



End-of-the-Year Party!  
A few words from the MD  
MPI-PL - 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023



No Large Language Models  
were used in the generation  
of this year's speech  
(i.e. all my own work)

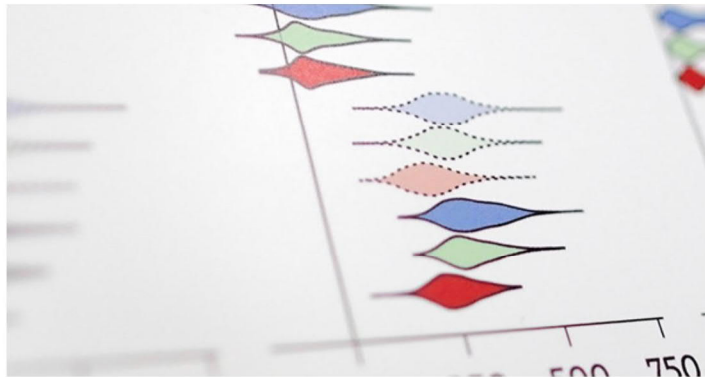
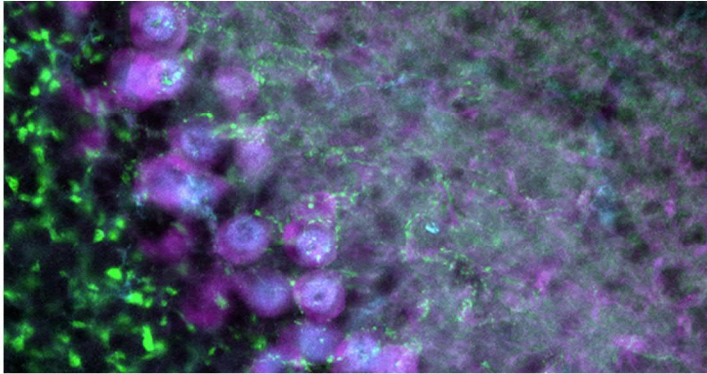
This is the place  
[2023 Remix]





This is the place we do psycholinguistics,  
dissecting out linguistic characteristics...





...with meticulous methods, exquisite statistics.  
We ain't got no room for simplistics & mystics.



Some of us want to gaze inside your brain, with scanning techniques that will give you no pain...

