

BIMODAL BILINGUALISM: WHEN THE KEYS TO THE MOTHER TONGUE ARE ON HER HANDS



Prof. Evelyne Mercure

Associate Professor, Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, Goldsmiths, University of London

Evelyne Mercure is a senior lecturer (associate professor) in the department of psychology at Goldsmiths, University of London in the United Kingdom. She is interested in infant neurocognitive development and the role of early communicative experience in shaping this process. She uses brain imaging, eye-tracking and behavioural methods to clarify links between brain and cognitive development in infancy.

15 Oct. 2024 (EDT, GMT-4)

9:00 am

Zoom

Registration link:
(or scan the QR code):

<https://forms.gle/4kHCUgwG8EpBF1mL7>



ABSTRACT

My main research interest is in understanding how human neurocognitive development is influenced by social and language experiences. Hearing children of deaf parents (also known as CODAs) are an interesting population to study experience-dependent plasticity because of their unique communicative experiences. Indeed, they are likely to be exposed to both a signed language (e.g., American Sign Language) and a spoken language (e.g., English), leading to the emergence of a special case of multilingualism: bimodal bilingualism. Despite traditionally limited and often inconsistent data on this population, it is often believed that they are at risk of language learning difficulties. This presentation will discuss recent data comparing brain activation patterns and language acquisition profiles in bimodal bilinguals from infancy to school-age years in comparison to children acquiring two spoken languages from birth (unimodal bilinguals) and children acquiring a single language (monolinguals). Results suggest that language experience impacts the development of the brain network for language from the first few months of life. They also suggest successful language acquisition in bimodal bilinguals from infancy to school-age years, with areas of strengths compared to children of hearing parents. Using bimodal bilingualism as an example, this presentation will illustrate how the emergence of linguistic expertise is an adaptive process dependent on the child's environment and experience.

For this lecture of the **Emergentism, Ecosystem, and Expertise Talk Series**, the Discussants will be the series organizers: Catherine Caldwell-Harris, Arturo Hernandez, Ping Li, and Brian Macwhinney

Information on upcoming talks in this series can be found at https://psyling.talkbank.org/E*3.