

What sign production can tell us about speech production

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A domain where sign language research is particularly informative for understanding the neurobiology of human language is the integration of production and comprehension systems because the perception-production interface differs by language modality. For speech, mostly unseen articulators give rise to an acoustic signal that is perceived by both the speaker and comprehender, whereas for sign the articulators are fully observable, but the visual signal is only perceived by the comprehender (signers do not watch their hands while signing). These modality differences have implications for theories of perceptual-motor integration during language production (i.e., the nature and role of perceptual feedback) and for theories of how language production and comprehension are integrated (e.g., the nature of common coding and whether production simulation occurs during comprehension). This talk explores these issues, highlighting both similarities and differences for sign and speech production.

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