but

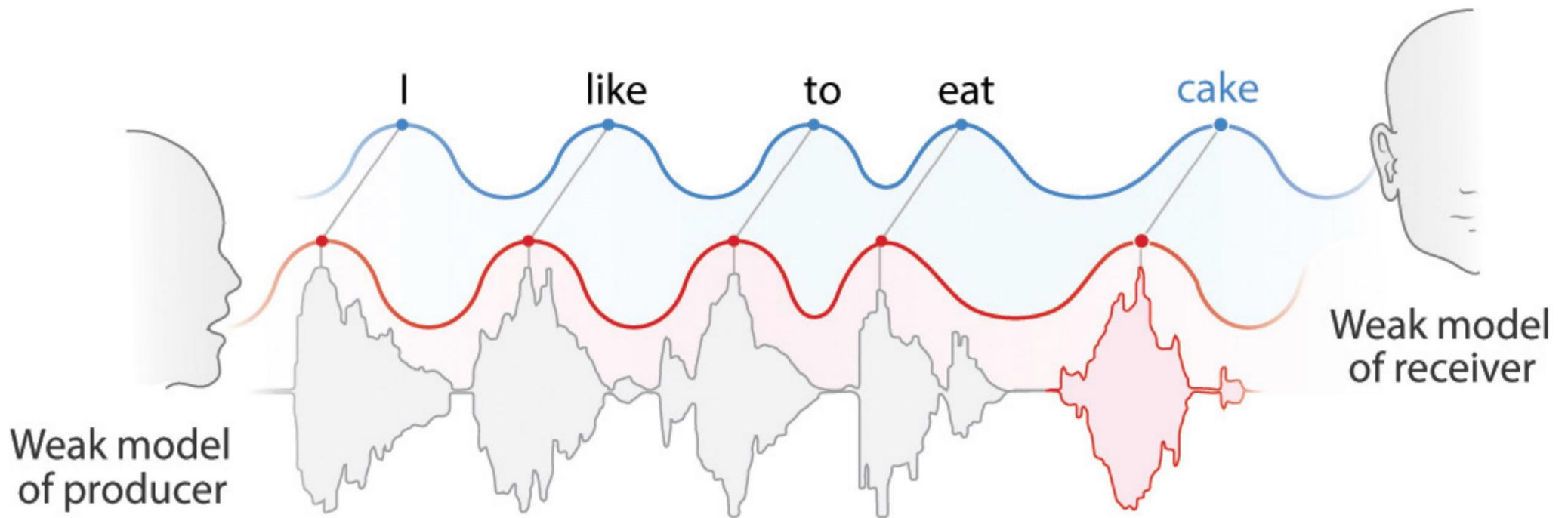




| Sentence  | Word list  |
|---|--|
| <p>Het aardige vrouwtje gaf Henk die een kleurige <b>papegaai</b> gekocht had een zak pitjes<br/><i>The nice lady gave Henk, who had bought a colorful parrot, a bag seeds.</i></p> | <p>Zak een kleurige aardige een had die vrouwtje <b>papegaai</b> gaf het gekocht pitjes Henk<br/><i>Bag a colorful nice a had who lady parrot gave the bought seeds Henk</i></p> |
| <p>Dit zijn geen regionale <b>problemen</b> zoals die op de Antillen.<br/><i>These are no regional problems such as those on the Antilles.</i></p>                                  | <p>zoals geen die Antillen <b>problemen</b> regionale zijn de dit op<br/><i>such as no those Antilles problems regional are the these on</i></p>                                 |

...hearing sentences/word-lists again & again  
[a legal disclaimer] this may drive you insane!





We're wondering if oscillations of brain waves can help us decipher how language behaves.

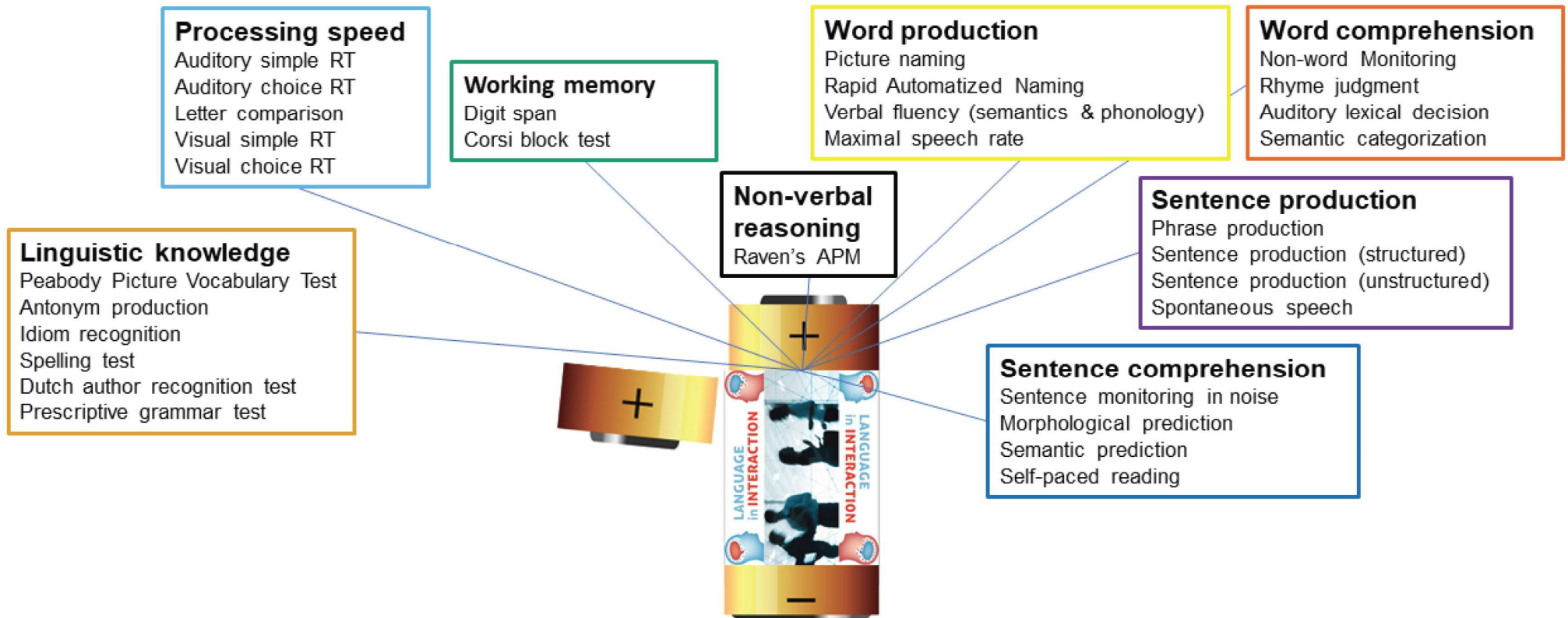


And when our participants feel extra brave, we'll immerse them in VR that's inside a cave!

