

Effective Factors towards First Language Acquisition in Hearing Impaired, Cochlear Implanted Children

L.C. Seneviratne
English Language Teaching Unit

Introduction

The main focus of this study is to determine the efficacy of first language acquisition among hearing impaired (HI) children with cochlear implants (CI) and the basic contributory factors which have been premised as mandatory. With the advancement of new technology in the field of audiology, Cochlear Implants have become very popular in the world, although it is yet to be popular in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, there are about 250-300 candidates who have undergone this CI surgery from 2005 onwards in Sri Lanka. This is a device which is very helpful to hearing impaired individuals with severe to profound hearing loss while conventional hearing aids, invented by Alessandro Volta in 1800, were supportive only up to some extent.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to enable these hearing impaired, CI children in Sri Lanka to attend mainstream education with other normal hearing children and thereby facilitate them to live as independent individuals in society. Accordingly, it is expected to determine the importance of age at implantation, parental support and rehabilitation therapy as the most effective factors which would enhance the efficacy of CI, with regard to first language acquisition.

Significance

When we consider parental support, preoperative involvement of them emphasizes identifying the impairment as soon as possible which will lead to early intervention. Post operatively, these parents should once again incorporate with the language development process of their CI children, by creating a suitable environment for them to acquire language and by directing them for speech therapy on a regular basis.

Methodology

A qualitative, observational study was carried out in Sri Lanka, among hearing impaired children who underwent cochlear implants. Data was collected basically through direct observation and focus group discussions with E.N.T. surgeons, audiologists, speech therapists and parents.

Key Findings

As per findings it was quite evident that all the hearing impaired, CI candidates whose parents were very much alert about an early cochlear implant, demonstrated a rapid development in their speech in comparison to the other CI children who received a CI later in their life.

References

Children's Language Acquisition - http://sitemaker.umich.edu/nicolesling/critical_period

Sensitive period for acquisition of language-<http://montessori21stcentury.wordpress.com/2008/04/08/the-sensitive-periods-and-the-acquisition-of-language/>

Cochlear Implants-http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochlear_implant

Cochlear Implant -<http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/eyes/cochlear.html>