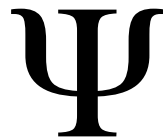




DET PSYKOLOGISKE FAKULTET



*An fMRI investigation
into the multifunctional role of the STS*

HOVEDOPPGAVE

profesjonsstudiet i psykologi

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Veileded

Prof. dr. psychol. Karsten Specht

Forord til artikkelen/ hovedoppgaven

Studien som danner grunnlaget for denne artikkelen/ hovedoppgaven ble gjort i regi av forskningsgruppen Bergen fMRI Group, ledet av prof. Kenneth Hugdahl, og gjort under sub-forskningsgruppen 'Bergen Research Group on Auditory Perception' (The BeRG-AP) ledet av prof. Karsten Specht. Selve testingen ble gjennomført på Haukeland Sykehus, på avdelingen for Radiologi. Det ble benyttet en funksjonell MR maskin for studien, som ble betjent av radiografer som jobber på avdelingen. U.t. bidro på aspekter av den designmessige utformingen av det eksperimentelle oppsettet, og det eksperimentelle oppsettet ble styrt av u.t. under gjennomføringen av testingen. Innledningsvis, i den eksperimentelle fasen, var også en forskningsassistent ved navn Marta Dyl deltakende i gjennomføringen av testingen av deltakere. Hun, sammen med u.t., var ansvarlig for rekrutteringen av deltakere til studien, samt med å sette sammen det eksperimentelle stimuli for testingen. fMRI rådataen ble bearbeidet av prof. Specht. Analyser av dataen ble gjort av u.t., men med veiledning av prof. Specht.

Hovedoppgaven ble skrevet som en artikkel (artikkelformat) klar for publisering i tidsskriftet *Neuroimage*. Artikkelen ble utformet i henhold til APA sine retningslinjer for utforming, og i henhold til de retningslinjer for utforming gitt av tidsskriftet. Retningslinjene gitt av tidsskriftet kan finnes på følgende nettside:

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Abstract

The superior temporal sulcus (STS) has been implicated subserving speech perception, audiovisual integration, and theory of mind. Prior functional imaging studies have also reported that distinct neuronal patches within the STS region show overlapping activation in response to these three cognitive processes. This finding has led to a theory that the STS as whole, or at least parts of it, are crossmodal and multifunctional in nature, subserving multiple and different processing demands based on network connectivity. The multifunctional role of STS was investigated by applying an fMRI mixed block- and event-related design, in which 20 participants were tested on three paradigms; *speech perception*, *audiovisual integration*, and *theory of mind*. Data was analysed using one-way ANOVA. Individual analysis of each contrast showed activation within the STS region for all three paradigms, with speech perception and audiovisual integration activating a large bilateral posterior STS area, and theory of mind activating bilateral middle and anterior STS areas. Global conjunction analysis revealed conjunct activation in the bilateral posterior STS area, though greater in cluster size in the right hemisphere, and showed a second discrete left middle-posterior STS activated patch. The results are on the whole in line with previous research, and indicate that the posterior STS area subserves crossmodal integration and that distinct sub-structures of the STS might be multifunctional in their processing ability. This is briefly discussed in relation to the theory of network connectivity.

Sammendrag

Den superiøre temporale sulcusen (STS) er blitt funnet til å betjene taleoppfattelse, audiovisuell integrering, og 'theory of mind' prosessering. Tidligere funksjonelle avbildningsstudier har også rapportert at forskjellige nevronale substrukturer inni STS viser overlappende aktivering i respons til disse tre prosessene. Dette funnet har ledet flere innenfor feltet til å foreslå at STS som helhet, eller i hvert fall deler av den, er kryssmodal og multifunksjonell ved at den tilsynelatende betjener ulike prosesseringskrav på bakgrunn av mer omfattende nevronal nettverkstilkobling. Den multifunksjonelle rollen til STS ble undersøkt i dette studiet med fMRI metodikk. Designet av studien var et blandet blokk -og event-relatert design, og studien inkluderte 20 deltakere. Det eksperimentelle utformingen bestod av tre betingelser: *taleoppfattelse, audiovisuell integrering, og 'theory of mind'*. Dataen ble analysert med enveis ANOVAs. Individuell analyse av de tre betingelsene viste aktivering innenfor STS regionen for alle tre paradigmer. Resultatet viste at taleoppfattelse og audiovisuelle integrering aktiverte et stort bilaterale posteriort STS område, mens 'theory of mind' aktiverte mer begrensede bilaterale midtre og anteriore STS områder. En global kombinasjonsanalyse ('conjunction analysis') av de tre betingelsene viste kombinert aktivering i det bilaterale posteriore STS området, med noe mer omfattende aktivering på venstre side, og noe begrenset aktivering i det venstre midtre-posteriore STS området. Resultatene fra studien er i tråd med tidligere forskning, og indikerer samlet sett at det posteriore STS området betjener kryssmodal integrering og at forskjellige substrukturer innenfor STS kan være multifunksjonelle i sin prosesseringssevne. Dette blir også diskutert i forhold til teorien om nevronal nettverkstilkobling.

An fMRI investigation into the multifunctional role of the STS

Keywords:

fMRI, STS, crossmodal, speech perception, audiovisual integration, theory of mind

1. Introduction

A growing number of research findings from neuroimaging studies and from human lesion studies have implicated the superior temporal sulcus (STS) in being a key cortical brain structure in an impressive array of perceptual and cognitive functions. Speech perception, Theory of Mind (ToM) and Audiovisual Integration (AV integration) are three functional processes which have in particular been found to be subserved by the STS cortical region. The STS is a large sulcus which divides the superior and middle temporal gyri (STG and MTG), extending from the foremost anterior to posterior part of the temporal lobe, running parallel and inferior to the lateral fissure. At its posterior point it transverses the angular gyrus at the intersection to the inferior parietal lobe.

Speech perception (SP)

A number of positron emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies have demonstrated the involvement of the superior temporal cortex in speech processing (Binder, Rao, Hammeke, Yetkin, Jesmanowicz et al., 1994; Dhankhar, Wexler, Fulbright, Halwes, Blamire et al., 1997; Howard, Patterson, Wise, Brown, Friston et al., 1992; Jäncke, Shah, Posse, Grosse-Ryuken, & Müller-Gärtner, 1998; Osnes, Hugdahl, & Specht, 2011^a; Osnes, Hugdahl, Hjelmervik,