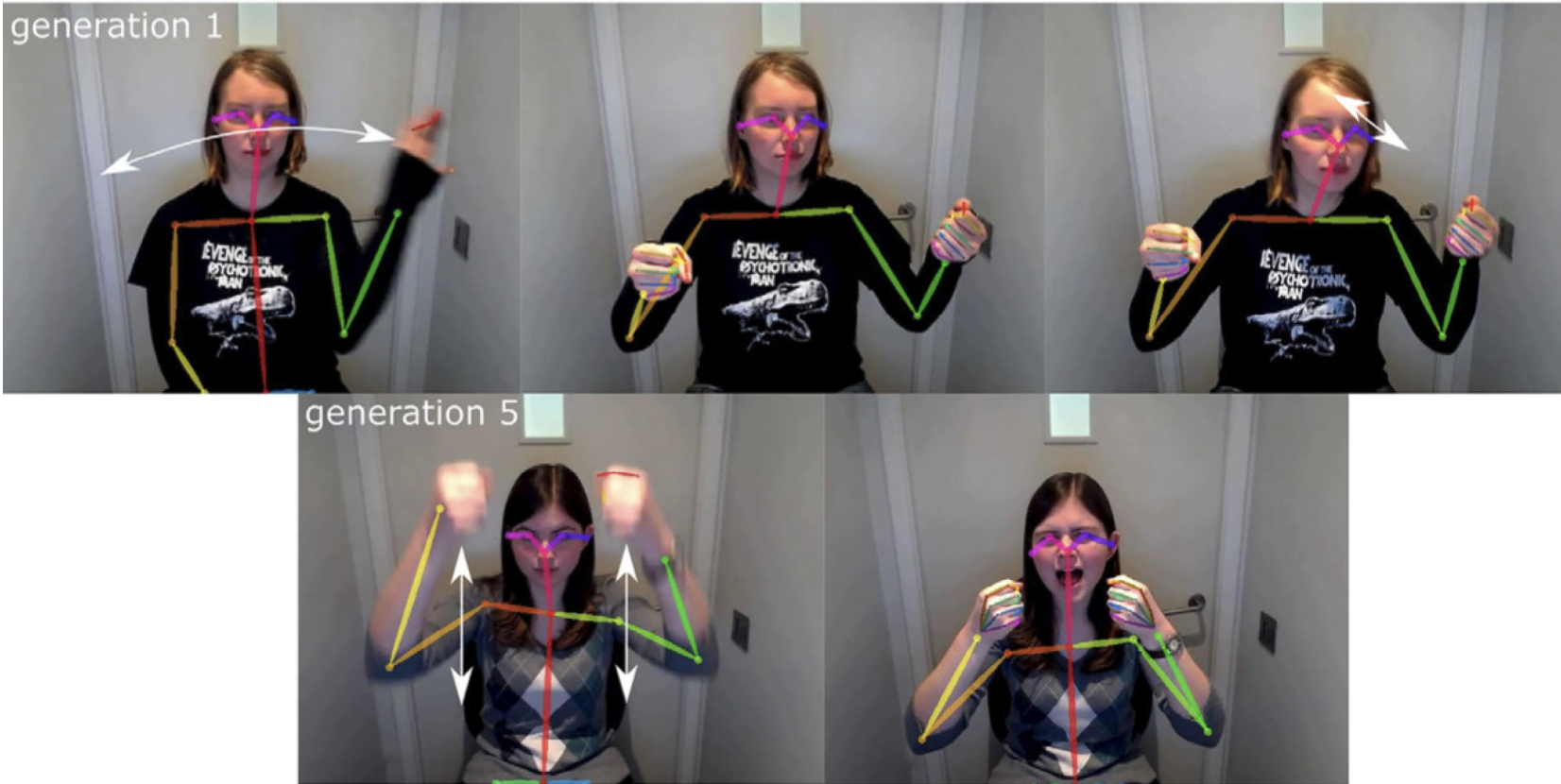


Each person's the same? That's a myth that we shatter.  
Some folk use less words, but then some love to chatter.

