

CAICAI ZHANG, CROSS-DOMAIN TRANSFER BETWEEN MUSIC AND LANGUAGE: A FOCUS ON TONAL LANGUAGES

Wednesday, 09.07.2025, 13:15 PM, UBB Seminar Room 5.1 or via [ZOOM](#)



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Language and music are both evolutionarily ancient and ubiquitous in human civilizations. Although typically regarded as distinct domains, language and music share close parallels, including the use of acoustic attributes such as pitch and duration. Congenital amusia (commonly known as tone deafness), a lifelong neurogenetic disorder characterized by impaired musical pitch processing in the absence of brain injury, provides an excellent opportunity to explore the relationship between language and music, as well as to inform related theories. Despite decades of research, several fundamental aspects of congenital amusia remain controversial, which hinders the development of a comprehensive understanding of the disorder and its implications for theories on the language-music relationship. The debates center around two key issues: (1) whether amusia is a domain-specific or domain-general disorder, and (2) the neural bases of amusia. In this talk, I will discuss a series of studies conducted by my lab that investigate these issues and their implications for understanding the neurocognitive mechanisms underlying the transfer between music and language.

Dr. Caicai Zhang is the Director of the Neurocognition of Language, Music and Learning Lab and an Associate Professor in the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She is also a member of the Research Centre for Language, Cognition and Neuroscience, as well as an affiliated member of the Speech Therapy Unit. Her work broadly concentrates on how language is processed and represented in the human brain, and how it interacts with other domains such as music and cognition. At a more specific level, her research focuses on: (1) the relationship between language and music, investigated through how tone deafness and musical training experience affect speech processes; (2) the contribution of sleep to language learning and memory consolidation in children and adults; and (3) the neurocognition of neurodevelopmental disorders of language and communication.



Dr. Zhang has received numerous grants awarded by the Ministry of Science and Technology of P.R.C., the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Hong Kong Research Grants Council, and the Food and Health Bureau of Hong Kong. She is currently an Associate Editor/Academic Editor for Scientific Reports, PLOS ONE, and Frontiers in Psychology.

The Seminar takes place at University Vienna, UBB, Djerassiplatz 1, 1030 Vienna, at seminar room 5.1. (5th floor) or via Zoom. With the following link you can enter the Zoom meeting directly or use the Zoom-Client, Meeting-ID: 989 3919 0732, Kenncode: 033461
<https://univienna.zoom.us/j/98939190732?pwd=bEh4bGtXVE43cVc4ck1OUUFPUFVBZx09>