SOCIETY FOR THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

SNL 2021
October 5–8

Important Deadlines

July 27
Board of Directors Election Closes

Neurobiology of Language

Job Postings & Announcements

If you have a job posting, general announcement, or conference/workshop notice that you would like to include in the SNL Newsletter, please send it to **newsletter@neurolang.org**

Join Our Mailing List

Important Notice to All Slide & Slide Slam Presenters: Session Preferences Due By July 19

All notifications of accepted abstracts were sent on July 14. If you have not received a notification, please contact SNL right away.

To help the committee assign sessions, please log into your SNL account, and select your presentation time zone preference. We will do our best to schedule your presentation in a session that is a reasonable time given your local time zone.

To log into your account, go to Account Login, and set your presentation time zone preference by end of day Monday, July 19.

We look forward to seeing you online at SNL 2021 (Virtual Edition)!

Job Postings

Postdoctoral position, Cognitive and Affective Science Lab, Department of Psychology, University of Lille, France

We are looking for applicants for a two-year postdoctoral position at the University of Lille to work with us on the ANR project READY-spok, investigating the adaptation of phonological representations after social interactions. Candidates should have a PhD and, ideally, have a background in research on the processing of spoken language (speech perception or spoken word recognition or spoken language comprehension or psychology of dialogue). We are mostly interested in studying behavior, in combination with EEG recordings and speech analysis. The starting date is flexible, but not earlier than September 1st, 2021. Applications will be considered until July 23th, 2021.

The position will be at the Department of Psychology at the University of Lille, which hosts several research groups on cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, creating a dynamic research environment including regular internal talk series as well as presentations by invited speakers. The main supervisor for this project will be Angèle Brunellière. The aim of ANR project READY-spok is to examine whether and how the adaptation of phonological representations such as the perception of a phonemic contrast takes place in the short and long term after a dialogue situation as well as their links with prediction mechanisms.

To apply, please send (1) a detailed CV, (2) a cover letter (max. 2 pages) that describes their motivation, research

interests, experience and career goals, and (3) two letters of reference person to **angele.brunelliere@univ-lille.fr** or let us know if you want any further information about the project or details about the position.

PhD position, Cognitive and Affective Science Lab, Department of Psychology, University of Lille, France

We are looking for applicants for a PhD position at the University of Lille to work with us on the ANR project READY-spok, investigating the adaptation of phonological representations after social interactions. Candidates should have a Master's degree in Psychology or in Cognitive Science or in Cognitive Neuroscience and, ideally, have a background in research on language processing (e.g., speech perception or spoken word recognition or spoken language comprehension or psychology of dialogue). We are mostly interested in studying behavior, in combination with EEG recordings and speech analysis. The starting date is flexible, but not earlier than September 1st, 2021. Applications will be considered until July 23th, 2021.

The position will be at the Department of Psychology at the University of Lille, which hosts several research groups on cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, creating a dynamic research environment including regular internal talk series as well as presentations by invited speakers. The main supervisor for this project will be Angèle Brunellière. The aim of ANR project READY-spok is to examine whether and how the adaptation of phonological representations such as the perception of a phonemic contrast takes place in the short and long term after a dialogue situation as well as their links with prediction mechanisms.

To apply, please send (1) a detailed CV, (2) a cover letter (max. 2 pages) that describes their motivation, research interests, experience and career goals, (3) report card and (4) at least one letter of reference person to **angele.brunelliere@univ-lille.fr** or let us know if you want any further information about the project or details about the position.

Research assistant position, Cognitive and Affective Science Lab, Department of Psychology, University of Lille, France

We are looking for applicants for a research assistant position at the University of Lille to work with us on the ANR project READY-spok, investigating the adaptation of linguistic representations after social interactions. Candidates should have a Master's degree in Psychology or in Cognitive Science or in Cognitive Neuroscience and, ideally, have a background in research on language processing (e.g., speech perception or spoken word recognition or spoken language comprehension or psychology of dialogue). We are mostly interested in studying behavior, in combination with EEG recordings, and speech and verbal productions. The starting date is flexible, but not earlier than September 1st, 2021. Applications will be considered until July 23th, 2021.