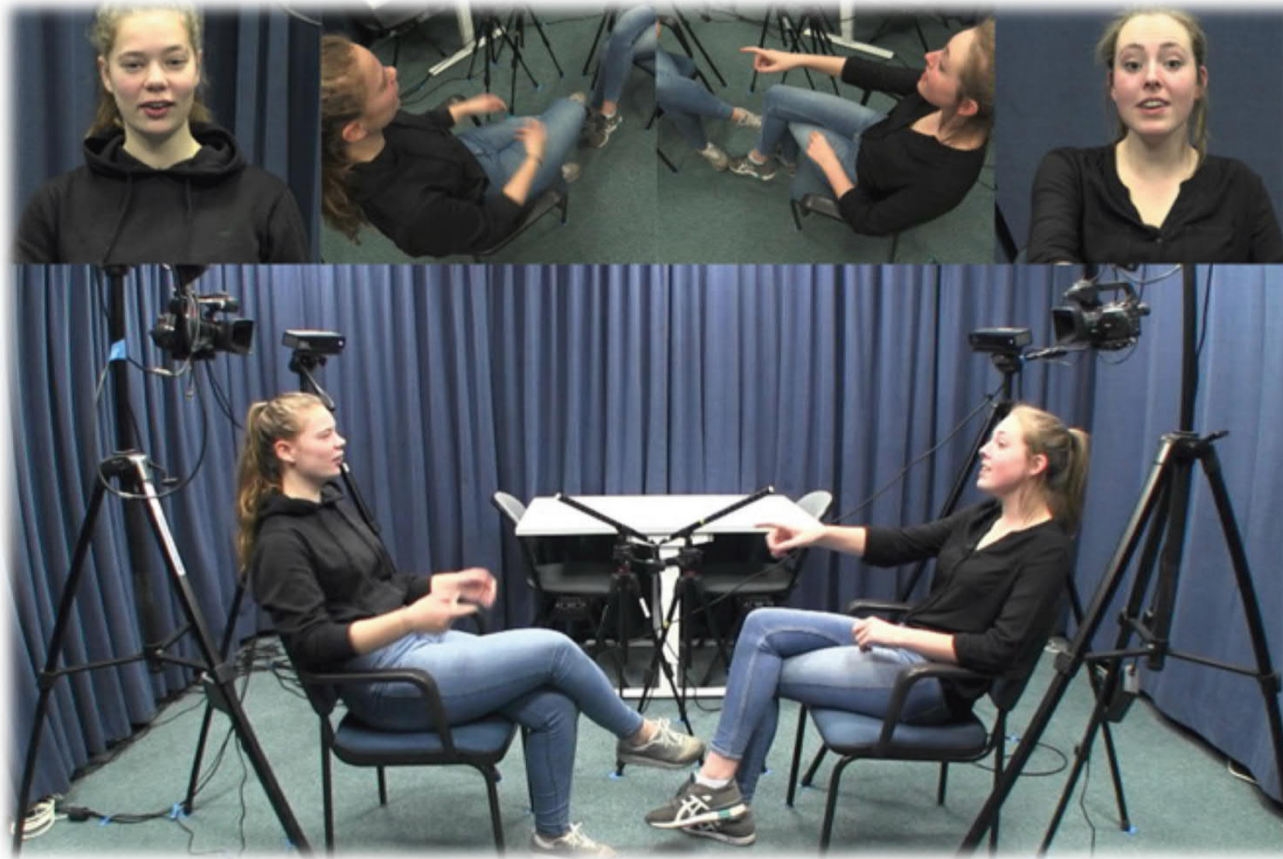




We've come up with tests that can query the matter, these studies are powered by linguistic batteries!



But if you think everything's just a speech code, we'll remind you of gesture & sign, even yodel.

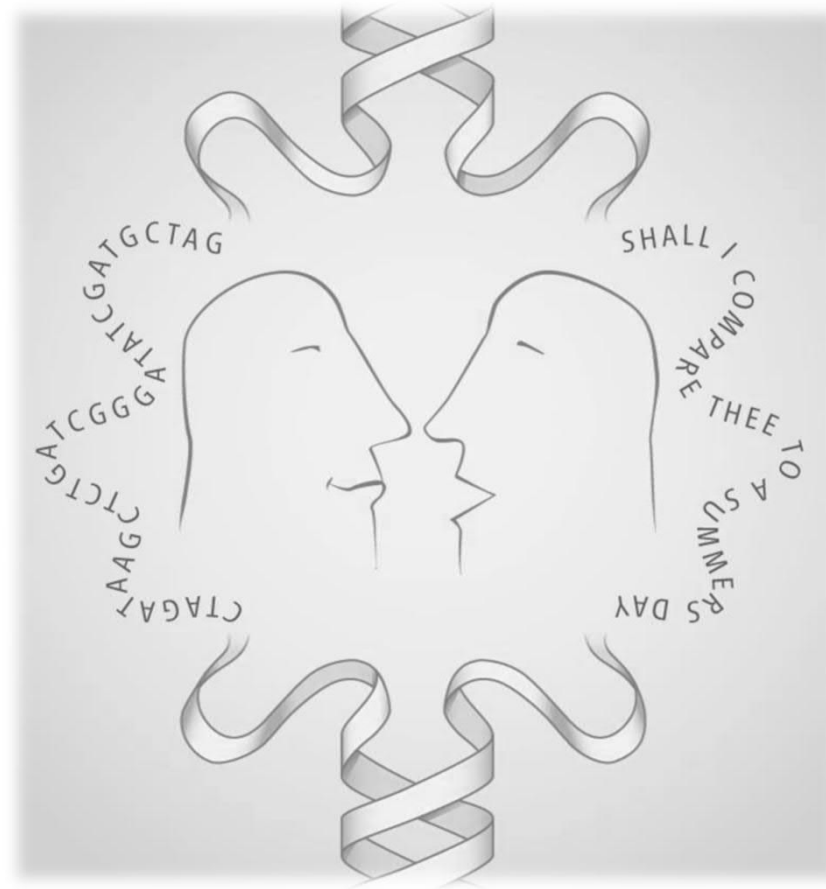


Our job won't be finished until we have showed all that language, inherently, is multimodal.