& Specht, 2011^b; Petersen, Fox, Posner, Mintun, & Raichle, 1989; Price, Wise, Warburton, Moore, Howard et al., 1996; Rimol, Specht, Weis, Savoy, & Hugdahl, 2005; Specht & Reul, 2003; Specht, Rimol, Reul, & Hugdahl, 2005; Specht, Osnes, & Hugdahl, 2009; Wise, Chollet, Hadar, Friston, Hoffner et al., 1991). This is not surprising since the superior temporal cortex comprises part of the primary auditory cortex (PAC/AI) and much of the secondary auditory cortex (AII). Looking at more focal points of activation, functional imaging studies have demonstrated increased activation within the STS bilaterally in response to both speech vs. complex non-speech stimuli (auditory stimuli matched according to spectral and temporal features) (Binder, Frost, Hammeke, Bellgowan, Springer et al., 2000; Uppenkamp, Johnsrude, Norris, Marslen-Wilson, & Patterson, 2006; Specht & Reul, 2003; Specht et al., 2009; Zatorre, Evans, Meyer, & Gjedde, 1992) and speech vs. tone sequences (Binder, Frost, Hammeke, Rao, & Cox, 1996; Binder, Frost, Hammeke, Cox, Rao et al., 1997; Binder et al., 2000; Démonet, Price, Wise, & Frackowiak, 1992; Osnes et al., 2011a, 2011b; Rimol et al., 2005; Specht & Reul, 2003, Specht et al., 2009). Reviewing both their own research and other imaging studies, Hickok and Poeppel (2000) suggest that the posterior-superior temporal lobe area bilaterally constitutes the prime cortical substrate of speech perception (SP), with the left posterior STS (pSTP) and posterior-superior temporal gyrus (pSTG) being involved in speech production in addition, finding projections from pSTP/sSTG to frontal and parietal regions known to host auditory-motor interaction. A host of studies have also found lateralised findings within the STS region (e.g., Belin & Zatorre, 2000; Jäncke, Wüstenberg, Scheich, & Heinze, 2002; Mummery, Ashburner, Scott, & Wise, 1999; Scott, Blank, Rosen, & Wise, 2000; Wise, Scott, Blank, Mummery, Murphy et al., 2001). While some studies have found specific

activation within the left middle STS (mSTS) in response to speech and speech-like sounds, others studies have reported specific activation within the left mSTS in response to phonological and prelexical processing (Jäncke et al., 2002; Price, Thierry, & Griffiths, 2005; Osnes et al., 2011b; Scott et al., 2000; Scott & Wise, 2004; Specht & Reul, 2003; Specht et al., 2005, 2009), lateralized activation within the left pSTS area in the context of word perception (eg. Mummery et al., 1999; Wise et al., 2001), and lateralized left anterior STS (aSTS) activation in relation to intelligible speech perception processing (Scott & Johnsrude, 2003; Scott et al., 2000). The common finding of lateralization of speech perception to the left STS is also supported by findings of higher temporal resolution in the left auditory cortex (Zatorre & Belin, 2001). Conversely, Zatorre and Belin (2001) found higher spectral resolution in the right auditory cortex. This finding, in line with studies showing that the processing of music and prosodic information is primarily mediated through known right temporal lobe auditory structures (Grimshaw, Kwasny, Covell, & Johnson, 2003; Tervaniemi, 2001; Tervaniemi and Hugdahl, 2003; Zatorre, Belin, & Penhune, 2002), and in line with studies reporting lateralisation to the right side in response to nonverbal stimuli (Engelien, Tüscher, Hermans, Isenberg, Eidelberg et al., 2006; Liebenthal, Binder, Spitzer, Possing, & Medler, 2005), suggests that there exists a functional lateralisation of speech perception to the left hemisphere and tone perception to the right hemisphere (Binder et al., 2000; Specht, Osnes & Hugdahl, 2009).

Lesion studies in humans and neuroanatomical studies from primates have also implicated the STS regions in speech perception. Lesion studies of human aphasics have shown that focal lesions contained within the left Wernicke's area, overlapping the middle-posterior STS region, produce specific impairments in speech perception

(Hickok and Poeppel, 2000; Scott & Johnsrude, 2003). A study by Samson, Apperly, Chiavarino, and Humphreys (2004) found for instance that lesions to left pSTS, intersecting the parietal lobe, were strongly associated with deficits in speech comprehension. Neuroanatomical studies from primates have in contrary implicated the aSTS in auditory perception, identifying this region as a multimodal polysensory area, responsible for crossmodal perceptual integration (Hein & Knight, 2008; Scott & Johnsrude, 2003).

In contrast to the classically held notion of functional lateralization to the language-dominant hemisphere, speech-responsive areas have been reported in both the left and right STS region. It seems, however, that the left STS (dominant hemisphere for most people) is nonetheless chiefly responsible for speech and speech-like analysis, whilst the right STS has been found to be particularly responsible for tone-speech differentiation. Functional imaging studies have spatially furthermore shown bilateral activation in the middle and posterior STS areas in relation to temporal feature-analysis, as well as anterior circumscribed STS activity in response to linguistic analysis processing (Binder et al., 1997, 2000; Scott & Johnsrude, 2003; Specht and Reul, 2003). The particular pattern of reported activation within the STS, the surrounding cortex, as well as throughout the brain, has furthermore led to a suggested model of speech perception in which there are two distinct neuronal pathways involved in speech perception, somewhat analogous to the ventral-dorsal distinction in visual perception. It is suggested that there is a somewhat left lateralised anterior-ventral pathway, which transverses the polymodal cortex of the anterior STS, thought to play a role in acoustic-phonetic analysis and thought to be a “what” pathway – subserving auditory object identification by relying on spectral dynamic analysis; and a posterior-dorsal pathway,

extending over the polymodal cortex of the posterior STS, thought to be more involved in explicit sub-lexical speech processing and thought to be a “where” or “how” stream of processing analysing more temporal acoustic features (Binder et al., 1997, 2000; Hickok and Poeppel, 2000; Rimol et al., 2005; Scott & Johnsrude, 2003; Specht & Reul, 2003)

Audiovisual Integration (AVI)

As research has found activation within the STS region in response to unimodal auditory activation (e.g., speech perception), so have studies also found discrete activations within the STS region in response to certain unimodal visual stimuli. Some electrophysiological and imaging studies have for instance indicated that the STS region is involved in biological motion processing (Allison Puce, & McCarthy, 2000; Grossman & Blake, 2001, 2002; Puce & Perret, 2003). A number of imaging studies have found specific activation in the posterior STS (pSTS) in response to point-light stimuli portraying biological motion (Grossman and Blake, 2001, 2002), but also in response to facial stimuli (Haxby, Hoffman, & Gobbini, 2000; Hoffman and Haxby, 2000; Puce, Allison, Bentin, Gore, & McCarthy, 1998). The fact that activation has been demonstrated in the pSTS in response to both biological motion processing and facial-feature processing, has led some researchers (e.g., Grossman and Blake, 2002) to suggest that the STSp is crucial for complex kinetic motion processing, even at a very precise facial-feature level. Lesions findings have also shown STS region involvement in spatial awareness, with studies on patients with visual neglect showing damage in the right STG area (Karnath, 2001). Similarly, other studies have linked circumscribed lesions to the right STG with deficits in biological motion processing and visual neglect

(Akiyama, Kato, Muramatsu, Saito, Nakachi, et al., 2006; Akiyama, Kato, Muramatsu, Saito, Umeda, et al., 2006). These latter findings come in addition to the early findings from lesion and single-cell recording studies on primates, which have also implicated the STS in spatial-, facial-feature-, and biological motion processing deficits (Hein & Knight, 2008).

