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An integrated theory of language production and comprehension

Current accounts of language processing treat production and comprehension as quite distinct. I reject this dichotomy. In its place, I propose that producing and understanding are tightly interwoven, and this interweaving underlies people’s ability to predict themselves and each other. Based on accounts of action, action perception, and joint action in which action and perception are interwoven to support prediction, I develop analogous accounts of production, comprehension and interactive language. Specifically, I propose that people predict their own utterances at different levels of representation (semantics, syntax, and phonology), and that they covertly imitate and predict their partner’s utterances.