

Week5a Tuesday, May 5 Seminar Questions on Lieberman I

Focus on the questions Q1-Q5 in small groups. We will discuss questions Q6 and Q7 and any questions generated by the small groups in the full seminar.

Q1 What is the Lichtheim-Geswind model of language in the brain. (p. 3-4) What is Lieberman's initial objection and how does his "functional neural systems" approach differ (p. 4) What do you think Musulam means by "multifocal" in the quotation (middle p. 4)

Q2. Discuss the four features of his model he proposes (p. 6-7). How do these features relate to Methin's claims about human language and its evolution.

Q3. How does Lieberman describe Fodor's "black box" modularism. What is his objection to claims about "encapsulation" and does he suggest his theory about the role of the subcortical basal ganglia will challenge it. (p. 10 near top) How does Lieberman use Bunge's distinction between testing against a theory of the data rather than actual data to challenge the competence/performance distinction. (p. 13 ff)

Q4. Discuss Mesulam's network model of the neural bases of language as best you can. (figure 1-1 p. 16) given his brief, introductory description.

Q5 What do you think Lieberman means when he says "The Ojemann group's data ... suggests that neuronal process ... are not genetically specified, but are instead acquired phenotypically in a manner similar to the neural bases of motor control." (p. 38). What is the motor theory of speech perception (p. 43, 48)? What does Lieberman add by talking about "motor equivalence." How is normalization relevant to his argument (p. 51 ff). How does "speech mode" perception fit into his account (p. 48, 58)?

Q6. What does Lieberman see as the implications of Damasio's imagining work for understanding the neural basis of word meanings. (p. 65-66) What are the implications for a strong modularity thesis. What is Lieberman's account of working memory and its implications for neurological basis of syntactic processing. (p.77). What does he conclude about the existence of modules responsible for and dedicated to language (and only language process). (p. 61)

Q7 Given the material (especially in the introduction) on a "functional language system" and its evolution, compare his approach to that of Chomsky as discussed in this morning's workshop.

Last small group task: the group as a whole should ultimately formulate a question for full seminar and write it on the board before the full group session.