There is a recurrent finding from imaging studies that specific auditory and visual processes activate overlapping areas within the STS, with several studies specifically linking the pSTS with crossmodal binding of auditory and visual stimuli (Beauchamp, Argall, Bodurka, Duyn, & Martin, 2004; Beauchamp, Lee, Argall, & Martin, 2004; Beauchamp, Yasar, Frye, & Ro, 2008; Calvert, 2001; Calvert, Campbell, & Brammer, 2000; Calvert, Hansen, Iversen, & Brammer, 2001; Hein & Knight, 2008; van Attenveldt, Formisano, Goebel, & Blomert, 2004, 2007; Wright, Pelphrey, Allison, McKeown, & McCarthy, 2003). Evidence of a multimodal or crossmodal integrative neuronal patch within the STS region has also come from neuranatomical and electrophysiological studies on nonhuman primates, which have shown convergence of afferent sensory inputs along the fundus of the (primate) pSTS (Benevento, Fallon, Davies, & Rezak, 1977; Bruce, Desiome, & Gross, 1981; Seltzer & Pandya, 1978). This area in primates has been named the superior temporal polysensory (STP) area, as single units here activate in response to auditory, visual and somatosensory stimulation (Bruce et al., 1981). It is believed that the STP is homologous to the human pSTS, which has been suggested to be the host region within the STS for audiovisual integration (AVI) (Beauchamp et al., 2004^b, 2008; Calvert 2001; Calvert et al., 2000, 2001). Human imaging studies have, however, yet to find clear evidence of a polysensory or multisensory area in the human STS, one which is responsive to all three modalities;

visual, auditory and somatosensory (Beauchamp et al., 2008). Findings though, from lesion studies, have still indicated multimodal processing within the STS. It has been reported that damage to the STS can produce deficits in aspects of both visual and auditory perception (Samson et al., 2004). Samson et al. (2004), however, found that these visual deficits also affected aspects of theory of mind (ToM), a result which would indicate a crossmodal integration process beyond that of simple audiovisual integration. Considering specifically the pSTS as an multimodal integration patch, it is uncertain if it only subserves AVI or is part of a larger distributed set of regions involved in crossmodal integration, irrespective of whether the stimuli are audiovisual or unimodal auditory or unimodal visual (Hocking and Price, 2008).

Theory of Mind (ToM)

The superior temporal sulcus (STS) region has been consistently linked across different imaging techniques, and across multimodal and contrasting cognitive paradigms such as verbal and nonverbal tasks, with theory of mind processing. *Theory of mind* (ToM) refers the ability to attribute mental states to others, to assume the viewpoint of others, to imagine what they perceive. It thus concerns mentalising others' mental states and viewpoints. The typically approach to assess ToM ability is with short stories or animate cartoons, describing or showing events which affect the mental state of another person in contrast to emotionally neutral non-ToM stimuli (Hein & Knight, 2008). Early imaging studies using PET (Brunet, Sarfatti, Hardy-Baylé, Decety, 2000; Fletcher, Happé, Frith, Baker, & Dolan et al., 1995; Goel, Grafman, Sadato, & Hallet, 1995) have shown increased activation in the superior temporal area at large, including the STS, in response to ToM stimulation. Functional magnetic resonance imaging

(fMRI) studies have shown multiple and more specific findings, demonstrating significant activation in the posterior STS (pSTS), the adjacent temporo-parietal junction (TPJ), the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), as well as the temporal poles, in response to ToM stimulation (Frith & Frith, 2003, 2006; Gallagher & Frith, 2003; Gallagher, Happe, Brunswick, Fletcher, Frith et al., 2000; Kobayashi, Glover, & Temple, 2007; Saxe & Kanwisher, 2003; Völlm, Taylor, Richardson, Corcoran, Stirling et al., 2006). Studies which have reported STS involvement have predominantly found specific activation in the right STS, and in more posterior areas (eg. Gallagher et al., 2000; Gallagher & Frith, 2003; Kobayashi et al., 2003; Saxe 2006; Saxe Carey & Kanwisher, 2004). These findings have associated the right STS with the ability to understand the meaning of human animate cartoons (Gallagher et al., 2000), with or without the requirement to mentalise (Gallagher & Frith, 2003), whilst other studies have found STS involvement in understanding the causality and intentionality of others' behaviours (Brunet et al., 2000), the interpretation of complex intentional movements (Castelli, Happé, Frith, & Frith, 2000), and in the ability to take self-perspective (Vogely, Bussfeld, Newen, Herrmann, Happé, et al., 2001). Though there is ample evidence which shows that frontal lobe lesions produce deficits in ToM ability (Stuss, Gallup, & Alexander, 2001), there are fewer findings that associate STS lesions with ToM. Samson et al. (2004) did, however, find that lesions in the upper bank of the left STS, intersecting the parietal lobe, led to difficulties in performing false belief tasks. They also, though, found that these lesions produced deficits in speech comprehension and biological motion processing, demonstrating that lesions in similar STS regions can cause different functional deficits. Such a finding argues against a strict functional subdivision of the STS (Hein & Knight, 2008). Within the ToM literature it is believed

that the host brain regions or mediating cortical areas of ToM ability are the medial-frontal cortex and the paracingulate cortex. This is in accordance with Leslie's (1987) model of mentalising and theory of mind development, as well as the *anterior paracingulate decoupling mechanism hypothesis of ToM* (Frith & Frith, 2003, 2006; Gallagher & Frith, 2003). Within this framework, STS involvement is then thought to represent a support function, processing and analyse initial explicit social cues, such as the perception of intentionality and causality of others' behaviours, necessary for theory of mind ability (Allison et al., 2000; Brunet, et al., 2000; Frith & Frith, 2003, 2006; Gallagher & Frith, 2003). It can be reasoned that processing biological motion, gaze- and eye-movement, and processing facial-features are crucial and necessary components of theory of mind and mentalising ability. Accordingly, one could expect tasks tapping the aforementioned abilities to activate the same neuronal patches across the different modalities and cognitive paradigms, as well as overlap with ToM activated areas. Indeed, studies have found such co-activation and overlap between different paradigms. This has led researchers (e.g., Gallagher & Frith, 2003; Frith & Frith, 2006; Hein & Knight, 2008; Völlm et al., 2006; Saxe, 2006) to suppose that STS, particularly the right STS, is part of a network of social cognition cortical areas responsible for theory of mind processing.

Having shown to subserve speech perception, audiovisual integration and theory of mind, it is arguable to claim that the STS is a highly multifunctional cortical region. On the other hand, functional imaging findings have associated some discrete cortical areas within the STS to specific functional processes, indicating a somewhat still functional differentiation of the STS. In line with this supposition, and considering the

aforementioned reviewed research, it is arguable that there is some anatomical subdivision and functional differentiation of the STS region into an anterior segment which primarily subserves intelligible speech perception, a middle section which subserves phonological and prelexical processing – and accordingly speech-like perception, and a posterior area which is responsible for theory of mind ability and audiovisual integration – having found coactivation in overlapping areas in response to both unimodal visual and auditory stimuli. And though evidence points to bilateral involvement of the STS region, data nonetheless indicates a somewhat left lateralised functional specialisation for speech perception, as well as a right lateralised functional specialisation for theory of mind ability. However, seeing that SP, AVI and ToM bilaterally recruits the pSTS region, it is defensible to posit that the STS is not wholly functionally subdivided. Crossmodal findings within the STS suggest accordingly that the STS, or at least certain cortical subdivisions of the STS – the pSTS, is multifunctional in nature – subserving different cognitive processes in response to specified cognitive demands. Indeed, in line with neuroanatomical findings showing bidirectional connections of the STS region with an array of other cortical structures, Hein and Knight (2008) suggest that the STS is not strictly functionally subdivided, but that the different functions of the STS regions are determined by the functional characteristics of coactivated higher-order brain regions. As such, the multifunctionality of the STS region might be based coactivations with other brain regions, such as frontal, parietal or temporal regions, with specific activation being determined by the nature of the network interactions.

