

Bilingualism in autism: Language acquisition in interactive and non-interactive contexts

There is a growing body of research on the effects of bilingualism in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Across studies, there is now broad consensus that exposure to two (or more) languages does not have detrimental effects on linguistic, cognitive or social development. Instead, bilingualism can even prove helpful in some domains. At the same time, research in this area faces important challenges, including how to capture the considerable heterogeneity within ASD, the wide range of bilingual experiences (e.g., simultaneous vs. sequential bilingualism, balanced vs. dominant language profiles), and the complex ways in which these two sources of variability intersect.

This workshop brings together researchers working on bilingualism in autism in order to address these challenges from multiple perspectives. We will discuss empirical findings on language development in autistic bilingual children across different language pairs and contexts. A special focus will be placed on emerging evidence of non-interactive bilingualism in autism, cases where language learning occurs with limited or no direct social interaction (e.g., learning from screens) and which challenge traditional assumptions that human interaction is a necessary condition for successful language acquisition.

We are very pleased to have Dr. David Gagnon (Université de Montréal), Prof. Dr. Natalian Meir (Bar-Ilan University), Prof. Dr. Mila Vulchanova (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), and Prof. Dr. Laurent Mottron (Université de Montréal) as invited speakers.

The workshop, hosted by the Autism, Bilingualism, Cognitive and Communicative (ABCCD) lab at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, will take place on **7 March 2026**. It will be followed by an outreach event on bilingualism in autism at the KORSO cinema in Fribourg, allowing for interaction with the autistic community.

We invite abstracts for poster presentations on any topics dealing with bilingualism in autism. We encourage submissions that involve innovative approaches and methods including, but not limited to, the study of non-interactive bilingualism in autism.

Important Dates

Abstracts open for submission	24 th November 2025
NEW abstract deadline	16th January 2026
Notification of acceptance	25 th January 2026
Workshop	7 th March 2026

Submission guidelines

Abstracts should be fully anonymous and no longer than 500 words maximum (Times New Roman size 12). One additional page can be used for examples, figures, tables, and references. Each author may submit several abstracts, however we will accept for presentation only a maximum of one first-authored posters per submitter. There is no limit on the number of accepted poster presentations for which the author is listed in a non-first-author role.

All questions about submissions should be emailed to: bilingual-autism@unifr.ch