

Lecture 2

Methods of Psycholinguistic Research (I)

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 1. **Language processing is subconscious.**
 2. **Often, language processing is not observed physically.**
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Important Facts I

1. Language processing (i.e. language production and language perception) is subconscious:

When reading an English text, do your eyes move continuously or move with slight pauses?

While reading, your eyes do not move smoothly from left to right. If you were unaware of this fact, this is because language processing is subconscious!

Important Facts II

2. Since language processing is a mind-internal process, it is mostly not physically observable.

For example, we cannot see how does the mind combine words to produce sentences?

To overcome this predicament (i.e. hidden language processing), psycholinguists GUESS the hidden mental process by analyzing the observable behavior.



How to observe hidden linguistic processes?

- Slips of the tongue (morphemes & the mind)
- Vocabulary experiments (e.g. lexical decision, the priming paradigm).
- Timed-reading experiments
- Event-related potentials.

Slips of the tongue & Spoonerisms

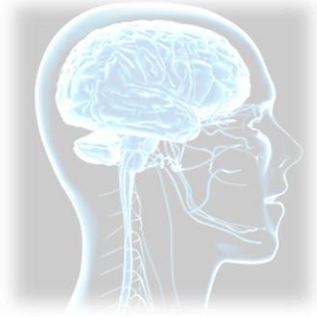
Examples

Slips of the tongue involve: exchanging morphemes within a sentence

These are not just random, useless mistakes. They tell us a lot about how language is processed in the brain!

Intended:	Bad salad
Produced:	Sad ballad
Intended:	I'd forgotten about that
Produced:	I'd forgot aboutten that
Intended:	easily enough
Produced:	easy enoughly

So what do slips of the tongue tell us about the brain and language processing?



They tell us that

1- We plan our speech before uttering it.

2- Morphemes function independently from words during sentence planning.

Intended: rules of word formation

Produced: words of rule formation