



Department of
Linguistics and Modern Languages

語言學及現代語言系

Distinguished Lecture Series – Lecture 3

Bimodal Bilinguals: One Grammar Or Two?



Prof. Caterina Donati
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Date: March 13, 2024 (Wednesday)

Time: 10:30am - 12:00noon (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)

Venue: Lecture Theatre 3, Lee Shau Kee Building,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:

Bimodal bilinguals master languages in two modalities, spoken and signed, and can use them simultaneously due to the independence of the articulators. This behaviour, named code-blending, is one of the hallmarks of bimodal bilingualism, and I shall present and discuss some typical blended productions by children and adults bimodal bilinguals. I shall in particular compare two available theories about these productions, invoking either the activation of one single mixed derivation (*The language synthesis model*, Lillo Martin et al. 2012) or the simultaneous activation of two syntactic derivations (Donati & Branchini 2016). Turning to comprehension, I will present a new study (Giustolisi et al. 2024) involving a lexical task and a truth value task with LIS/Italian and LSF/French bimodal bilinguals. Results show that blended *words* are not cognitively costly and that blending facilitates lexical access. On the other hand blended utterances for languages with incongruent word order like LIS/Italian are processed slower than monolingual utterances, while no difference is found when the word orders are congruent (LSF/French). I shall discuss these findings in light of the debate on syntactic structure derivation in bimodal bilinguals.

Speaker:

Caterina Donati is full professor at the University Paris Cité. She works on syntactic theory and sign language linguistics, and has written, among other books, *(Re)labeling* (MIT Press, 2015, with C. Cecchetto) *SignGram Blueprint, A Guide to Sign Language Grammar Writing* (2019, De Gruyter, with J. Quer, et al.), and *Generative Grammar: Ideas, history and Models of analysis* (in press, Cambridge University Press, with G. Graffi). She is the author of some 50 articles on descriptive, theoretical and experimental syntax published in important journals and venues (*Linguistic Inquiry*, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, *Glossa*, *Syntax*, *The linguistic review*, *Journal of Memory and Language*, *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* etc).

All Are Welcome

Enquiries

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