The goal of this study is to further explore the multifunctionality of the STS region by applying an fMRI method to investigate and identify neuronal activation in

the STS region in response to speech perception (SP), audiovisual integration (AVI) and theory of mind (ToM). The study applied a mixed event-related and block design to see whether the STS region responds to all three conditions separately, and to test whether there is any conjunct activation within any STS area across all three paradigms. The study does not include an investigation of any specific areas of interest, nor does it assume or explore activations to other and wider regions of activation outside of the STS region. It is hypothesised that all three cognitive processes (or paradigms); SP, AVI and ToM, will show independent activation within the STS, and that there will be STS areas showing conjunct activation across all three conditions.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Participants

The participants were 20, right handed, healthy male adults, recruited within the age range of between 20-30 years old. Participants were recruited from the student population at the University of Bergen and from the local hospital (Haukeland University hospital) staff population. Handedness was determined by a modified version of the Edinburgh Inventory (Annett, 1970). All participants gave written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and institutional guidelines, and the regional ethics committee of the State Department of Health approved the study. All participants were screened by licensed radiographers working at the fMRI lab (Haukeland University Hospital) for neurological, cardiac and prosthetic issues or complications, which would exclude them from undergoing MR imaging and thus participation.

2.2. Activation paradigms and stimuli

The experimental testing included three conditions, one condition to test (capture activation) for each paradigm:

1. Speech perception
2. Audiovisual integration
3. Theory of mind

2.2.1. Speech Perception (SP)

In order to investigate and capture neuronal activation associated with SP, the study employed a speech perception stimulus design, based on the previously described “soundmorph” (SM) technique (Specht, Rimol, Reul, & Hugdahl, 2005; Specht et al., 2009), however slightly shortened. This soundmorph paradigm was chosen since it has proven to be an effective paradigm in capturing neuronal activation relating to speech perception, particularly in capturing activity within the STS region (Specht et al., 2005, 2009, 2011a, 2011). In this SM paradigm participants are presented with morphed and transitioned consonant-vowels (CV) /da/ and /ta/ as speech stimuli. The CVs were read by a male voice and lasted 420 ms. The SM condition also included two non-speech control sounds, a guitar sound (A3) and a piano chord (C major triad on a C3 root). Both speech stimuli and non-speech control stimuli were digitizing and matched in duration and mean intensity (Goldwave Software). Further, white noise was generated and inserted into the experimental setup. The white noise was also matched in duration and mean intensity to the speech and non-speech stimuli. The stimuli material was manipulated further by creating a transition from a non-speech sound into a speech sound. This transition was created by constructing seven separate sounds or group-

based trials, in which the amount of white noise perturbation in the sounds was parametrically varied. Accordingly, this manipulation procedure gradually reveals the specific spectral and temporal characteristic of the speech (CV) sounds in a stepwise manner. The non-speech acoustic sounds were manipulated in the same manner. [An example of the stepwise “morphing” transition (procedure) of the speech stimulus can be viewed in fig.1]. The design differentiates only between speech and non-speech, i.e., not between the underlying stimuli themselves (e.g., between /da/ and /ta/ or between the piano and guitar sound). A more detailed description of the soundmorph technique can be gleaned from Specht et al. (2005, 2009, 2011b). In the present design each stimulus category and manipulation step had 14 repetitions. The SM condition included in total 182 regular events and 86 null events (e.g., trials with no stimuli), The order of the events/trials was pseudorandomised across manipulation steps and categories (speech/nonspeech) so that the morphing sequence was never presented in a consecutive order. This was done to avoid expectancy effects. In order to also preclude neuronal activation related to top-down processes (Dehaene-Lambertz, Pallier, Serniclaes, Sprenger-Charolles, Jobert et al., 2005; Dufor, Serniclaes, Sprenger-Charolles, & Démonte, 2007; Sabri, Binder, Desai, Medler, Leitl et al., 2008) and to keep attention relatively constant during fMRI data acquisition (Jäncke, Mirzazade, & Shah, 1999), the sound-morph condition included a speech-stimulus unrelated behavioural task. Participants were instructed to report, with a response button placed in dominant hand, whenever they heard a stimulus in one ear only. The design included 14 target trials which were randomly distributed, with an equal number of trials for the left and right ear, respectively. The total condition time for the SM paradigm was 18min:03s.

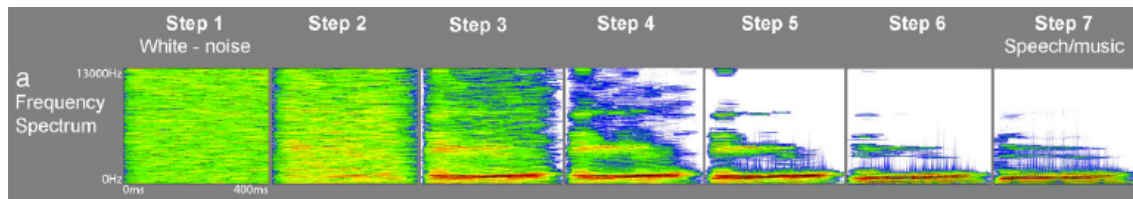


Fig. 1.

Example of a “sound-morphing transition, where the stimulus changes (is being “morphed”) from white noise (left) to a speech sound, to a “da” CV syllable (right). Fig. acquired with permission from Osnes et al. (2011^a)

2.2.2. Audiovisual Integration (AVI)

The AVI condition included three separate tasks: an audiovisual integration task, a control visual task, and a control auditory task. The premise here is that the two control tasks are used to cognitively subtract unimodal visual and auditory associated activity from the neuronal activity associated with the main experimental sub-task – audiovisual integration. The audiovisual integration task consisted of showing the participants a blank black screen in which a white asterix would appear, either synchronous or dis-synchronous with a simple short-pitched sine-wave tone (1000 Hz) being played into both ears. The key feature to this integration task was that the participants were instructed to indicate with a single response button (placed in dominant hand) whether the asterix and the tone appeared NOT synchronous. This task then forces the participants to have to perceive if an auditory and a visual stimulus appear together, a mental process which would require audiovisual integration. In the control visual task participants were only shown the blank black screen with appearing white or grey asterixes, and were instructed to indicate with the response button if an appearing asterix was grey. In the control auditory task participants were played a single short-pitched tone, on either both or one of their ears (left or right), and instructed to respond

with the response button if they heard the tone only on one ear. The auditory control task was designed so that participants would hear interchangingly a tone on both ears during half the trials and a tone on either the left or right ear, in equal amounts, during the rest of the trials. During the control auditory task the visual stimuli-screen was left blank. The design of AVI condition was a block design, with 6 blocks for the integration task and three blocks each for the visual and auditory control tasks. Each block contained 15 trials, with each trial lasting on average 2.2 sec.. The three tasks were presented in a fixed intermittent sequence, and with instruction on how to respond before each block. The total time for the AVI condition was 10min:56s. (An example of each task in the AVI condition can viewed in fig. 2).

