



Département de psychopédagogie et Counselling Psychology de psychologie du counseling



L'intégration multimodale en autisme : une perspective développementale

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Summit Center for Education, Research and Training (SCERT) / Centre pour l'Éducation, la Recherche et la Formation le Sommet





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CONFERENCE ON NEURODEVELOPMENTAL CONDITIONS



DR. ELIZABETH PELLICANO PhD in Psychology, Professor

Professor Liz Pellicano has long been committed to transforming autism science so that it more accurately reflects everyday autistic life.



DR. LAURENT MOTTRON MD, Psychiatrist, PhD in Psycholinguistics

Dr. Mottron is researcher-clinician specialized in the cognitive aspects of autism.

https://www.summit-scert.com/conference2022

WHEN OCTOBER 27 & 28 2022

MCGILL UNIVERSITY NEW RESIDENCE HALL

WHERE

PRICE RANGING \$75-175

perceptual neuroscience lab (PNLab.ca) for autism and development









Centre de l'éducation, de la recherche et de la formation le Sommet development of social and non-social visual information processing in autism and related neurodevelopmental conditions (NDCs).

- visually-based cognitive intervention (attention) in autism and other NDCs

- sensory-related cognition and behavior across NDCs.

- development of multisensory information (MSI) processing in autism and during typical development.









visual (unimodal) perception in autism : atypical at different levels of processing / complexity

approach and context = systematic assessment of **unimodal visual perception** at different levels of processing / complexity :

- low-level = elementary / non-social information processing = local information
- mid-level = integration of elementary information / non-social = global information
- SCIENTIFIC high-level = complex / social information processing = global information + social content REPORTS

An early origin for detailed perception in Autism Spectrum Disorder: biased sensitivity for high-spatial frequency information.





Behavioral evidence for a functional link between low- and mid-level visual perception in the autism spectrum

Audrey Perreault $^{a,b,*},$ Claudine Habak c, Franco Lepore b, Laurent Mottron d, Armando Bertone d,e,f





" mid-level "

Atypical Face Perception in Autism: A Point of View? Karine Morin, Jacalyn Guy, Claudine Habak, Hugh R. Wilson, Linda Pagani, Laurent Mottron, and Armando Bertone





complexity

DSM-5 : sensory issues now explicitly included as criteria for autism

DSM 5 : 2 symptom domains (3 domains in DSM-IV : SC, SI & RIRBs)

A. persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction

B. restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities,

B4. Hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment (e.g., apparent indifference to pain/temperature, adverse response to specific sounds or textures, excessive smelling or touching of objects, visual fascination with lights or movement).

\uparrow sensory abnormalities in ASD

- prevalence : 69-95% (Caminha et al., 2012; Hazen et al., 2014; Leekam et al., 2007)
- differ across age, symptom severity, & modalities (Ben-Sasson et al., 2009; Pellicano, 2013; Kern, 2006)

do sensory processing underlie core features in autism? (larocci & McDonald,

2006; Marco, Hinkley, Hill, & Nagarajan, 2011)

 cascading effect = disruption in sensory processing → higher-level atypicalities (cognitive, behavioral, etc.) (Hilton, Graver & LaVesser, 2007; Lane, et al., 2010; Maekawa et al., 2011)

« we currently have more functional imaging data about how the autistic brain processes a face or a theory of mind than we do about the way it processes location, colour, orientation, or spatial frequency; at what level of processing do the perceptual and cognitive abnormalities begin? » (Belmonte et al 2004, p 658.)

FEATURE REVIEW

Autism as a disorder of neural information processing: directions for research and targets for therapy¹ MK Belmonie¹, El Cock Jrf, GM Andersn¹, JR Hensenlan¹, YT Greenough¹, A Beckel-Mitchene⁴, E Courbenert, LM Bolanger', SB Powell⁴, PR Levit⁴, EK Penry⁶, YH Jiang¹¹, TM DeLorey¹² and E Tienne¹²









Mottron et al., 2007

nj

multisensory integration - MSI

multisensory integration (or MSI) = ability to efficiently and simultaneously integrate stimuli from multiple sensory modalities integrated into 1 coherent percept (Stein, Wallace & Stanford, 1999; Stein & Meredith, 1993)

- automatic
- advantage conferred by MSI = multisensory facilitation
- leads to an efficient & accurate interpretation of world
- adaptive response to environment / efficient decision making

multisensory integration (MSI) = audio-visual integration ...

consequences of MSI impairment in NDCs & ASD ? (Foxe & Molholm, 2009) environment complex & confusing | incoherent information | withdrawal / avoidance | cognitive overload | lack of cognitive flexibility

atypical MSI consistent with cognitive theories

- weak central coherence (Happé & Frith 2006)
- temporal binding deficit (Brock, Brown, Boucher & Rippon, 2002)





Figure 3. A hypothetical model. Illustration of our hypothetical model on the impact of developmental delays in sensory processing on the later development of higher-order functions in people with ASD. From a developmental perspective, multisensory integration is thought to partly underlie social cognition, which in turn underlies social interactions and functioning. Thus, if treatment can promote the development of multisensory integration in individuals with ASD, it may improve social cognition, core symptoms, and social functioning. ASD, autism spectrum disorder.

