

Mental representations and the processing of prosody across languages, across speech and non-speech

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Prosody - the musical aspects of a language, such as intonation and rhythm - is an intersection between speech and music and is the/an ideal object of studying how far speech and music mental and neural processing underlie the same mechanism. In this lecture, I will first provide some basic information about prosody, its cross-linguistic differences and some aspects of psycholinguistic experimental methodology. After this, I will report on some of (my own and other) studies on cross-linguistic mental representations and the processing of prosody. I will show how we, depending on our language background, perceive speech sounds and sound structures differently. Finally, I will present research evidence on whether we only perceive speech sounds differently or whether native-language dependent listening even applies to processing sounds in non-speech and music.