The position will be at the Department of Psychology at the University of Lille, which hosts several research groups on cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, creating a dynamic research environment including regular internal talk series as well as presentations by invited speakers. The main supervisor for this project will be Angèle Brunellière. The aim of ANR project READY-spok is to investigate how communication between individuals can alter their mental representations to the point where their mental states become increasingly similar as they interact due to an adaptation of their linguistic representations. By combining verbal, behavioral and electrophysiological measures, this project examines whether verbal feedbacks contribute to the adaptation of linguistic representations and to prediction in comprehension. This fundamental research proposes a dynamic approach to oral communication and brings a new theoretical vision of oral communication by considering the adaptation of linguistic representations in the short and long term after a dialogue situation. It also has direct implications for education, since learning situations are situations where one person tries to modify the representations of another person through communication.
The research assistant will be required to help in setting up the experimental devices and in selecting the linguistic items, to carry out the experimental devices and to write scripts for dialogic settings.
To apply, please send (1) a detailed CV, (2) a cover letter (max. 2 pages) that describes their motivation, research interests, experience and career goals, (3) report card and (4) at least one letter of reference person to **angele.brunelliere@univ-lille.fr** or let us know if you want any further information about the project or details about the position.

Post-doctoral Research Fellow position at Royal Holloway, University of London

Applications are invited for the post of Research Fellow in the the Neuroscience of Communication Development (N-CoDe Lab) at Royal Holloway, which is directed by Dr. Saloni Krishnan.

We have recently received Academy of Medical Sciences Springboard funding for the project, “The neural and cognitive basis of motivation for reading”. This is an exciting opportunity to empirically assess motivation for reading and language, and assess if motivation might differ in those with reading disorders such as dyslexia.

The post offers significant opportunity for skill development, including gaining experience of developmental MRI and computational modelling methods. The postholder would join a small group embedded within a thriving research-intensive department. Royal Holloway has a dedicated MRI scanner, a strong MRI research community, and excellent research-practice links with schools. The post also offers the opportunity to collaborate with the broader project team, including Dr. Pablo Ripollés (NYU), Dr. Matthew Apps (Birmingham), and Dr. Jessie Ricketts (Royal Holloway).

Apply here: **https://jobs.royalholloway.ac.uk/Vacancy.aspx?ref=0721-241**

Other

NoL Special Issue: Cognitive computational neuroscience of language

A core goal of language research is to achieve a mechanistic understanding of the processes involved in sentence comprehension, and of the functional organization of the underlying neural substrates.

In recent years, deep learning language models have reached remarkable performance on many complex language tasks. A rapidly evolving research program at the interface of artificial intelligence and cognitive neuroscience focuses on the question of whether these computational models can serve as models of language processing in the human brain.

The time is ripe to synthesize some of this cutting-edge research. This special issue of Neurobiology of Language invites submissions — theoretical and empirical — at the intersection of computational linguistics, neuroscience of language, and psycholinguistics. The central question is whether the level of performance on sentence comprehension tasks displayed by deep learning language models is achieved through mechanisms comparable to the ones employed by the human brain. The focus should be on how the architecture, the training task, and the internal representations of deep learning language systems compare and relate to those of the language network in the human brain.

We welcome proposals and studies that adopt different approaches to combining artificial neural networks and (different kinds of) neural data. Contributions may include, but are not limited to, neural network models of sentence processing and/or other language processes, empirical evaluations of the neural or cognitive plausibility of existing natural language processing models, or meta-analyses of prior attempts to computationally model brain responses during language comprehension. We are also interested in publishing a limited number of position/opinion papers that discuss the promise and challenges of computational models in the study of the neurobiology of language.

It is crucial that all contributions clearly specify what we learn about language processing mechanisms and the brain by developing and evaluating computational models. Researchers interested in this issue, but who are not sure whether their work fits the special topic issue are encouraged to contact the special issue editors.

All contributions will be peer-reviewed and will be published on a rolling basis if considered acceptable.

Guest editors:
Alessandro Lopopolo - University of Potsdam
Milena Rabovsky - University of Potsdam
Ev Fedorenko - MIT
Roger Levy - MIT
Roel Willems - Radboud University

TIMELINE:
Deadline for First Submission: December 2021
Deadline for First Reviews: March 2022
Deadline for Resubmission: May 2022
Deadline for Second Reviews: July 2022
Deadline for Collection to be Finalized: Sept 2022

Call for Abstracts: "(Why) is Language (Not) Rhythmic?" (AG14 @ DGfS 2022)

OVERVIEW

Recent findings from auditory neuroscience suggest that periodic electrophysiological activity supports the neural processing of spoken language (for review, see Poeppel & Assaneo, 2020). Periodic modulations of neuronal potentials, so-called neural oscillations, represent time windows for acoustic and abstract information processing at different temporal granularities. Oscillatory cycles of different durations are known—from a few milliseconds to a few seconds. Synchronization of oscillations has been described for phonemes, syllabic nuclei, prosodic boundaries, and syntactic phrases (for review, see Meyer, 2018; Strauß & Schwartz, 2017).

