

# AQUI\_LGP: Acquisition corpus

Sara Carvalho\*, Mara Moita, Sofia Lynce de Faria, Patrícia Carmo

Instituto de Ciências da Saúde da Universidade Católica Portuguesa

## Abstract

The process of language acquisition and development follows identical patterns throughout the children's growth, no matter the language they are immersed in (Chomsky, 1965). Acquisition studies demonstrate that in general the path of language acquisition is comparable for sign and spoken languages, even if their visual modality differs from the auditive modality of spoken languages (Lillo-Martin, 1999). However, there are not many studies in Portuguese Sign Language (LGP) confirming it.

LGP has been studied as a complex structural natural linguistic system since the 1980s, and although some important linguistic studies were carried out and a number of limited sign vocabularies have been created, only recently acquisition of LGP has begun to be studied (Carmo et al. 2013).

In order to fill this gap, a longitudinal corpus of Portuguese Sign Language acquisition has been developed, the AQUI\_LGP Corpus, reference PTDC/LIN/111889/2009. The main goal of this project is to establish research concerning early acquisition of LGP in both monolingual and bilingual children. The project allows not only the study of language acquisition and development but also the creation of a corpus that enables the study of LGP. We also aim at comparing bimodal bilingualism results with what is reported about unimodal and bimodal bilingualism, and the development of Portuguese in deaf children with cochlear implants, focusing on the linguistic performance of children in the different modalities to which they are exposed (Lillo-Martin & Quadros, 2005).

The corpus comprises naturalistic recordings (and their transcriptions) of 13 male and female children acquiring language for

a period of two years. The sample comprises hearing bimodal children (LGP/Portuguese), deaf children with early sign language acquisition, children with cochlear implants, and hearing children with early Portuguese acquisition. The children's age onset varies from 10 months to 5 years of age. They were video-recorded individually every other week if monolingual and every week if bilingual, and audio-recorded once a month if deaf with cochlear implants. The transcriptions are being made using ELAN (*EUDICO Linguistic Annotator*).

In this paper we will present the methodology, collected data, and recent findings, as well as other ongoing studies.

## References

1. Chomsky, N. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.
2. Lillo-Martin, D. 1999. Modality Effects and Modularity in Language Acquisition: The Acquisition of American Sign Language. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of Language Acquisition*, 531-567. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
3. Carmo, P., Mineiro, A., Branco, J. C., Müller de Quadro, R., Castro-Caldas, A. 2013. Handshape is the hardest path in Portuguese Sign Language acquisition: towards a universal modality constraint. *Sign Language and Linguistics*. John Benjamin's, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 16 (2).
4. Lillo-Martin, D. & Quadros, R. M. 2005. The acquisition of focus constructions in American Sign Language and Língua de Sinais Brasileira. In: A. Burgos, M. R. Clark-Cotton, & S. Ha, (Orgs.), *Proceedings of the 29<sup>th</sup> Boston University Conference on Language Development*, 365-375. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

\* sarafcarvalho@ics.lisboa.ucp.pt