under-identified (Tomblin et al., 1997) and unlikely to receive services (Zhang & Tomblin, 2000). I expanded upon previous work by developing a survey to examine how teachers, who are primarily responsible for meeting student needs, evaluate children with LI. Findings showed that teachers saw language as necessary for success in the classroom for children with specific LI (SLI) and also saw meeting their needs as extra effort on their part (Girolamo et al., 2017, under review). I collaborated on a parallel survey exploring speech-language pathologists' clinical decision-making for children with SLI, and found that, in the absence of workplace constraints,

they recommended services for children with SLI at higher than reported rates (Selin et al.,

2019). Overall, this research highlighted the need to better understand the evaluation of

individuals with limited communicative competency.

During my training, I expanded my scope of research after receiving my Master's in

Child Language in 2016 and explored the evaluation of culturally and linguistically diverse

(CLD) individuals in academia. CLD individuals are underrepresented in communication science

and disorders (CSD; ASHA, 2019). In addition, some have claimed that because higher-order

tasks like academic writing are difficult for all, linguistic bias against those less proficient in

international academic English does not exist. I collaborated on two articles, one highlighting the

need for empirical investigation of linguistic bias (Politzer-Ahles et al., 2016) and one exploring

how faculty and Ph.D. students in CSD evaluated conference abstracts that varied along one

parameter: whether they were written in native English (i.e., L1) or English as an additional

language (EAL). Results showed that EAL abstracts were rated lower, despite being of equally

strong scientific quality (Politzer-Ahles et al., 2020). In a current study, I build upon this work

and extend it to how faculty and Ph.D. students evaluate culturally and linguistically diverse

individuals in CSD using holistic admissions criteria. Respondents rated CLD applicants lower

than a student from a dominant background (Girolamo et al., under review). Altogether, these

studies provide insight on potential issues in the evaluation of CLD individuals.

While working on the research above, I also developed my primary line of research,

which explores the language abilities of minority young adults on the autism spectrum. I spent

three years building trust and rapport with a community organization serving minorities on the

autism spectrum and developed a community-based approach to engage minority young adults

on the autism spectrum in research (Lewis & Oyserman, 2016). During this time, I worked with

Dr. Steven F. Warren, an international expert on fragile X syndrome and autism. I developed a project evaluating the state of community-based intervention research for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum (Girolamo & Warren, in prep). I conducted a pilot study on the language abilities of minority young adults on the autism spectrum who have below typical language abilities yet are not minimally verbal, as assessed by lexical measures. I explored the feasibility of assessment using standardized tests, which previously have been shown to assess the same constructs as non-standardized measures (Condouris et al., 2003). Results showed that while most participants performed at floor on an omnibus language test, grammatical outcomes were more variable (Girolamo et al., 2020). Further, retention rates were high. I pivoted my research online during the Covid-19 outbreak and collected a third timepoint of assessment using an expanded protocol. While data collection is still ongoing, I look forward to working with the community for longitudinal research. Ultimately, findings from this research may inform effective assessment methods and strategies for engaging minorities in research, as well as the developmental trajectories of language in autism across the life span.

I am in the final year of my Ph.D. and will begin a T32 postdoctoral traineeship in the Cognitive Neuroscience of Communication in Spring 2021. Participating in *Pathways* will be beneficial for me at this stage. During my postdoctoral training, I aim to obtain extramural funding, namely a NIDCD ECR R21, and to build out a research program through development of a five-year strategic plan. To work toward these aims, I will use my postdoctoral training to develop online probes of linguistic processing to explore language in minority young adults on the autism spectrum. Achieving these goals will make me a competitive applicant for a tenure-track faculty position at a research-intensive institution. I know that *Pathways* will provide me with the mentorship, knowledge, and skills to succeed my short-term and long-term goals.

References

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