



Séminaires ISIR

Lundi 28 Avril 2014 à 14h00

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Campus Jussieu, 4 place Jussieu, Paris
Amphithéâtre Herpin

Title : Infants' voyage from speech to language

Abstract : Anyone who has had a chance to see a child go from barely being awake to speaking fluently in three years has been amazed at the naturalness and apparent ease with which learning unfolds. The last 50 years of research have further shown that an equally astounding, albeit less evident, acquisition process occurs in language comprehension even before the child's first birthday.

In this talk, I will first present a brief overview of the state of the art in this line of work. Infants' voyage from their native input to internalized knowledge can be conceived as a function of the input, on the one hand, and the learning mechanisms brought to the task, on the other. Analyses of acoustic corpora and laboratory learning experiments have been used to document some fundamental (and surprising) properties of each.

The next challenge is to document language learning in the *_real world_*. This is complicated by the fact that infants do not seem to build language knowledge in an orderly fashion, but rather advance in several inter-dependent fronts at once. I will close by reviewing several promising approaches to the cartography of the language learning function in the human infant.

Short Bio : Alejandrina Cristia is a CNRS researcher at LSCP, Paris. She received her PhD in Linguistics from Purdue University in 2009. In her research, she combines multiple methodologies including spoken corpora analyses, behavioral studies and neuroimaging (primarily NIRS) to understand what phonetic/phonological representations infants and adults have, how these representations are formed and how they interface with other linguistic levels and other cognitive systems.