Traces of a language deficit on the higher end of the autism spectrum: Subtle dissociations between structural language and figurative language processing

Research in the comprehension and processing of figurative language in ASD invariably documents problems in this area. The greater paradox is that even at the higher end of the spectrum, where structural language competence is intact, problems with extended language persist. Such problems are evident even in the cases of linguistically talented individuals with Asperger syndrome (Vulchanova et al. 2011; 2012). There exist various accounts, ranging from linking potential failure directly to overall structural language competence (Brock, Norbury, Einav, & Nation, 2008; Norbury, 2005), right-hemispheric involvement (Gold & Faust, 2010) to the search for more general cognitive mechanisms and traits in the autistic phenotype (e.g., in terms of weak central coherence, Vulchanova, Falcott, Vulchanov, Stankova, & Eshuis, 2012). An intriguing possibility are accounts of failure at on-line semantic integration with increased complexity and diversity of the stimuli (Coulson & van Petten, 2002). This perspective is even more compelling in light of similar problems in a number of conditions, including both acquired (e.g., Aphasia, Dilkina & Lambon Ralph, 2012) and developmental disorders (Williams Syndrome, Hsu, 2013). In his talk we report evidence from on-going research on figurative language comprehension in high-functioning autism suggestive of deviant patterns of processing and a developmental delay in participants with autism.

This event is open to the general public.

Further information can be found at: http://www.ntnu.edu/employees/mila.vulchanova

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