

**Acquiring phonological contrasts:  
The role of perception and production**

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In this talk I will present an overview of the various studies we have carried out to study the acquisition of various phonological contrasts by Dutch children, using evidence from infant speech perception, word recognition and word production. The literature on infant speech perception presents a very different view on the nature of phonological acquisition than the literature on child speech production. During the first year of life it seems that infants form broad categories of sounds that play a role in their native language. However, category formation is not sufficient. I argue that phonology only comes into action when children store words as meaningful patterns. It is therefore important to distinguish speech perception and word recognition. Only the latter makes use of phonological features. This raises the question of how many levels of representations are needed. Once this difference is taken into account patterns from perception (i.e. in word recognition tasks) and production show very similar patterns pointing to shared underlying phonological underspecified representations. Yet, it remains unclear what the exact nature of the abstraction are, whether these are made on the basis of perception or production, and how the early system develops into a full-fledged adult system.