



The gesture-sign interface in language acquisition

14h15-15h15 Marion Blondel (Université Paris 8/CNRS), Dominique Boutet (Université Paris 8/CNRS), Fanny Limousin (Georgetown University), Pauline Beaupoil & Aliyah Morgenstern (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3)
Hearing and Deaf children's gestures and signs in negative constructions

The study of the expression of negation in longitudinal data of adult-child conversations is a privileged locus to combine multimodal analyses of gesture with prosody, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. First negative constructions seem to take over from early gestures of rejection and avoidance, but tracing the transitions between actions and gestures, and between gestures and signed or vocal expressions in very young children is quite complex. In this study, we address the expression of negation in four longitudinal studies including 1) Madeleine, a hearing child in multimodal French interactions, 2) Ellie, a hearing child in multimodal English interactions; 3) Charlotte, a deaf child of deaf parents in monomodal LSF interactions, 4) Ilana, a child with one deaf, one hearing parent in bimodal bilingual (French-LSF) interactions. All the negative utterances including French, English or LSF, symbolic gestures and actions, were coded and analyzed between 12 and 36 months for the four children. We draw the four pathways to illustrate how each child combines symbolic categories and visual/aural modalities in successive steps with respect to her own linguistic environment. We focus on palms-up and index-wave gestures and underline systematic properties at the junction between coverbal gestures and signs. To do so, we show a) their contrastive physiological patterns, b) the common properties of each pattern through the four corpora, c) their semantic and pragmatic value for the expression of negation.

15h15-16h15 Gary Morgan (City University London)
Comparing co-speech gestures and sign languages in children and adults

How do children learn the rules of a signed language from different types of input?
What is the function of gesture in sign language development?
There are a lot of similarities between gestures and signs but also important differences. By studying the overlap between these two visual-manual systems we can explore language acquisition and language evolution. We compared child signers with deaf and hearing parents and document how early gestures and signs become organised into a language system.

16h30-17h30 Discussion lead by Michèle Guidetti (Université Toulouse 2-Le Mirail), Marion Blondel (Université Paris 8/CNRS), Jean-Marc Colletta (Université Stendhal - Grenoble 3) and Aliyah Morgenstern (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3) with our guests and the audience



Local organizers:
Marion Blondel, Michèle Guidetti, Aliyah Morgenstern

The workshop is free and open to all but please contact Aliyah.Morgenstern@univ-paris3.fr for us to organize lunch on Saturday and coffee breaks



Acquisition • Dysfonctionnements • Langues • Oral • Cognition



INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP



The gesture-sign interface in language acquisition

L'interface geste-signe en acquisition du langage

April 4th and 5th 2014

Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3

petit et grand amphithéâtres
5, rue de l'École de Médecine, 75006 Paris

Friday April 4th 2014

from 14h to 17h30 - Small amphitheater

Special event for junior researchers



L'interprétation en LSF sera assurée et financée par la Cellule Handicap de l'Université Paris 8

Pauline Beaupoil and Camille Debras (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3)

Forms and functions of shrugging in interaction: a comparison between children and adults

In this paper comparing children and adults' shrugging postures, our objective is two-fold. First, we want to suggest that certain gestures (such as hand and/or forearm supination, shoulder lifts or head tilts) contribute to the meaning of a multimodal utterance not so much directly as indirectly, that is, insofar as they index a shrugging posture. Second, we show that shrugging postures become part of children's semiotic repertoires quite early (around 18 months) and we identify what semantic and pragmatic functions children express with such postures compared with adults.

Stéphanie Caët (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3) and Fanny Lismousin (Georgetown University)

From gesture to word and from gesture to sign: reference to you and me in the requests of a hearing speaking child and a deaf signing child

In this presentation, we report observations on the development of reference to self and other in the early productions of Madeleine (a French-speaking child) and Charlotte (a deaf signing child acquiring French Sign Language), through the examination of requests. Because requests emerge very early in the multimodal productions of both speaking and signing children and because they quickly trigger verbalisation of the self as the source of desires or the interlocutor as the agent who can fulfil them, these speech acts therefore constitute an ideal locus of investigation of personal reference in the transition from gesture to word and from gesture to sign.

