

# *Linguistic and Non-linguistic Signs in Adult-child Daily Interaction*

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This presentation will focus on the continuum between “symbolic” or “linguistic”(?) and “non-symbolic” / “non linguistic” communication and the role of gestures in child language development. The children we study in our research projects, whatever the language or languages that surround them, be they hearing or deaf, use all the resources provided by their bodies to express themselves in an environment that is favorable to language acquisition. They constantly use the plurisemiotic resources at their disposal modeled in the input and progressively enrich the complexity of their productions.

Gestures seem to be preferred in the early stages of language acquisition with some possible reasons being their relative articulatory and cognitive simplicity and the sensorimotor link they provide between action, word and object. Infants’ general production of gestures has indeed been studied as a prerequisite to construct “pre-linguistic” concepts, as a pathway into the symbolic function of language or a bridge between language and embodiment. Gestures are viewed as representational structures, constructed through imitation of actions that are enacted overtly and can be shared with others.

The issues discussed in this presentation on multimodal language acquisition are the transition from gesture to word/sign, the linguistic and multimodal reorganization during language development and whether gestures give access to symbolic meaning or whether access to symbolic meaning is mostly linked to cognitive maturity.