The workshop "(Why) is Language (Not) Rhythmic?" critically evaluates the major assumption of this research: Neural oscillations can serve to process acoustic and abstract units only if these units are rhythmic themselves. But are phonemes, syllabic nuclei, prosodic boundaries, and syntactic phrases really rhythmic? Does our linguistic behavior in production and comprehension then also exhibit rhythmic patterns?

(The workshop is part of the 2022 Conference of the DGfS)

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We are seeking to showcase corpus-linguistic, psycholinguistic, and neurolinguistic work that helps to answer the workshop questions. We hope that your submissions will open new perspectives for descriptive, theoretical, and cross-linguistic research on temporal patterns of acoustic and abstract linguistic units.

We invite you to submit abstracts for talks (20 minutes + 10 minutes discussion) Abstracts should be submitted as a single PDF file of 250 words. References don't count and an optional figure page is fine.

Please submit at **https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=ag14dgfs2022**.

The submission deadline is 15 August 2021 (anywhere on earth).

QUESTIONS?

Contact **lmeyer@cbs.mpg.de**.

ORGANIZERS

Lars Meyer, MPI for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, DE
Antje Strauß, University of Konstanz, DE

REFERENCES

Meyer, L. (2018). The neural oscillations of speech processing and language comprehension: state of the art and emerging mechanisms. European Journal of Neuroscience, 48(7), 2609–2621.
Poeppel, D., & Assaneo, M. F. (2020). Speech rhythms and their neural foundations. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 21(6), 322–334.
Strauß, A., & Schwartz, J.-L. (2017). The syllable in the light of motor skills and neural oscillations. Language, Cognition and Neuroscience, 32(5), 562–569.

Dr. Lars Meyer

MPRG Language Cycles
Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, DE

Clinic for Phoniatrics and Pedaudiology
University Hospital Münster, DE

International Symposium Announcement

The Molecular Anthropology of Language: Results and Prospects

Over the past two decades, genomic studies have played an increasingly important role in exploring the history of our own species. These studies have helped to gain detailed insights into the first appearance of anatomically modern humans in Africa and their subsequent migration to other parts of the world. Genomic approaches also allowed

researchers to unravel intricate details of population admixture as well as gene functions and adaptations previously deemed impossible. These developments have opened new avenues for exploring the evolutionary origins and the historical dynamics of human language, one of the most distinctive features of our species.

To take stock of these developments, the Swiss National Competence Center in Research 'Evolving Language' is happy to announce a special symposium on **The Molecular Anthropology of Language: Results and Prospects.** This two-day event held at the University of Zurich from **29-30 September 2021** will bring together both established and emerging leaders in this burgeoning field.

We invite scientists of advanced PhD stage and beyond who utilize 'omics' approaches to contribute to this symposium. We are seeking contributions from researchers applying empirical, theoretical or comparative approaches to study evolution. In a broad sense, topics should include, but are not limited to, all aspects of modern genomics in language-related research. We are delighted that Alicia Sanchez-Mazas (University of Geneva), Simon Fisher (MPI Nijmegen), Mark Stoneking (MPI Leipzig) and Laurent Excoffier (University of Bern) have agreed to deliver keynote addresses. We have likewise secured presentations by the following scholars: Dan Dediu (CNRS - DLL Lyon), Sonja Vernes (St. Andrews), Cedric Boeckx (University of Barcelona), Reyna Gordon (Vanderbilt University), Angela Morgan (MCRI, Australia), Chiara Barbieri (University of Zurich), Patrick Wong (Chinese University of Hong Kong).

We have a limited number of 30-minute slots available for speakers who plan to attend the symposium with an active contribution. Please send an abstract of 300 words incl. title, author names and affiliations to Eliza Isabaeva at **research@evolvinglanguage.ch** until **13 August 2021**. The NCCR Evolving Language will cover the symposium related costs (flight+accommodation).