Isabelle Estève (Université Stendhal-Grenoble 3)
The Gesture-Sign dynamics in deaf children

We consider the later development of deaf children's skills and shift the focus away from specific language skills in order to integrate a multimodal perspective. Given the diversity of deaf children's sociolinguistic background, their language skills are still developing in primary school. Our aim is to take into account all symbolic skills, as broadly as possible, whether they are systematized in a linguistic form or not.

In this presentation, we specifically focus on the dynamics between gestures and signs, and pay particular attention to what we propose to call "transitional skills" - symbolization skills which are not yet systematized according to a particular Sign Language. We will focus more specifically on the narrative productions of deaf children who are not formally exposed to a sign language, in various school environments. We will highlight how the symbolic gestural skills of these children can be described in terms of a contrasted developmental continuum between gesture and sign. Our study gives us tools to reconsider how verbal/non verbal dynamics could be integrated more efficiently in language assessment tests.

Elise Leroy (Université Toulouse 2 Le Mirail)

Didactique de la LSF, langue 1 ou comment se définit la pédagogie sourde dans l'enseignement de la LSF au niveau du primaire face à des élèves sourds.

La Langue des Signes Française (LSF) est aujourd'hui reconnue comme une langue enseignée à part entière. Mais quelle est cette langue ? Qui sont ces élèves sourds ? Et qu'en est-il de cet enseignement ? Nous avons choisi d'étudier la pédagogie des enseignants sourds, lors des cours de LSF - cycle 2 et 3 - au sein de classes où la langue des signes est langue d'enseignement et langue enseignée. Des classes (extra)ordinaires encore trop rares en France. Dans un contexte institutionnel qui reste problématique, nous considérons la LSF comme une création linguistique iconique mettant en avant la pertinence de la surdité. Au travers de stratégies empiriques et d'attitudes qui lui sont propres, cet enseignant de LSF permet à ces élèves sourds de se développer linguistiquement et cognitivement comme tout élève. Pourtant quelques obstacles et paradoxes persistent encore afin que soient reconnues pleinement ces classes singulières et ces enseignants au sein d'un système social et éducatif quelque peu rigide.

Camille Schoder (Université Paris 8/CNRS)

Contraintes typologiques dans l'expression du mouvement en acquisition L1 de la Langue des Signes Française (LSF)

Le débat sur l'incidence des contraintes typologiques sur le parcours d'acquisition a fait émerger un nombre croissant de travaux sur l'acquisition du langage, et plus spécifiquement sur l'expression du mouvement, essentiellement en langue vocale. En s'appuyant sur une approche typologique (modèle sémiologique, Cuxac 2000, Cuxac & Sallandre 2007) qui tient compte du rôle fondamental de l'iconicité dans les langues des signes, l'étude présentée ici examine l'impact de la modalité visuo-gestuelle de ces langues sur la représentation du mouvement et sur son développement. Nous nous interrogeons sur les moyens linguistiques utilisés par les enfants sourds, selon les âges, pour exprimer en langue des signes française (LSF) les procès de déplacement. L'analyse porte plus particulièrement sur la façon dont les composantes sémantiques de l'espace (trajectoire, manière) sont réparties dans le discours de huit locuteurs sourds (deux adultes, six enfants de parents sourds âgés de 5, 8 et 10 ans, à raison de deux sujets par âge). Nos données ont été recueillies dans une tâche de production, à partir d'animations mettant en scène des déplacements volontaires, développée dans le cadre de recherches translinguistiques sur des langues vocales (Hickmann 2010 ; Hickmann, Taranne & Bonnet 2009). Les résultats de cette étude témoignent, à tous les âges, de l'exploitation massive de structures fortement iconiques pour exprimer un déplacement. Par ailleurs, par l'exploitation de la simultanéité des paramètres et la succession de ces structures, les productions en LSF véhiculent une densité sémantique spatiale forte (i.e. nombre de composantes exprimées). Selon les âges, nous relevons cependant certaines variations au niveau du degré de spécificité des composantes spatiales exprimées.

