In spoken languages, individuals with specific impairments to a language component called the Phonological Output Buffer (POB) make phonological errors in production, repetition, and reading aloud of morphologically-simple words and nonwords, as well as stems of morphologically-complex words, whereas they make whole-unit errors (i.e., substitutions, omissions, and insertions of whole-units from the same category) with number words, function words, and morphological affixes (Dotan & Friedmann, 2015). Since phonology seems at first glance to be very different between spoken languages and sign languages, it is interesting to test whether the same type of phonological impairment may be present in signers as well.

I will present the first examination of how POB impairments are expressed in deaf native signers of Israeli Sign Language (ISL), by first addressing phonology of sign languages, as well as unique morphological structures of sign languages – such as classifier constructions, morphological facial expressions, and agreement verbs, and will show that despite the different modality, language impairments are expressed similarly in spoken languages and in sign languages.

The talk will be held online via Zoom.

12.03.20 – Cancelled due to COVID-19

Prediction has been proposed to be a fundamental aspect of cognition. Some have proposed that language acquisition also happens through prediction (e.g., Chang, Dell, & Bock, 2006). Nevertheless, there is currently little direct evidence that children generate linguistic predictions rapidly enough to allow for learning through prediction, and no evidence that these expectations can guide the learning of novel linguistic information. I will present a series of studies conducted with children, which show that they do not only update their predictions about what speakers will say next, but also use their adapted predictions to learn novel information. I will also show my results from an experiment with infants,
and discuss what these might tell us about the developmental time course of prediction in language acquisition.