

2nd JEAN PIAGET CONFERENCES

Infant development from Piaget to today

Geneva, Uni Mail, June 20-21, 2016

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14h30 **Thierry Nazzi**, *University Paris Descartes*, *University*

Sorbonne Paris Cité.

Early developmental trajectory of a phonological bias in

lexical processing

Abstract:

Nespor et al. (2003) proposed a functional dissociation in language processing, according to which consonants would be given more weight than vowels in lexical processing, and vowels would be given more weight than consonants in prosodic/syntactic processing. Accordingly, we investigated the proposed consonant bias at the lexical level both from a crosslinguistic and developmental perspective. Crosslinguistically, the C-bias was found to be pervasive in French and Italian, while a different pattern wase found in English (late emergence of the C-bias) and in Danish (observation of a V-bias). This variation suggests that the originally proposed C-bias is language-modulated. Developmentally, lexically-related studies focusing on French-learning infants between 5 and 11 months suggest that these infants switch from an early V-bias around 5/6 months of age to a functional C-bias around 8/11 months. We will discuss these findings in relation to early phonological and (pre)lexical developments.