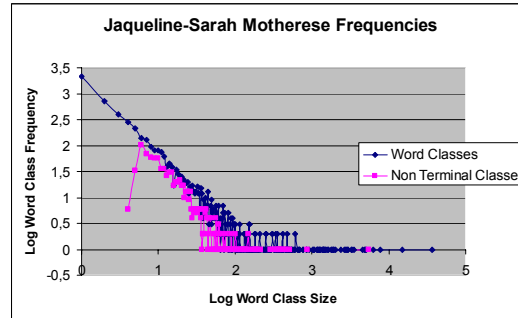
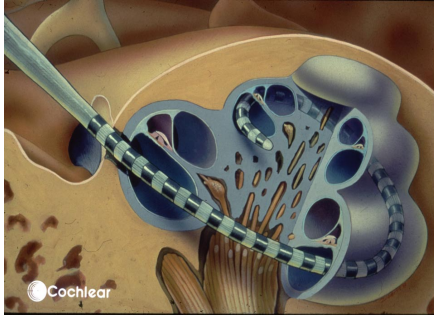


Mini-Conference: Cochlear implants and their effect on first language acquisition

De Wipfelberg, 17-18 September 2003. Pieter Adriaans, Dick de Jongh (ILLC, Amsterdam), Adriaan van Olphen, Guido Smoorenburg (AZU, Utrecht), Jacqueline van Kampen (UiL OTS, Utrecht).



In September 2003 a preliminary mini-conference (supported by NWO) with a number of (inter)national experts in the field was held. This conference has greatly contributed to a better understanding of the central research issues and better contacts with international research groups. The objectives of the project are:

- To study language development of normally hearing children from early pre-lingual babbling to first grammar acquisition with the objective to obtain better diagnostic methods in monitoring language development of CI children.
- Establish the essential stages in grammar acquisition by normally hearing children, especially in the first period of learning. The occurrence and timing of these stages are to be used for early detection of deficiencies in the grammar acquisition by CI children.
- To focus on phonological development in its relations to lexical development during the first three years after implantation in order to be able to analyse early productions during pre-lexical stages in terms of gestures and rhythmic structure. To compare the development of CI-implanted children to normally developing children.
- To obtain more workable and encompassing models of language learning in the Gold model and its many variations developed in parallel and in mutual support with the linguistic theories of language acquisition above.
- The gathering of data by creating annotated video sequences in a standardized environment from CI children and normally hearing children in a longitudinal study using the CHILDES corpus format so that the results can be used and compared internationally.

It is clear that a successful project of this nature could have beneficial effects for society as well as for the area of cognitive research in a broader sense. In fact a deeper understanding of formal complexity issues in language acquisition related to good linguistic models that can be applied in diagnostic contexts would be a major breakthrough in the field of cognition.