

Centre for Speech and Language Intervention Research



Winter 2011 - Issue 1

FACILITATING LINKS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE



Welcome to the first CSLIR newsletter; providing a termly update of the Centre's activities and events.

If you would like to receive future copies of this newsletter and/or find out more about the Centre then please visit:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cslir>

Forthcoming events

Research Design Service (RDS) London - supporting successful grant applications

Dr Peter J Lovell

Date : 27 October 2011,

Time: 1.00-1.45pm

Venue: Room G10, Chandler House, UCL

Research Design Service (RDS) London provides help to those preparing research proposals for submission to peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care research. The advice is provided free of charge and is available through use of online resource and consultations with experts. <http://www.rdslondon.co.uk/>

Dr Peter J Lovell, Programme Manager of RDS London will give an overview of the RDS and funding opportunities. This will be followed by time for questions.

Further details of future CSLIR events can be found at:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/cslir/events>

Current project highlights

WORD Project: Lexical Retrieval Difficulties in Children: A new approach combining modeling of impairment and intervention to help word finding

Current project team: Wendy Best (UCL, Principal Investigator), Jackie Masterson (Institute of Education, Co-PI), Michael Thomas (Birkbeck College, Co-PI), Lucy Hughes (UCL, Research SLT), Anna Fedor (Birkbeck College, Post-doctoral researcher), Silvia Roncolli (PhD student, Institute of Education).

AIMS: This new ESRC funded project investigates lexical retrieval, or word-finding in children. We all experience difficulties in retrieving names occasionally. This occurs in around a quarter of children with specific

language learning difficulties and can influence their relationships, self-concept and education. The study sets out to advance our understanding of word-finding difficulties (WFD) and ways they can be ameliorated.

METHOD: The project has three strands. The first involves collecting data from children with typically developing language and children with WFD. We examine the accuracy and speed of naming and related skills. We will help clarify the nature of the difficulty by comparing the performance of the children with WFD with those with typically developing language at different stages.

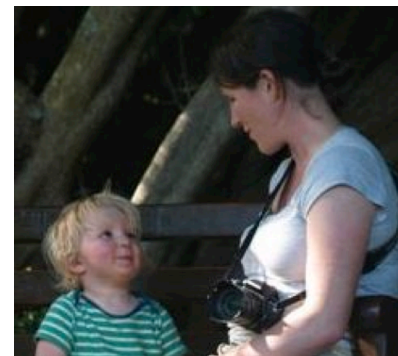
The second strand entails computer modelling of the processes involved in word retrieval - moving from meaning (semantics) to sound (phonology). The model can be impaired and enhanced in various ways. For example, the modeller can limit or increase the processing resources available to link meaning and sound representations or can strengthen meaning or sound representations, enabling identification of potential

pathways to difficulty and intervention within a developmental framework.

The final strand of the study is an experimentally controlled intervention in which children with WFD will receive one form of therapy that appears more appropriate to the focus of their difficulty, and one less appropriate. The interventions focus on semantic or phonological processing and on providing children with strategies to aid word retrieval. The results will be used to inform practice with children with language learning needs.

The researchers carrying out the study come from different backgrounds: SLT, psychology and modelling. By bringing together knowledge and skills from different approaches we aim to inform understanding of typical language development and of what happens when children have difficulties retrieving words. The modelling of intervention effects will be a very new endeavour. The study will provide practitioners working with children with language difficulties with more evidence on appropriate intervention for different children and with better ways of comparing children's language profiles with those of children whose language is developing more typically.

Communication Interventions for Pre-school Deaf Children Project



Project team: Rachel Rees¹, Merle Mahon¹, Josephine Marriage², Rosalind Herman³ Caroline Newton¹

¹Developmental Science Research Department UCL, ²UCL Ear Institute, ³Department of Language and Communication Science, City University London

AIMS: This project is aiming to investigate the communication intervention practices employed in a range of approaches (e.g. Auditory Verbal Therapy¹, Hanen² and Parent-Child Interaction therapy³) so that we can identify which practices are used by most professionals and which are more linked to a particular approach.

METHOD: We have developed two questionnaires to send to all professionals involved in communication intervention with

families of pre-school deaf children, those with implants and those with hearing aids.

The *background questionnaire* is designed to provide information about the background of the professional concerned, the treatment approaches they favour and their role and caseload.

The *main questionnaire* is designed to provide information about intervention practices. Professionals are asked to rate (from 1-5) how often they would encourage parents to adopt intervention strategies such as:

- Use naturally occurring situations (e.g. *bath time, mealtimes, shopping*) as opportunities for communication
- Watch their child carefully to notice their focus of attention and any attempts to communicate (e.g. facial expression, gesture, vocalisations)
- Deliberately use strategies to make sure the child is able to see the adult's face for information about the referent (e.g. *waiting until they look, holding an object near the face*)

strategies to make sure the child is not able to see the adult's face (e.g. *talk when the child is looking at an object, cover mouth*) to encourage them to use their hearing.

Professionals are asked to rate (from 1-5) how often they would use methods such as:

Use rating scale/checklist for parent/carer to evaluate aspects of their interaction

- Video-record parent/carer interaction followed by discussion
- Encourage parent/carers to choose goals for their own interaction skills (i.e. through discussion parent chooses interaction behaviours they will try to change)
- Provide parent/carer with pre-set interaction goals from a programme (e.g. monitoring protocol)

Ten experts in the field (including SALTs, teachers of the deaf, auditory verbal therapists and academics) have taken part in a review of the questionnaires.

The revised questionnaires will be sent to intervention professionals across the UK.

FUTURE STAGES OF THE PROJECT:

Once treatment approaches have been specified in terms of the intervention practices employed, we intend to compare the different approaches in terms of the children's spoken language outcomes.

REFERENCES:

1. www.avuk.org
2. www.hanen.org
3. Kelman, E. & Schneider, C. (1994) Parent-child interaction: an alternative approach to the management of children's language difficulties *Child Language Teaching & Therapy* ,10,81-94

Forthcoming conferences

NeuroPsychoLinguistic Perspectives on Aphasia International conference 21-22-23 June 2012, Toulouse, France

Languages of the conference: English and French

Website:

<http://npl-aphasia-2012.com/>

E-Mail:

npl.aphasia.2012@gmail.com

Abstract submission:

<http://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=nplaphasia2012>