Kawakami & Otsuka (2021)

MSI & autism

interest in MSI and autism \uparrow

- accelerated since since Foxe & Molholm's (2009) " call to arms paper "
- need to translate fundamental MSI to clinical populations, and autism in particular = many empirical and review papers since

MSI abilities in autism still not that well understood

MSI in autism more consistently impaired when using using **social stimuli**

 McGurk effect (Taylor, et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2004; ++++) | speech with lip-reading (Foxe et al., 2015; Smith & Bennetto, 2007) | speech with gestures (Silverman, et al., 2010)

less consistent findings when using non-social stimuli / illusions

• sound-induced flash illusion (Shams et al. 2000)

not clear why (Wallace, Woynaroski & Stevenson, 2020)

- differences between multisensory impairments when processing social vs non-social stimuli ?
- developmental trajectory of multisensory integration is delayed or disordered ?

McGurk Illusion (McGurlk & McDonald, 1976)



speech components & dynamic face

sound-induced flash illusion



beeps & flashes

Research motivation

regardless of task / paradigm, most studies make generalized conclusion of altered MSI in autism (Mulleur et al., 2020)

- do they assess a fundamental MSI impairment = "low-level",
- <u>or</u> are results confounded by the complex, socio-communicative nature of the stimuli ?

relatively few developmental assessments of MSI are available

• across different periods of development

questions ...

- is the MSI (audio-visual integration) altered in autism ?
- if so, is altered MSI in autism contingent on <u>the type of</u> <u>information</u> being integrated ?
- is altered MSI in autism different in the same way at <u>different</u> <u>periods of development</u>?

several recent review papers (2019-) all cite these two variables as

- stimulus complexity and age

as critical to understanding MSI in autism (Feldman et al, 2019; Kawakami & Otsuka, 2021; Wallace et al., 2021; Mulleur et al 20221)

beeps & flashes



VS



speech / faces



MSI in autism : atypical at different levels of processing / complexity ?

approach = systematic assessment of MSI at different levels of processing / complexity :

- low-level = elementary / non-social
- mid-level = integration of elementary information / non-social
- high-level = complex / social



complexity

How is MSI defined and assessed

RT most often used measure in MSI tasks

redundant signals effect (gain) = responses are faster when stimuli presented together ($F_A + F_V$) vs separately ($F_A \text{ OR } F_V$)

however ...

need to distinguish between;

- statistical facilitation (race model) = faster of the two unisensory (F_A or F_V) inputs always determines the speed of response to multisensory trails = $F_A + F_V$
- multisensory facilitation (coactivation model) = assumes *integrated* processing = decreased RT on multisensory conditions goes above and beyond the effect of redundant stimulation = F_{AV} should always be ≤ F_A + F_V

race model inequality (RMI) (Miller, 1982): violation of RMI = presence of an <u>integrative</u> multisensory facilitation (grey area)

the race model analysis : compares the RTs on the AV condition to a bound value computed from the unimodal RTs that reflects the effect of redundancy = gold standard process for assessing present of MS *facilitation*

Gondan & Minakata, 2015; Miller, 2016



neurotypical : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - low-level, non-social info

first developmental assessment of MSI in neurotypicals

• [school ages → adulthood] + [Race Model Analysis]

111 typically-developing individuals - 4 age groups :

- 6-9 ys |10-13 ys | 14-17 ys & 18+
- target detection task completed

race model analysis applied for each age group

- race model inequality : evaluated at 10 different points of the RT distributions (the 5th, 15th, 25th... 95th %-iles)
- %-iles with the shortest RT for each participant computed
- bound value computed
- for each %-iles, the mean RTs for the AV condition compared to the bound using t-test.
- violations (*)= MSI facilitation

results : violations of the race model increase as a function of age group

- MSI for simple information develops / improves across developmental periods
- MSI abilities for low-level information do not reach adultlike level during **late adolescenc**e : 14-17 ys.

target detection task : A trials = beep | V trials = flash, AV trials = beep + flash



respond to the stimulus as fast as possible : reaction time (RT) recorded for each trial.

