

## What is psycholinguistics?

- the study of how the human brain acquires, processes, and understands language
- the study not of the language itself but of the interaction between language and humans.

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## Components of Psycholinguistics

- **Comprehension**
  - speech perception
  - reading
  - lexical access
  - sentence processing
  - discourse processing
- **Speech production**
  - speech errors
  - tips-of-the-tongue
  - disfluencies & hesitations

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## Components of Psycholinguistics, cont.

- **Language acquisition**
- **Neurolinguistics**

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## In any given conversation....

- Speaker begins with a thought to convey.
  - determines level of complexity & formality
  - determines appropriate grammatical structure
  - picks out words and places in order
  - sends commands to abdomen, chest, throat, tongue & lips
  - articulates speech, causing vibrations in air
- Vibrations arrive at listener's eardrum
  - become discharges in auditory nerve
  - brain translates nerve signals into sounds
- Sounds from friend are separated from background noises
- Sounds are separated into individual words (or segmented)
- Words are accessed in brain to find meanings
  - for some, need to choose between alternative meanings
- Words and grammatical structure interpreted
- Link this with prior knowledge of discourse

and all of this was seemingly without any effort

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