

## Signed and spoken language skills in a bimodal bilingual child who uses a cochlear implant

Mittwoch,  
04.03.2020  
15:15–15:45  
ESA1 HG HS B

**Pasquale Rinaldi, Cristiana Sanalidro, Maria Cristina Caselli**

*National Research Council – Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies, Rome*

pasquale.rinaldi@istc.cnr.it, cristiana.sanalidro@istc.cnr.it, cristina.caselli@istc.cnr.it

### AG 2

In Italy, as in others countries, parents of deaf children are often warned to avoid exposing the child to sign language, considered as a factor negatively affecting spoken language mastering. However, up to now, no clear evidence is available about the role of sign language in promoting or impairing spoken and written linguistic skills of children with cochlear implants -CI (Fitzpatrick et al. 2016). In the present study, we report new longitudinal data on a deaf child with hearing parents exposed to Italian Sign Language (LIS) from 5 months of age, in educational contexts (kindergarten/school) where bimodal bilingual education programs were implemented. The child received a CI at 24 months. Structured tests have been used to assess child language development in spoken Italian and LIS. Results from 4 to 7 years of age showed that the child achieved lexical and grammar skills in Italian not different from those of hearing peers and, in some cases, higher than those of children with CIs exposed only to spoken language. Also in LIS, the child showed a high proficiency in both comprehension and production tests, also mastering aspects considered very complex in LIS (e.g., non-manual components) (Rinaldi, Caselli, Luciola, Lamano & Volterra 2018). After an initial dominance of LIS, the child differentiated more effectively between the two languages and their contexts of use. Code-blend productions continued to be used when the difficulty of the test used increased. Our findings provide evidence that early exposure to sign language could promote the construction of conceptual representations and linguistic and communicative skills (Davidson, Lillo-Martin & Chen Pichler 2014; Rinaldi & Caselli 2014).

**References:** Davidson, K., Lillo-Martin, D. & D. Chen Pichler (2014). Spoken English language development among native signing children with cochlear implants. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 19(2), 238–250. Fitzpatrick, E.M., Hamel, C., Stevens, A., Pratt, M., Moher, D., Doucet, S.P., Neuss, D., Bernstein, A. & E. N (2016). Sign language and spoken language for children with hearing loss: A systematic review. *Pediatrics* 137(1): e20151974. Rinaldi, P. & M.C. Caselli (2014). Language development in a bimodal bilingual child with cochlear implant: A longitudinal study. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 17, 798–809. Rinaldi P., Caselli M.C., Luciola T., Lamano L. & V. Volterra (2018). Sign language skills assessed through a sentence reproduction task. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 23(4), 408–421.