Race Model x age group



adult group : race model violated through the 85th percentile

violations increased with age group

RM violation at any percentile is sufficient to provide evidence of multisensory **facilitation**.

autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - low-level, no RESOCIAL info

target detection task and ASD : only one previous study used this simple task and AND race model analysis (Brandwith et al., 2103)

MSI of younger (7–10) and older (11–16) children
compared = no MSI facilitation found in ASD group

assessed older autistic group: adolescents & adults

- autism group (n = 20)
- neurotypical group (n = 19)
- 13-29 years

	AS (n=20)	TD (n=19)	t	p
Sex				
Male	16	17		
Female	4	2		
Chronological Age			-0.252	0.802
M	19.21	19.61		
SD	4.71	5.15		
Range	13-29	13-28		
Age groups				
Adolescents	10	9		
Adults	10	10		
Wechsler Full-Scale IQ			-1.189	0.242
M	102.95	107.79		
SD	13.71	11.55		
Range	79–120	86-125		

MSI for low-level, non-social information is <u>atypical</u> and <u>less efficient</u> for autistic adolescents and adults

 what about M<SI abilities at different periods of development ?



Armando Bertone^{1,2,3}

natureresearch



NT group : RM violated through the 55th percentile

ASD group : RTs did not violate the race model at any of the percentiles (but MS gain evidenced by +ve numbers)

autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - low-level, non-social info

at what age does MSI improve in autism?

- Brandwith (2013) no MS facilitation across (7–10) & (11–16) year old age rages
- Ostrolenk (2019) no MS facilitation 13-29 year-olds group

investigate developmental change in MSI in autism :

younger (< 14 years) and older (> 15 years) participants

Table 1 - Participant characteristics across all participants age groups

Participant Characteristics							
	Autistic: 14 or <	Autistic: 15 or >	Neurotypical: 14 or <	Neurotypical: 15 or >			
N=	23	22	55	56			
Age							
Age Range	7-14	15-29	6-14	15-29			
Age M	11.91	19.05	10.78	19.96			
Age SD	2.00	4.10	2.39	4.27			
IQ							
PIQ M	112.85	107.16	111.43	109.27			
PIQ SD	17.89	11.57	13.83	12.42			

redundancy gain : RT for [A + V] conditions < A or V conditions alone

- evidenced for both group
- but significantly lower in the of autism group ٠

MSI facilitation (RM violation)

- younger (45% %-ile) and older (75%-ile) TD group
- only younger autism group (5th %-ile)

MSI facilitation for low-level, non-social information develops differently in autism

MSI facilitation less evidenced for younger age groups

Reduced multisensory facilitation exists at different periods of development in autism



Kirsty Ainsworth ^{a,b,*}, Alexia Ostrolenk ^{a,c}, Catherine Irion ^d and Armando Bertone ^{a,b,c}







multi-sensory integration (MSI) - low-level, non-social info

temporal binding window (TBW) : multisensory information is perceived as being simultaneous even when it is asynchronous by a longer period of time = metric of MSI

simultaneity Judgement (SJ) task :

- judge (same vs different) the perceived simultaneity of stimuli pairs with varying SOAs:
 - 50ms, 100ms, 150ms, 200ms, 250ms, 500ms, 750ms

wider TBW = increase in "same" responses for larger SOAs = \downarrow efficient MSI

evidence regarding atypical TBW in autism is mixed;

- wider TBW autistic children/adolescents (Noel et al., 2017; Stevenson et al., 2014)
- comparable in adults (Turi et al. (2016); Kawakami et al. (2020)

studies explicitly assessed the differences in TBW width across <u>different age groups</u> in autism do not exist.



Figure 2. SJ Task: Synced, Auditory-leading and Visual-leading conditions.





100

90

adolescentser(6 ity 18 years) 19-70 27.96 7.36 17-47 < 0.001

- the sensorly profile of all participants also assessed (Dunn)
- TBW of child (6-12 ys) and adolescents (> 15 years) compared

Table 2. Demographic information for autistic and neurotypical groups divided by age category

	Autistic	Autistic	_	Neurotypical	Neurotypica	al
Children		Adolescents	μ	Adolescents	Children	
n =	16	41		16	33	
Age Mean (SD)	9.9 (1.8)	9.3 (2.1)	0.30	14.7 (1.7)	14.8 (1.5)	0.83
PIQ Mean (SD)	106.1 (22.3)	110.3 (16.3)	0.43	106.4 (15.2)	109.7 (16.2)	0.51