Now, whether it's spoken or written or signed,  
language is nature & nurture entwined.



One secret to building a linguistic mind:  
genetics & learning, the two strands combined.



So, a magical path leads to special lab spaces where friendly researchers, with smiles on their faces



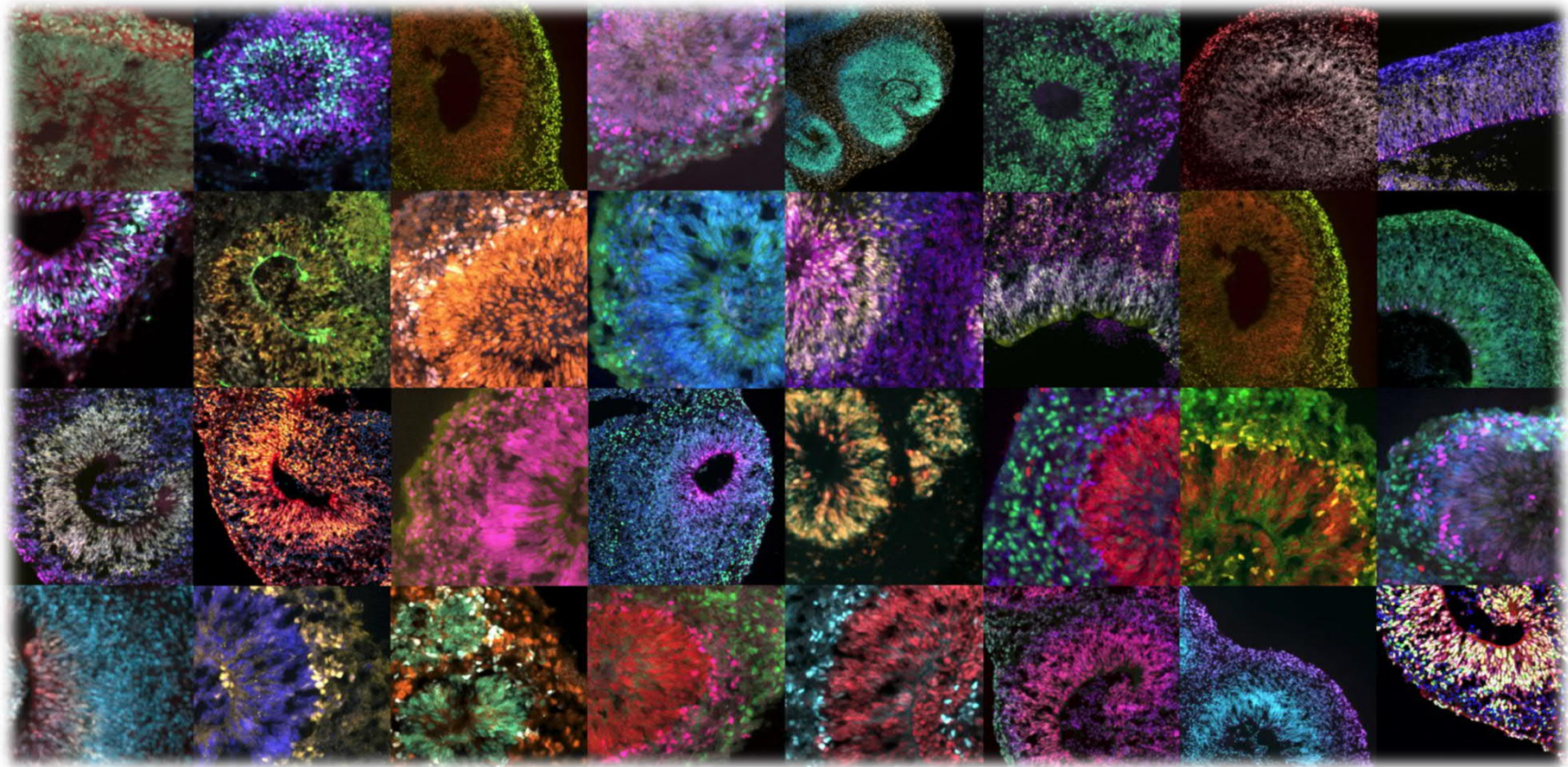


...ask how a kid masters grammatical cases before she is able to tie her shoelaces.



