

Second International Workshop on Multimodal Language Acquisition

23 June 2021 – Virtual Event (CET)

Program

8:25	8:30	Welcome	
8:30	9:00	Xiaolong Lu & Jue Wang	The processing of chunks in Mandarin Chinese: A psycholinguistic approach
9:00	9:30	Stephen Matthews, Costanza Navarretta, Patrizia Paggio, Alice Ping Ping Tse & Virginia Yip	Towards the construction of multimodal bilingual child language acquisition corpora
9:30	9:45	Break	
9:45	10:15	Jonathan Him Nok Lee, Regine Yee King Lai, Stephen Matthews, & Virginia Yip	What factors contribute to the bilingual prosody produced by Cantonese-English bilingual children?
10:15	11:00	Keynote: Prof. Anna Esposito	How Italian adults and children synchronize pauses in speech and gestures
11:00	11:15	Break	
11:15	12:00	Keynote: Prof. Marianne Gullberg	Gesture analysis promotes a non-deficit view of semantic development in first and second language acquisition
12:00	13:00	Lunch	
13:00	13:30	Ladina Brugger & Britta Juska-Bacher	What inferencing strategies do children use when exposed to unknown words while reading?
13:30	14:00	Eirini Ploumidi	The acquisition of [Obstruent + Sonorant] clusters: New evidence from child Greek
14:00	14:05	Conclusion	

How Italian adults and children synchronize pauses in speech and gestures

Anna Esposito

Università della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Dept of Psychology, and IIASS,
Viale Ellittico 34, 81100 Caserta, Italy

anna.esposito@unicampania.it; iiass.annaesp@tin.it

Abstract:

Previous research works proved the existence of a synchronization among pauses expressed through speech and gestures.

When and how does this synchrony develop during child language acquisition?

The present work aims to answer the above questions reporting on the analysis of narrations produced by three differently aged groups of Italian children (9, 5, and 3 year olds) and provides measurements of the amount of “expressive gestures”, speech, and gestures pauses, in the three different groups, as a function of the word rates and narration durations.

Here “expressive gestures” are defined as “*every body movement (including hands, harms, head, and posture) which accompanied the subject interaction with the interlocutor and was interpreted by the latter as a communicative and/or expressive intention*”

Gesture analysis promotes a non-deficit view of semantic development in first and second language acquisition

Marianne Gullberg,

Lund University, Sweden

marianne.gullberg@ling.lu.se

Abstract:

Studies of both first (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition have largely focused on the acquisition of form over meaning. Although comprehension studies indicate that language learners’ understanding is not always adult- or target-like, surprisingly little is known about the nature of the differences once forms are used in production. In this talk I will highlight what gestures can contribute to our understanding of what forms in use actually mean to language learners and of the development of linguistic meaning. Taking the semantic domain of caused motion and placement as a starting point (e.g., *put a cup on a table*), I first demonstrate robust crosslinguistic differences in adult native speakers’ speech and gestures, highlighting that gestures about manual actions are modulated by language and do not necessarily imitate practical actions. Second, I show that gestures change in parallel with developing verb meaning in children and in adult L2 learners, providing details about learners’ current semantic representations. The studies support the notion that speech and gesture form an integrated system, partly decoupled from practical actions, where gestures can shed light on the process of acquisition by revealing semantic shifts. Crossmodal acquisition data have theoretical implications for the view of meaning in acquisition studies, for simplistic views of gestures as compensatory devices, and for models of speech-gesture production and coordination.