TBWs width defined via gaussian curve fitting procedures =

wider TBWs indicate less sensitivity to temporal alignment

800 autism group : TBWs wider for child group. NT group : TBWs same for both age groups = autism adolescent group

significant correlation b/n TBW and age in autism group only



MSP in autism - development even for low-level, non-socia info – must be taken into context 41 33 1000

(SD)

PIO Mea

9.9 (1.8)

106.1 (22.3)

9.3 (2.1

110.3 (16.3)

0.43

109 7

(16.2)

0.51

106.4 (15.2)

NT

ing Wir

800



Ainsworth & Bertone A. (accepted), Autism Research

autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) – mid-level, non-social info

challenging non-social, multi-modal visual search task (van der Burg et al., 2008)

find vertical or horizontal line = target

visual (no pip): all items (target and distractor) alternate color :

<u>visual + auditory</u> (pip) : tone presented concurrent to color change of target = parallel search

methods

- task accuracy (HITs) = % correct responses.
- reaction times (RTs) = response to the target color change (only correct answers).

autism group : **no benefit** of concurrent auditory information during search = no MSI facilitation

 \downarrow multi-sensory integration **but** <u>better</u> unimodal **visual** performance in autism (large set sizes)

reflections : is unimodal advantage in autism ever considered in MSI research ...

Reduced multisensory facilitation in persons with autism

Olivier Collignon^{a,b,c,*}, Geneviève Charbonneau^b, Fréderic Peters^{*}, Marouane Nassim^e, Maryse Lassonde^{a,b}, Franco Lepore^b, Laurent Mottron^e and Armando Bertone^{e,f}







autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - higher-level, social info

integration of social information - expression of emotion - impaired in autism

• children and adults (Uljarevic and Hamilton, 2013).

participants completed emotion discrimination (dynamic)

- late adolescents and young adults, between 15 27 years.
- discriminate between affective expressions of "fear" and "disgust"
- conditions : auditory | visual | audio-visual

 \downarrow auditory & visual discrimination (RT) in autism (A)

 \downarrow MSI of higher-level, social info in autism group (B, C)

Multilevel alterations in the processing of audio-visual emotion expressions in autism spectrum disorders

Geneviève Charbonneau^a, Armando Bertone^{b,c}, Franco Lepore^{a,d}, Marouane Nassim^c, Maryse Lassonde^{a,d}, Laurent Mottron^c, Olivier Collignon^{a,d,e,*}





ecologically-validated stimuli comprised of dynamic visual movies and auditory (non-verbal) vocal clips of emotional expression « Montreal Affective Voices » (Belin et al., 2008; Simon et al., 2007)



autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - higher-level, social info

secondary task used to assess **unimodal** emotion discrimination using same stimuli

signal-to-noise ratio measured for <u>auditory</u> and <u>visual</u> conditions

same task : discriminate between "fear" and "disgust"

signal-to-noise ratio adjusted in order to target a 80% accuracy rate performance = discrimination threshold

results : \downarrow auditory & visual discrimination in ASD group for both <u>auditory</u> and <u>visual</u> conditions

• in addition to \downarrow MSI (primary task results)

= generalized alteration for processing of higher-level, unimodal social info (dynamic emotion expressions)

• unimodal (auditory and visual) estimates of emotional expressions are noisier in autism

need to take into account unimodal alterations for simple vs complex information when assessing MSI ... ?

• equate individual unimodal stimulus saliency prior to multimodal presentation ??

Multilevel alterations in the processing of audio-visual emotion expressions in autism spectrum disorders

Geneviève Charbonneau^a, Armando Bertone^{b,c}, Franco Lepore^{a,d}, Marouane Nassim^c, Maryse Lassonde^{a,d}, Laurent Mottron^c, Olivier Collignon^{a,d,e,*}





Fig. 5. Signal-to-noise ratio for an 80% accuracy rate in the discrimination of emotional expressions presented auditorily and visually in ASD and TD. This graphic illustrates the main effect of the factor "group", suggesting inferior detection thresholds in TD than ASD for both modalities (*: $p \le .05$).



multi-sensory integration (MSI) - sensori-motor

posture and balance are regulated by the continuous integration of afferent information from 3 sensori-motor systems:

- vestibular : inner ear
- proprioceptive : feedback from our limbs about our position
- visual : precedes other senses, feedback about position in environment

immersive « virtual tunnel » stimulus = dynamic visual environment that oscillated in antero-posterior fashion (3 frequencies)







also static visual environments

• static tunnel (0 Hz) + eyes closed

DVs : (1) stability and (2) reactivity to motion (body sway) as a function of oscillation frequency