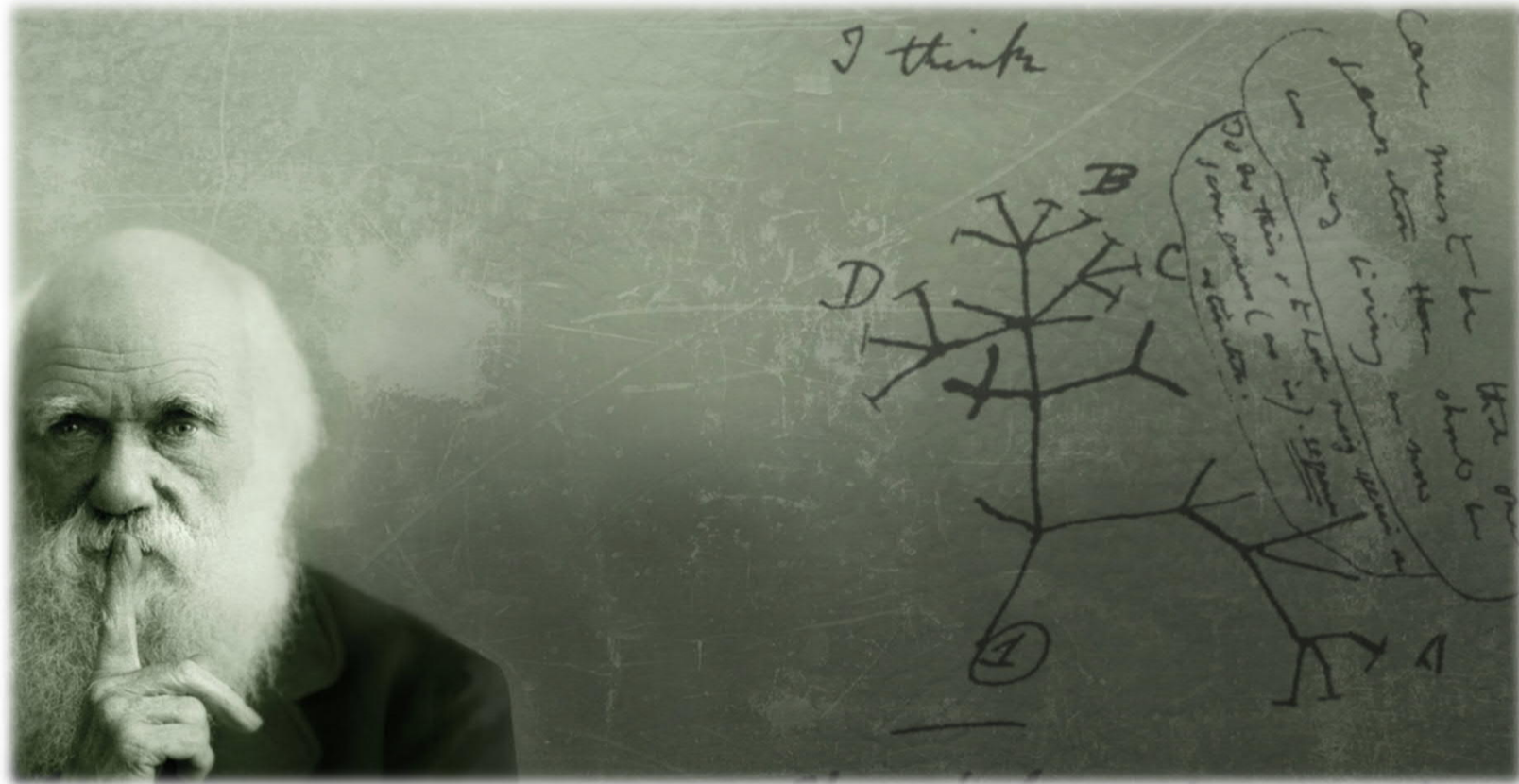
Our scientists love to break boundaries & to bridge fields, so we study disorders of language





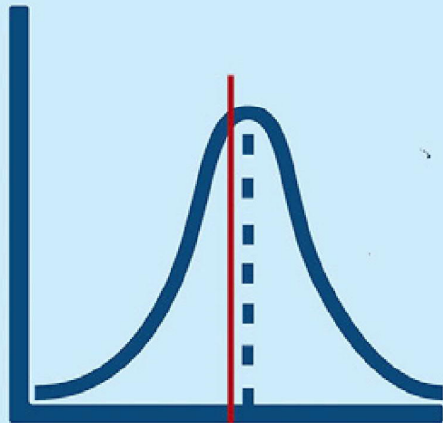
...with brain organoids that are stored in a lab fridge.  
(It's not the same place that you're keeping your sandwich.)