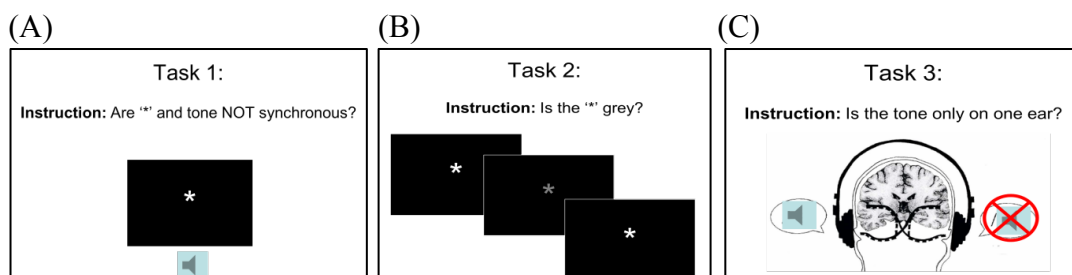


Figure 2.

Example of AVI experimental condition tasks. (A) AVI task, with instruction; press the button when /*/ and tone are NOT synchronous. (B) Visual control task, with instruction; press the button when you see grey /*/ (C) Auditory control task, with instruction; press the button when you hear the tone only on one ear.

2.2.3. Theory of Mind (ToM)

To assess theory of mind (ToM) processing and activation, the study used comic strip cartoons derived from Brunet, Sarfatti, Hardy-Baylé, and Decety (2000, 2003), and acquired from aforementioned first author. The design of the ToM condition included

one experimental theory of mind task and one control task. The experimental setup of the applied comic strips is that they require either an attribution of intention of others (ToM cartoon – experimental task) or the use of knowledge about the physical properties of objects (control task) (“physical logic”: Spelke, Vishton, & Von Hofsten, 1996, as cited in Brunet et al., 2000). The premise, as with the AVI condition, is that one can cognitively subtract the neuronal activity associated with the control task from the AVI task, and thus see which cortical areas which are solely involved in theory of mind or mentalising. The experimental setup of the ToM condition included twenty-eight ToM cartoon trials (stories), in which participants were tasked to select the correct best-fit answer to the story out of two possible responses, and twenty-eight control task trials, in which participants were presented three cartoon pictures, whereby two were copies (identical), and prompted to select out of two possible answers the cartoon picture which appeared twice (see fig. 4 below for examples of the two tasks). The design of the ToM condition was also a block design, comprising six blocks, with seven trials each. ToM and control cartoon trials were randomly arranged prior experimental testing and administered in a fixed sequence for every participant. Trials were randomised in order to avoid expectancy effects. Each response item, or cartoon slide, was presented for 4.^{1/2} seconds, with the total condition time set at 09min:08s. The participants were given two hand-held controls for this condition, one for each hand, with a button on each control to which to indicate response to each successive task: right hand button for right side response; left hand button for left side response. Participants were given instructions on screen and verbally by the test-technicians as to how to respond to the cartoon strips prior testing.

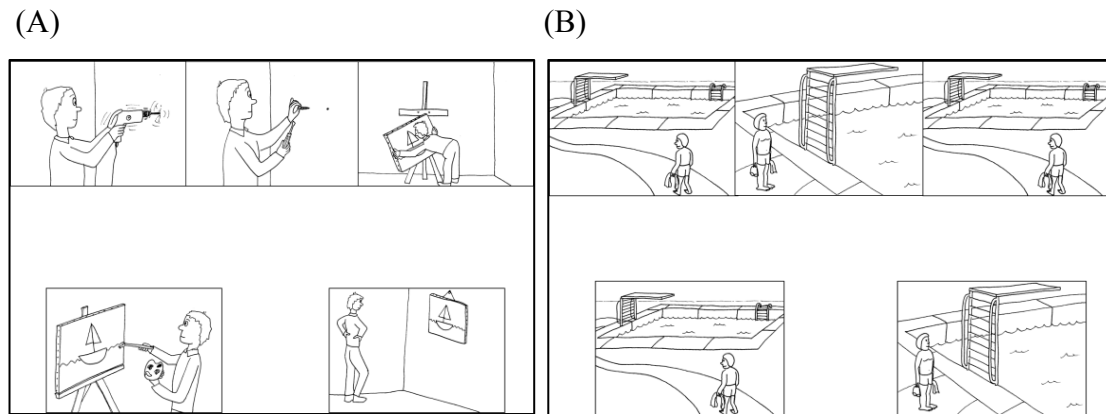


Figure 3.

Example of a story stimuli from Comic-Strip Task used to assess theory of mind (ToM): (A) ToM comic strip task, in which participants should choose between one of the two lower pictures as a response/answer (left picture correct answer here); (B) Control task, in which participants should see that two of three upper cartoon pictures are identical, and should pick this picture out from the two option-pictures below (left picture correct answer here).

2.3. Experimental procedure

Auditory experimental stimuli were presented through MR compatible headphones with insulating materials that also compensated for the ambient scanner noise by 24 dB (NordicNeuroLab, www.nordicneurolab.no). Visual stimuli were presented through MR compatible goggles which were fastened to the participants' heads during the experimental paradigms which involved visual stimuli. The intensity of the stimuli was the same as described in Osnes et al. (2011a). Presentation of the visual and auditory stimuli, and recording of the behavioural responses, was controlled by the E-prime software (Psychology Software Tools Inc.) running on a PC placed outside of the MR chamber. The three paradigms were rotated in a fixed sequence across participants in the experimental setup, so that 1/3rd of participants went through the setup ToM-AVI-SM, a 1/3rd went through with AVI-SM-ToM, and a 1/3rd went

through the setup SM-ToM-AVI.

2.4. Data acquisition

The fMRI study was performed on a 3-T GE Signa Exite scanner. To minimize the effect of scanner noise, a sparse sampling technique was used with 1.5 s of image acquisition and an additional silent gap of 2.3 s, where the stimuli were presented. Axial slices for the functional imaging were positioned parallel to the AC–PC line with reference to a high-resolution anatomical image of the entire brain volume and obtained using a T1-weighted gradient echo pulse sequence (MPRAGE). The functional images were acquired with an EPI sequence, which included: 285 EPI volumes for the SM paradigm, with an 1.5s image acquisition time and a 2.3s silent gap frame; 432 EPI volumes for the AVI paradigm, with an 1.5s image acquisition time and no silent gap; and 360 EPI volumes for the ToM paradigm, with 1.5s image acquisition time and no silent gap. Each EPI volume for the three paradigms contained 25 axial slices (64x64 matrix, 3x3x5.5 mm voxel size, TE 30 ms) that covered the cerebrum and most of cerebellum. The first three volumes for each paradigm were treated as dummy scans and removed prior to the subsequent processing. A short localizer procedure (4s) and a high resolution T1 structural imaging procedure (10min:43s), was conducted before the acquisition of the functional images. After the functional imaging of the three experimental paradigms was executed, participants were further subjected to a diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) procedure (8min:38s).