Lee and Aronson "swinging room" (1974)



Fully Immersive Virtual Reality System (CAVE[©]) - Faubert Perception Lab, Ecole d'Optometrie

neurotypical : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - sensori-motor

investigate the development of visually driven postural regulation in typically developing children of different ages.

typical development

DV = postural perturbations induced by the moving environment = root mean squared (RMS) of total body velocity (cm/s) in angles/second

stability increased with age

- 5 7 year group
- 2 / 6 (33%) met criteria
- over-reliance of visual input on postural regulation at young ages (5-7 years)

16-19 year group

- no significant effect of frequency on postural reactivity and sway
- adult-like levels

critical period for typical "sensori-motor" (postural stability) development between 16-19 ys of age

Development of visually driven postural reactivity: Selma Greffou A fully immersive virtual reality study

Armando Bertone Jean Marie Hanssens Jocelyn Faubert



Figure 5. vRMS in log (cm/s) as a function of age and oscillation frequency. *SEM* are shown for each age group.

autism : multi-sensory integration (MSI) - sensori-motor

repetitive behaviours + self-stimulatory behaviours

- rocking
- hand flapping

Atypical hypo-reactivity (i.e., less postural perturbation) to a sway-inducing visual environment evidenced for highest oscillation frequency (0.50 Hz)

postural stability to visual information is present in autism, but is contingent on

- (i) type of stimulus (oscillation frequency)
- (ii) <u>age</u> (younger participants < 12 years).

results not do to motion perception nor vestibular impairments

atypical integration between visual and other afferent systems (i.e., motor,/serebeallr and/or somatosensory) in youth w autism?

• ou "temporo-spatial processing disorder" (Gepner et al., 2009)

Postural Hypo-Reactivity in Autism is Contingent on Development and Visual Environment: A Fully Immersive Virtual Reality

Study Selma Greffou · Armando Bertone · Eva-Maria Hahler · Jean-Marie Hanssens · Laurent Mottron · Jocelyn Faubert

J Autism Dev Disord (2012) 42:961–970 DOI 10.1007/s10803-011-1326-6



0.125 Hz (T= 8 s)

0.25 Hz (T= 4 s)

0.5 Hz (T= 2 s)



conclusions

altered MSI should not be considered an ability that is simply "impaired or absent" in autism

- findings provide a more nuanced view of MSI in autism as influenced by multiple factors : <u>age</u> and <u>type of task / stimuli</u>
- **low-level**, **non-social info** : ↓ efficient MSI <u>for younger</u> autistic participants (13 years and younger)
- **higher-level, social info** : \downarrow efficient MSI in autism across ages
- Results are consistent with reviews/meta-analyses = group MSI differences more evidenced earlier in life (Feldman et al., 2019; +++)

altered MSI in autism not specific to audio-visual (AV) information

- atypical MSI also exist for other modalities : visuo-motor & visuo-tactile (Greffou et al., 2011; Charbonneau et a., 2020)
- common mechanisms? can proposed framework/theories be applied to other modalities

clinical implications

- communication between research and clinical domains (Foxe & Molholm, 2009)
 - accommodating differences specific to situation and age
- bottom-up approach to developing interventions ? (Cascio et al., 206;
 - perceptual training paradigms to narrow TBWs ... (Powers et al., 2016)
- do we or don't we intervene ? at what age ..
 - often superior unimodal abilities demonstrated in autism





Reduced multisensory facilitation in persons with autism

Olivier Collignon ^{a,b,c,*}, Geneviève Charbonneau ^b, Frédéric Peters ^d, Marouane Nassim ^e, Maryse Lassonde ^{a,b}, Franco Lepore ^b, Laurent Mottron ^e and Armando Bertone ^{e,f}



BUT enhanced unimodal (visual) abilities

current / future directions

current :

- defining MSI ability across different periods of typical and atypical development with different tasks concurrently (low and high-levels)
- assessing if altered low-level MSI is associated with altered high-level MSI
- assessing if altered MSI (low- or high-level) related to sensory behaviours or core symptoms ?

future

- longitudinal assessment of MSI using different tasks (levels) - compare typical trajectories to assess delayed vs disrupted MSI development ?
- lower-functioning person w autism?
- are attentional abilities related to performance
- assessing the neural correlates of altered MSI in autism using brain imaging (EEG / fMRI)

collaborations - www.summit-scert.com







merci



collaborators :

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Réseau pour transformer les soins en autisme

Transforming Autism Care Consortium













UCLouvain

