

Solving the secrets of syntax: A review of the mechanisms influencing the syntactical organization of birdsong and human language

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Abstract

Many subcomponents of human language can be found within the vocal communication systems of other species, most notably songbirds. One of the most prominent of these subcomponents is syntax. While studies of syntax are abundant, a lack of consensus on the definition of syntax has led to much debate. The goal of this review paper is to solidify the definitions of syntax and to explore the mechanisms that shape syntax formation in songbirds and other species, with a specific focus on neurobiology, genetics, dopamine, and chunking organization.

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