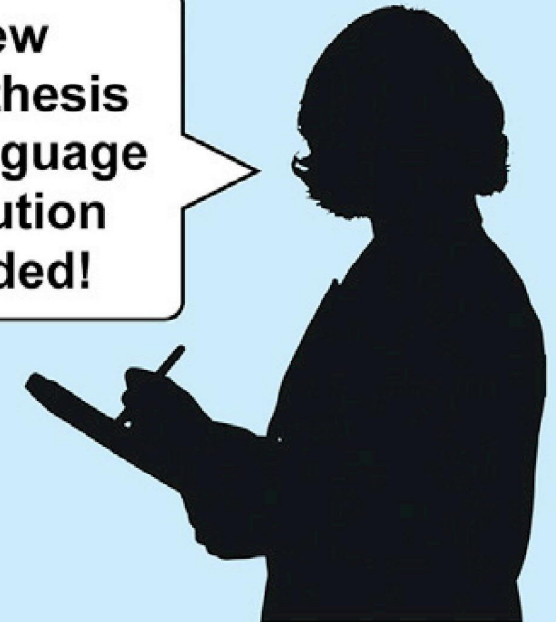


And as to the mystery of speech evolution, we've shown that the genome affects elocution,

No evidence for recent selection in *FOXP2* across diverse populations

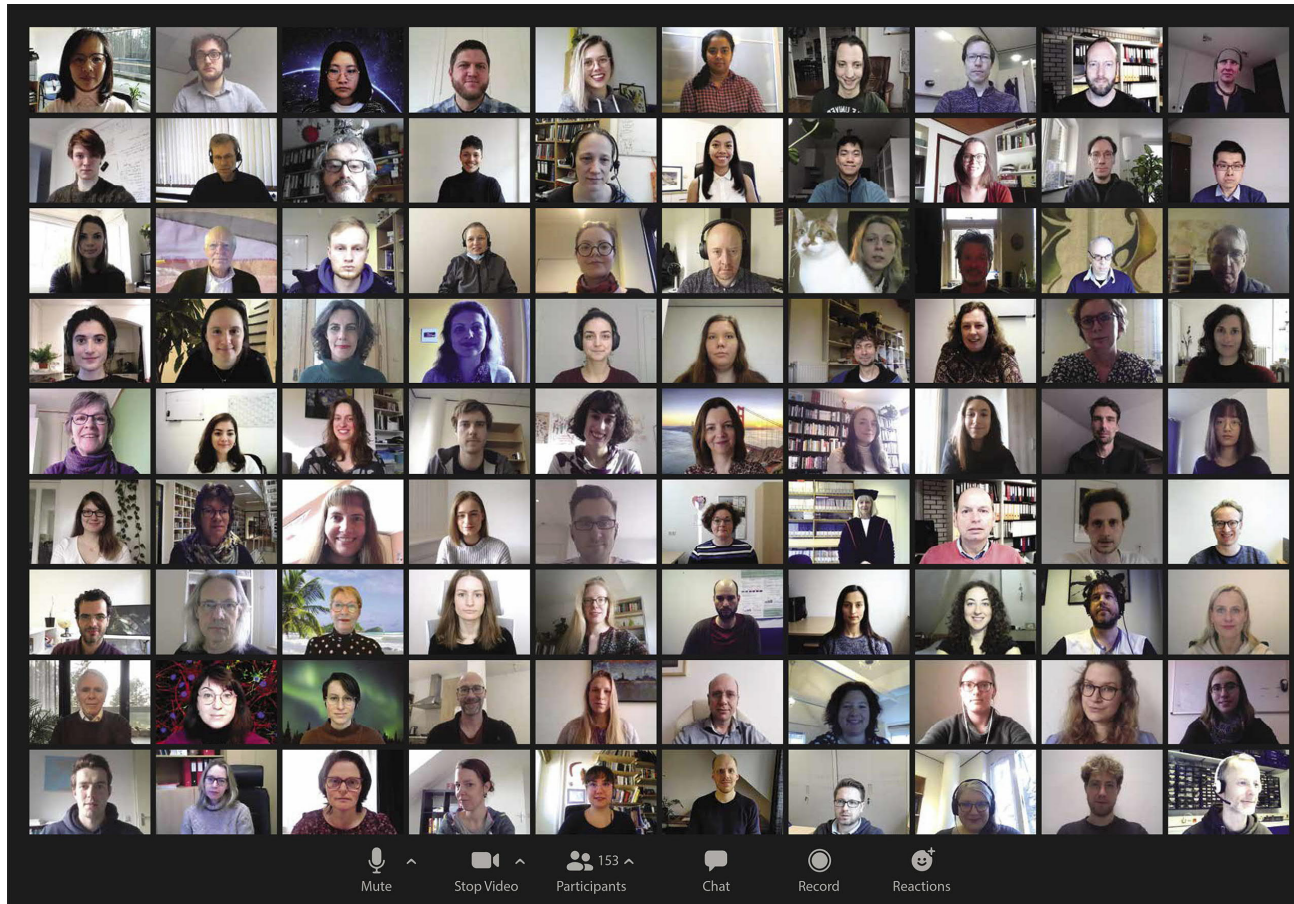


New hypothesis for language evolution needed!