Discussions will be lead by : **Susan Goldin-Meadow** (The University of Chicago), **Gary Morgan** (City University London), **Asli Özyürek** (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics), **Virginia Volterra** (CNR Rome)

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Saturday April 5th 2014

from 9h30 to 17h30 – Grand amphitheater



L'interprétation en LSF sera assurée et financée par le GDR Adyloc

9h30-10h30 Susan Goldin-Meadow (The University of Chicago)

From homesign to sign language: Creating language in the manual modality

Imagine a child who has never seen or heard any language at all. Would such a child be able to invent a language on her own? Despite what one might guess, the answer to this question is "yes". I describe congenitally deaf children who cannot learn the spoken language that surrounds them, and have not yet been exposed to sign language, either by their hearing parents or their oral schools. Nevertheless the children use their hands to communicate—they gesture—and those gestures, called homesigns, take on many of the forms and functions of language. I first describe the properties of language that we find in homesign. I next consider properties of language that homesigners can and cannot develop by comparing their linguistic systems to those developed by deaf individuals in Nicaragua. Forty years ago large numbers of homesigners were brought together for the first time and Nicaraguan Sign Language (NSL) was born; NSL continues to develop as new waves of children enter the community and learn to sign from older peers. I end by taking an experimental approach to when gesture does and does not take on linguistic properties. I examine hearing individuals asked not to speak and instead communicate using only their hands. Although these silent gesturers can create some properties of language on the spot, they do not create all of the properties that homesigners develop over time.

10h30-11h30 Asli Özyürek (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics)

Multiple routes from cospeech gestures to signs

Gestures accompanying speech and signs used in sign languages share the same modality of expression. Visual modality, shared by both modes of communication, affords similar representations objects and events; motivated (iconic) form- meaning mappings conveyed through the hands, body and the space around the singers/speakers. In this talk, drawing on direct comparisons between cospeech gestures and signs used in established, emerging sign languages as well as in homesigns, used by children and adults, I will discuss to what extent the shared visual modality accounts for similarities between the two and where differences arise as well as multiple influences that might account for the differences. In doing so I will emphasize the necessity to take crosslinguistic differences in cospeech gestures and signs into account to arrive at general conclusions about the "natural" affordances of the visual modality and how it manifests itself in different modes of communication.

Coffee break

11h45-12h45 Virginia Volterra (CNR Rome)

New developmental evidence for a continuity from action/gesture to sign and word

I will review previous work conducted by several researchers in favor of a continuity from action to gesture (Capirci et al., 2005), from action/gesture to word (Caselli et al., 2010; Stefanini et al., 2009) and from gesture to sign (Capirci & Volterra, 2008; Pettenati et al., 2010; Schembri et al. 2005). In particular, more recent research data comparing the form of representational gestures and/or signs produced by hearing speaking and deaf signing children, show that some motor characteristics found in the production of hearing toddlers' gestures are similar to those described for early signs. Gestures and signs are similarly linked to motor actions, suggesting a common developmental stage influenced by the communicative input the children are exposed to which is similar despite the fact that deaf participants are also exposed to a sign language input (Iverson et al. 2008; Brentari et al. in press).

How do we categorize the forms that occur in spoken communication in the 'gestural' domain, knowing that we attribute the status of linguistic items to the same forms when they occur within sign languages (Pizzuto, 2007)? Where and when are we to draw a boundary between what is 'linguistic' and what is not?

Visible bodily actions (Kendon, 2004) as used by speakers have rarely been considered part of their language, and included in linguistic descriptions. However, co-verbal gestures have compositional structure and semantic significance. On the other hand, highly iconic structures produced in sign language, often considered as 'non-linguistic', are instead part of the structure of sign language (Cuxac & Pizzuto, 2010).

By studying the visible actions of speakers and signers in "a semiotically comparative fashion" (Kendon, 2012), we will be able to consider the dichotomies between "sign" and 'gesture' as over-simplified, in order to cease to categorize an item as 'linguistic' or not, and to further develop an approach to 'language' as a form of action.

Buffet lunch

