

Monday, November 21, 2022, 15:00 hrs Hybrid Meeting (Lecture Hall and via Zoom)

Institute Colloquium

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MPRG Language Cycles

How neural timing constrains language (processing) from the inside out

Language comprehension is mostly effortless. But challenges can arise when speakers speak too fast or too slowly-or serve too much information in too little time. While we are flexible, our comprehension abilities are certainly limited. Team Language Cycles investigates whether inherent properties of the brain are the limiters of our verbal processing abilities. We focus on time: Does our preferred rate of information uptake follow from our brain's preferred pace of information processing? Does this constrain and shape the way that we acquire language? Could our preferred pace of processing be the reason that the languages of the world have evolved to package information into sequences of discrete units, optimizing the processability of human language(s)? In this institute colloquium, we discuss magneto- and electroencephalography projects on adult language processing, artificial grammar learning, and infant language acquisition. We also provide a special feature of large-scale cross-linguistic corpus analyses involving Natural Language Processing methods. Our results suggest that electrophysiological processing windows might not only constrain the pace of language acquisition and processing, but also shape the discrete units that (all) languages (of the world) are built of.

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