2.5. Data analysis

The BOLD-fMRI data were pre-processed and statistically analyzed with SPM8 (<http://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm>). The EPI images were first re-aligned to adjust for head movements during the image acquisition and the images were corrected for movement-induced distortions (“unwarping”). Data were subsequently inspected for residual movement artefacts. The realigned image series were then normalized to the stereotaxic Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) reference space provided by the SPM8 software package and resampled with a voxel-size of 2x2x2 mm. The images were finally smoothed by using a Gaussian kernel of 8 mm. Results were analysed both on an individual paradigm level (1st. level analysis) and on a group level (2nd. level analysis), based on the General Linear Model (GLM). The group analysis was performed as an one-way ANOVA analysis, in which all three paradigms were entered. For the SM paradigm contrast, the linear increase in phonetic (speech) perception in response to the seven manipulation steps was plotted into the ANOVA to calculate significant brain activation, whilst for AVI and the ToM contrasts, the difference in activation between the experimental and control tasks was used to calculate significant brain activation for these paradigms. Group activations were examined by specifying contrast for each condition separately. In addition, a global conjunction analysis across all three paradigms was performed. In all analyses a family wise error corrected (FWE-corr.) threshold of $p > 0.05$ was applied, together with a cluster threshold (CI) of at least 10 voxels per cluster. Probability maps (PMs) of each paradigm were estimated by thresholding the individual 1st level results at the $p < 0.05$, averaging them across the group. Results within PMs were explored across participants with a cut-off of 66% (2/3rds).

3. Results

An initial one-way ANOVA analysis (FWE-corr. $p < 0.05$, $CI > 10$ voxels) of each paradigm (condition); soundmorph (SM), audiovisual integration (AVI) and theory of mind (ToM), revealed foci of significant brain activity in the STS region in response to all three paradigms. As shown in table 1 and can be viewed in fig.4, both SM and AVI activated a substantial and circumscribed cluster in both the right and left pSTS region, in Brodmann areas 22 and 48 respectively. The analysis revealed that ToM activated multiple large and distributed clusters across the occipital lobe, the lateral posterior frontal lobe, and across parts of the parietal and temporal lobe, (see fig. 4). Looking specifically at the STS region, it was found that ToM activated small cortical patches in the left aSTS and mSTS/MTG area (Brodmann areas 38 and 21 - respectively), and a small cortical patch in the right aMTS area (Brodmann 20). Fig. 4 shows that the left mSTS/MTG patch stretches towards the pSTS region. The local peak voxels for these three patches are reported in table 1.

Table 1

Foci of significant brain activations associated with SM, AVI and ToM stimuli, only for STS region **

Paradigm	cluster-level		peak-level			MNI, mmm			Brodmann
	P $FWE-corr$	k_E	P $FWE-corr$	T	Z	x	y	z	(area)
SM	0.000	635	0.000	8.51	6.69	64	12	0	22 (pSTS/STG)
	0.000	695	0.000	8.27	6.55	-60	-14	-2	22 (pSTS)
AVI	0.000	540	0.000	8.23	6.54	52	-18	0	48 (pSTS)
	0.000	556	0.000	7.11	5.90	-48	-18	-4	48 (pSTS)
ToM		*	0.001	5.62	4.94	-44	18	-26	38 (aSTS)
	0.004	10	0.002	5.49	4.84	-54	-6	-22	21 (mSTS/MTG)
	0.004	11	0.000	5.73	5.01	48	8	-36	20 (aMTS)

Note. Parametric analysis using one-way ANOVA of each individual contrast, with FWE-corrected threshold of $p < 0.05$ and a cluster threshold of 10 voxels. The table describes the activations in terms of cluster size (voxel size $2 \times 2 \times 2$ mm) (k_E), significance value (t), effect size (z), and localization (MNI space and Brodmann). Peak-level voxel for main cluster is also shown. [x coordinates with a negative value are located in the left hemisphere].

* This local (maxima) activation was found as an extension of a larger activated posterior frontal lobe cluster, located at (MNI, mmm) -48,18,-14 (peak voxel of cluster), cluster size (k_E) = 1263, $p(\text{FEW-corr}) < .000$, $t = 10.76$. (see **)

** For SM and AVI the table shows global maxims, which were located in STS region. For ToM, local peak maxims within STS region had to be specifically explored. A complete table of global ToM activated clusters can be viewed in *Appendix 1*, under the *table 3*.

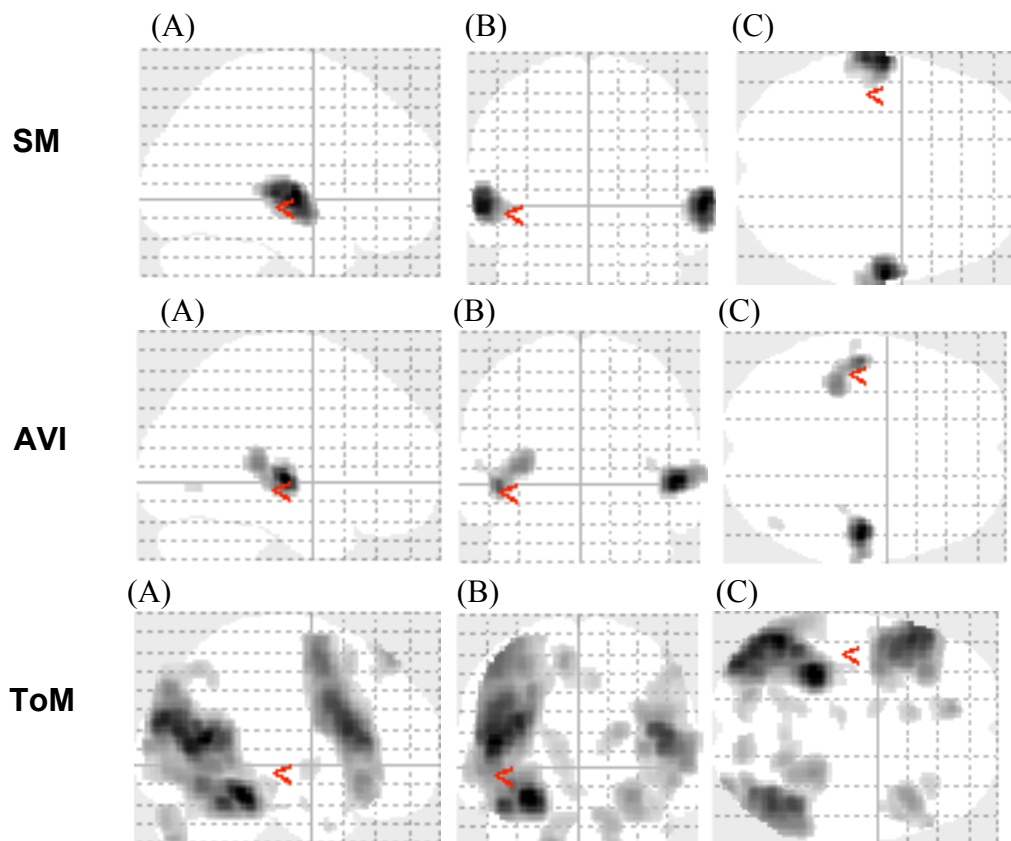


Fig. 4. Significant areas of activation in the individual analysis for the three contrasts: SM, AVI and ToM, [$p < 0.05$ (FWE), $Cl. > 10$]. (A) Sagittal view. (B) Coronal view. (C) Transverse view.

