The Semiological Model for Sign Language: focus on deixis, eye gaze and acquisition
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In this talk, we present an overview of the Semiological Model, developed for the linguistic description of sign language, French Sign Language (LSF) in particular (Cuxac 1999, 2000, Fusellier 2006, Cuxac & Sallandre 2007, Garcia 2010, Cuxac & Antinoro Pizzuto 2010, Garcia & Sallandre 2014). The talk is divided into three parts: a. presenting the main theoretical lines of this model, followed by b. a closer look at sign language deixis, and at c. the acquisition of sign language and eye gaze.

According to this approach, Sign Language involves an optimal exploitation of the visuo-gestural modality, and therefore enables two linguistic modes of meaning production, which are related to three coexisting forms of iconicity (imagistic, degenerated and diagrammatic). The first mode—*telling by showing*—is encoded by transfer units ("productive signs"), generated by Highly Iconic Structures (HIS). We distinguish three main structures: transfers of form and size, situational transfers ("classifier predicates") and personal transfers ("constructed actions" and "constructed dialogues", Winston 1995, Cormier et al 2015). The second mode—*telling without showing*—concerns the conventional lexical signs and the pointing system.

In a second part, we focus on the deixis system. In Sign Language, deictic-anaphoric reference is produced via lexical signs, pointings, or transfers. These transfers exhibit iconic features and are marked by specific non-manual patterns (such as eye-gaze), which distinguish them from lexical signs. Our crosslinguistic analysis of nine Sign Languages shows that signers produced a wide range of transfers, averaging at 60% of the units produced in discourse. Animate entities were typically introduced by a lexical sign, but re-introduce through personal transfer and/or pointing. Thus, the strategy of embodiment by personal transfers seems to be very productive in these languages (Pizzuto et al 2008, Sallandre et al 2016).

In the last part of our talk, we focus on LSF acquisition by Deaf children, and particularly on the importance of eye-gaze patterns in Deaf education (L'Huillier 2009, L'Huillier & Sallandre 2015). This study concerns the visual "listening" attention, its causes, its evolution and the pedagogical methods to enhance its development. In the corpus data, we also observe the development of personal transfers and HIS structures in general, linking with eye gaze patterns. These findings open important didactic perspectives for the teaching of LSF and fruitful lines of research on the cognitive ergonomics of Deaf children learning their language.