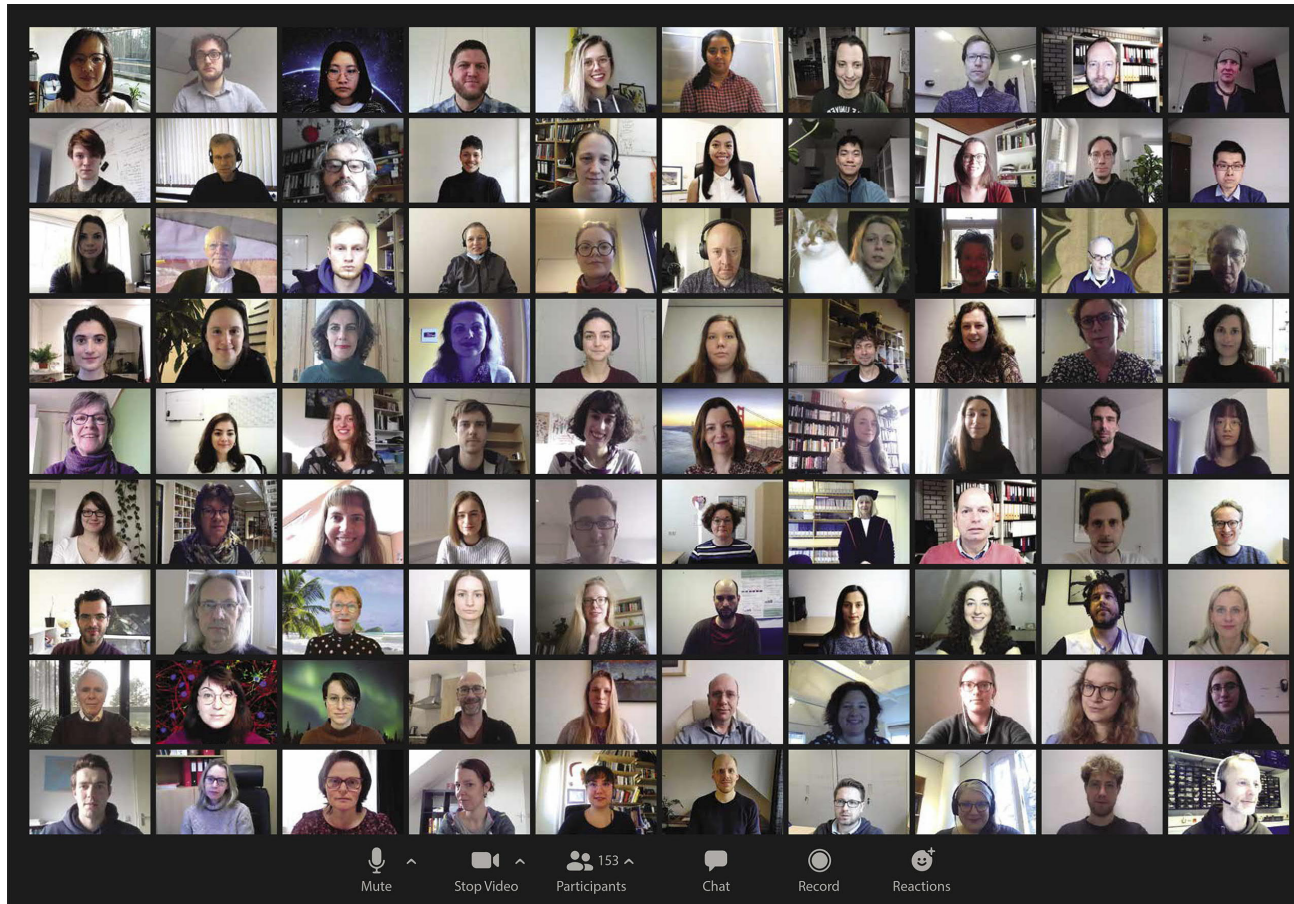
...but doubt that there could be a one-gene solution explaining the linguistic revolution.





IMPRsive researchers across generations,  
Lab managers, Secretaries, Communications...





Library, TG, Canteen, Operations....  
Extraordinary people make up our foundations!





In conclusion the MPI has at its heart,  
an instinct, some say, for acquiring an art.

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