A global conjunction one-way ANOVA analysis (FWE-corr., $p < 0.05$, $Cl > 10$ voxels) of SM, AVI and ToM revealed three significant cortical clusters of activation. As table 2 and fig. 5 shows, there are two closely distributed activated clusters in the left STS region; a small cluster located in the far pSTS region and an even smaller cluster in the middle-posterior STS region, and a moderate sized cluster in the right pSTS region. As seen in fig.6, the activated clusters are located in the posterior and upper bank region in both the left and right STS region. As can be discerned from table 2 and viewed in fig.3, there is a greater – total – activated patch or cluster in the right STS region.

Table 2

Global conjunction analysis of significant brain activations associated with SM, AVI and ToM stimuli

<u>cluster-level</u>		<u>peak-level</u>			<u>MNI, mmm</u>			<u>Brodmann</u>
$P_{FWE-corr}$	k_E	$P_{FWE-corr}$	T	Z	x	y	z	(area)
0.002	26	0.001	2.97	5.58	-52	-40	2	21 (pSTS/MTG)
0.000	100	0.002	2.87	5.44	50	-38	2	21 (pSTS/MTG)
0.010	10	0.006	2.67	5.15	-50	-22	-10	20 (pSTS/STG)

Note: Parametric conjunction analysis using one-way ANOVA of all three contrasts, with FWE-corrected threshold of $p < 0.05$ and a cluster threshold of 10 voxels. The table describes the activations in terms of cluster size (voxel size 2x2x2 mm) (k_E), significance value (t), effect size (z), and localization (MNI space and Brodmann). Peak-level voxel for main cluster is also shown. [-x coordinates denote left hemisphere]

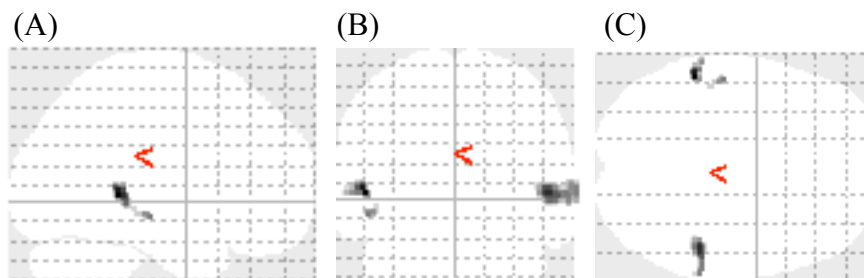


Fig. 5. Significant activation foci for global conjunction analysis of SM, AVI, and ToM, [$p < 0.05$ (FWE), $CI > 10$]. (A) Sagittal view. (B) Coronal view. (C) Transverse view.

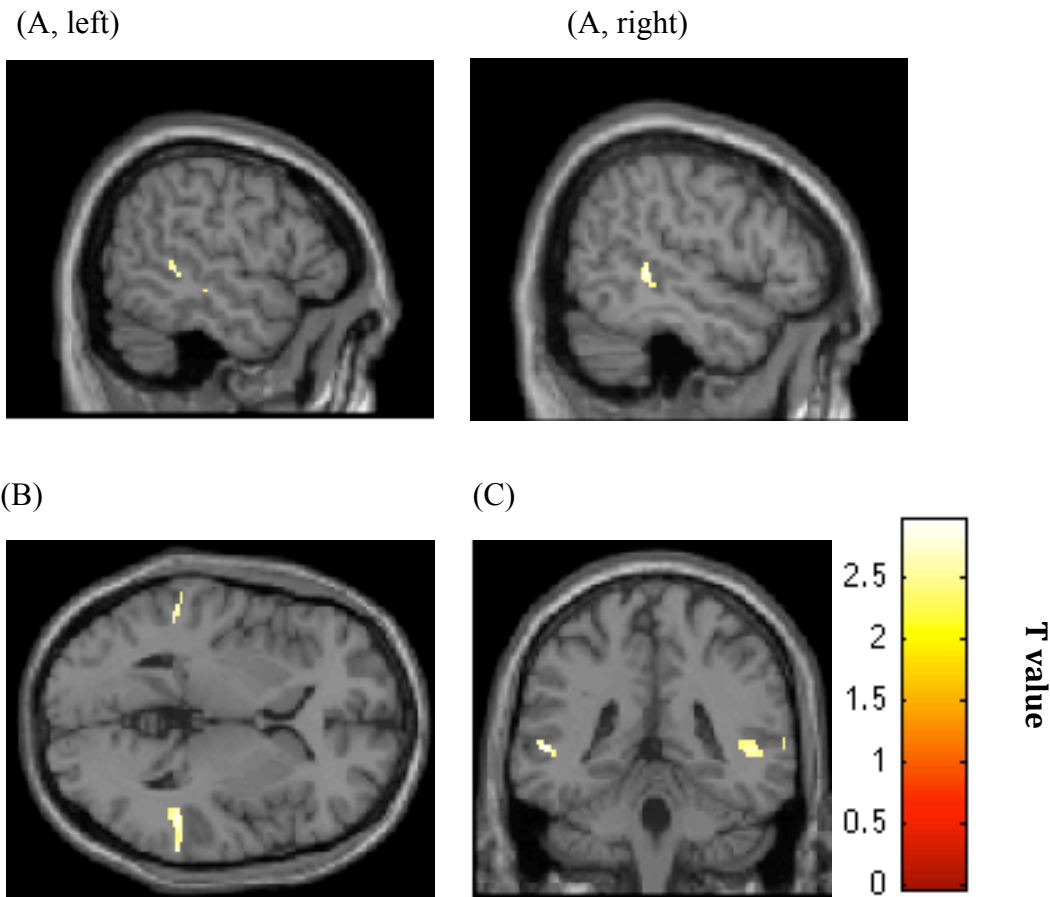


Fig.6. Significant activation foci for global conjunction analysis of SM, AVI, and ToM, [$p < 0.05$ (FWE), $CI > 10$]. (A left) Sagittal view of left hemisphere. (A right) Sagittal view of right hemisphere. (B) Transverse view. (C) Coronal view.

Using Mricron (<http://www.mccauslandcenter.sc.edu/mricro/mricron/>), a statistical and rendering tool for functional MRI data, to analyse the percentage of participants who showed activation in the STS region in relation to SM, AVI and ToM, we found that at least 2/3 of participants showed activation within STS across all three contrasts. Fig. 7 shows that the greatest activation across participants was found for ToM, showing large patches of activation bilaterally in the middle-posterior lateral

frontal lobe, large patches of activation in the lateral occipital lobe transversing the middle posterior temporal lobe, and some small bilateral activation in the anterior and posterior STS region. AVI shows less distributed activation, with some bilateral activation to medial-lateral posterior occipital lobe, and fairly circumscribed bilateral activation in the posterior STS region. SM shows the least distributed activation, with only very circumscribed activation showing bilaterally in the posterior STS region, as well an activated patch in the right middle STS region. Fig. 7 also shows that SM and AVI activate in close proximity to each other in the bilateral pSTS area, whilst ToM shows only some very discrete activation inferior and posterior to SM and AVI, in the bilateral mSTS/MTG area.

