

Exploring word learning difficulties in minimally-verbal children with autism spectrum disorder

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Tuesday 4th April, 11am – 12.30
University Place room 5.206, University of Manchester

ALL WELCOME

Abstract

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Word learning is a vital aspect of children's language development. However, many children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have enormous difficulty learning words and approximately 30% are minimally-verbal at 9 years of age. To identify the source (or sources) of their difficulties, it is necessary to explore word learning as a multi-stage sequence that includes: (a) identification of a word's intended meaning, (b) retention of the word-referent pairing, and (c) appropriate extension of the word to new category members. It is also important to explore word learning in different contexts. Many minimally-verbal children with ASD are trained to communicate using pictures, and are often taught the names of 3-D objects via labelling their 2-D counterparts. However, recent evidence suggests that many of these children have an atypical understanding of how words, pictures, and objects inter-relate.

In the first part of this seminar I will introduce a new project that is currently investigating word learning in children with ASD. Across a series of experiments, we are examining the holistic word learning process by measuring word-referent pairing (by fast mapping and cross situational mapping), retention, and generalisation. In the second part I will discuss recent research focusing on how children with ASD map words to pictures, and extend to real objects.

Directions

University Place is on Oxford Road, building 37 on the [Campus Map](#).

Further information

For further information about this seminar, please contact michaeline.k.glover@manchester.ac.uk or about LuCiD, please contact helen.allwood@manchester.ac.uk