

Language, music, and the brain: Wrestling with granularity mismatch issues

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In this lecture I would like to assess what we know about the neurobiology of some aspects of (our ability to acquire, process, etc.) language and music. Friederici's new book "Language in our brain" strikes me as a wonderful place to start, since it offers an extremely well-articulated example of how linguistic theorizing can be used to motivate the search for (aspects of) language in (parts of) the brain. I'll focus on what I take to be domains of consensus and controversy and show that part of the reason for the controversies stem from the way linguists frame their hypotheses without paying attention to what David Poeppel has called the Granularity Mismatch problem. I'll try to solve at least some of these problems and show how the solutions could be used to make interesting claims about language evolution and also the relation between language and music (and tool-making).