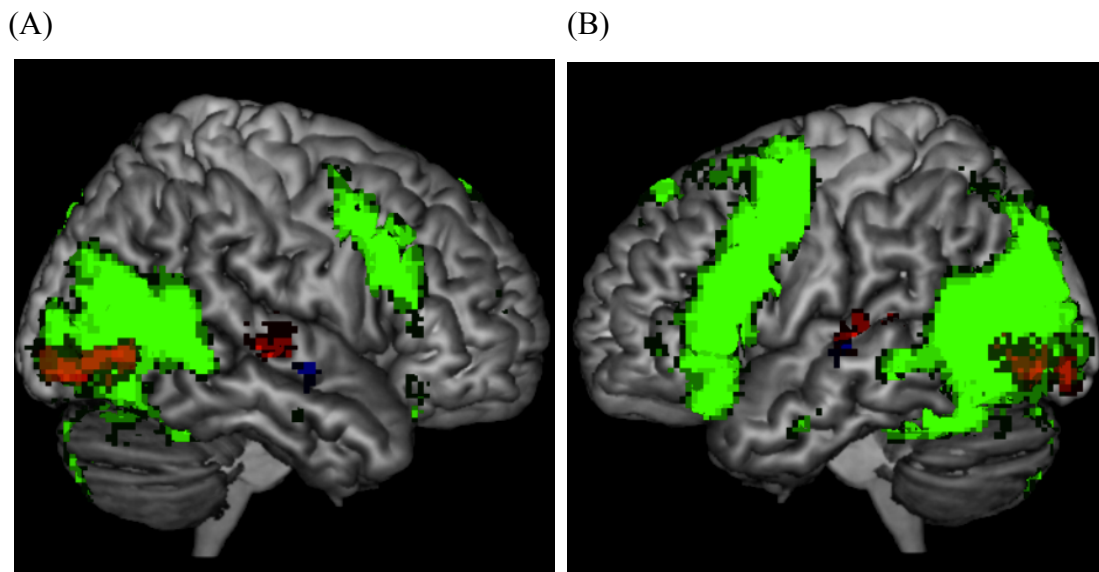


Fig. 7. Probability maps (PMs) ($p < 0.05$) of activation across all three paradigms (contrasts); ToM [green], AVI [red], SM [blue], and across participants with a cut-off of 66% (2/3rds of participants). (A) Right hemisphere. (B) Left hemisphere.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate and identify neuronal activation in the STS region in response to speech perception (SP[SM]), audiovisual integration (AVI), and theory of mind (ToM) using an fMRI method. It was firstly hypothesised that all three paradigms (or cognitive processes) would show individual activation within the STS region. The results confirmed this hypothesis, demonstrating STS region activation in response to individually the SP, AVI, and TOM paradigm. Of interest, the SP and AVI paradigms showed both substantial bilateral activation in the pSTS and mSTS areas, and the ToM paradigm showed some discrete activation in the left STS/MTG area, stretching somewhat posterior. It was secondly hypothesised that the STS region would show conjunct activation in relation to all three paradigms. A global conjunction analysis of SP, AVI and ToM did indeed show joint activation within the STS region at three focal spots: bilateral activation in the pSTS area and some discrete activation in the left m-pSTS area.

There are several aspects of the results worth noting. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the left STS showed conjunct activation in two places, in the pSTS and the mSTS area, whereas the right STS only showed activation in the pSTS. It is likely that the left mSTS activation seen in the conjunction analysis can be accounted for (is mainly driven) by the substantial activation seen by SP and AVI in the left mSTS area. Secondly, the conjunction analysis used in the current study was a global conjunction analysis, and as such, it cannot say if all three paradigms showed coactivation in the three stated patches. A global conjunction analysis tests whether two or more paradigms (contrasts) are not NOT significant compared to each other, i.e., it says that is at least one paradigm significantly activated a given neuronal patch and that the other

paradigms were definitively not significant as well. A *pure conjunction* analysis, on the other hand, shows whether all three paradigms significantly activate the given patch. The present results therefore demonstrate that all three paradigms showed activation bilaterally in the pSTS area and in the right mSTS area, although not that all three showed significant activation, which would be the case in a "pure" conjunction. Considering that the global conjunction analysis did not show any conjunct activity between SP and AVI, which both activated large but discrete areas in the pSTS area, and ToM which showed activation across much of the frontal and parietal lobe, reinforces the supposition that ToM – to a certain degree – also activated the bilateral pSTS area. A third interesting point, is that looking at the PMs one sees that SP and AVI seemingly activate very close but mostly distinct sub-structures within the pSTS, and that ToM activates quite few clusters and more inferiorly in the mSTS/MTG. This could indicate that there is mostly close but not overlapping activation in the pSTS region. The PMs, however, are not spatially precise or statistically relevant in delineating conjunct activation.

Considering previous research, we see that the current findings only partially fit. The study's finding that speech perception and audiovisual integration activates posterior regions of the STS is in line with previous functional imaging studies (e.g., Binder et al., 2000; Specht & Reul, 2003; Specht et al., 2009; Uppenkamp et al., 2006). Though the present study did not find activation in the anterior region of the STS, as some previous studies have found (Scott & Johnsrude, 2003; Scott et al., 2000), some activation was nonetheless observed in the middle to posterior portion of the STS area, supporting previous finding that have shown mSTS activation in response to perception of speech-like sounds, and to phonological and prelexical processing (e.g., Jäncke et al.,

2002; Price et al., 2005; Scott & Wise, 2004; Specht & Reul, 2003; Specht et al., 2005). These previous findings have also specifically linked the left mSTS and pSTS areas to speech perception. In the present study, the conjunction analysis did indeed indicate a somewhat modest left lateralised m-pSTS finding, which as stated, is probably due to strong SP activation in the dominant (left) pSTS.

Likewise to speech perception, previous studies have in particular associated audiovisual integration to the pSTS region (e.g., Beauchamp et al., 2004a,b, 2008; Calvert et al., 2000, 2001; van Attenveldt et al., 2004, 2007). In line with this research the current study also found pSTS activation in response to audiovisual integration processing, both in terms of individual paradigm activation and considering the conjunct activation in the pSTS area.

Whereas previous research has shown recurrent middle and posterior STS activation in response to ToM (e.g., Frith & Frith, 2006; Gallagher & Frith, 2003; Gallagher et al., 2000; Völlm et al., 2006), and in particular right pSTS activation ToM (eg., Kobayashi et al., 2003; Saxe 2006; Saxe et al., 2004) the closest activation found here individually for ToM was in the mSTS/MTG area. It is furthermore contrasting that the present study found greater left than right STS activation. Previous findings have typically linked the right pSTS area to ToM (eg., Kobayashi et al., 2003; Saxe 2006; Saxe et al., 2004). The current finding that more anterior areas, and to a larger extent the left STS, were activated could be a consequence of participants verbalising ToM stimuli, thus activating more speech associated left and anterior STS areas. It is still worth noting, however, that the conjunction analysis does indicate that there might also be some pSTS activity in response to ToM. This however, as mentioned, cannot though be significantly stated since a global conjunction analysis was used.

The results from the present study showed that speech perception, audiovisual integration, and theory of mind, activated distinct neuronal structures within the STS. Of most interest, it was revealed that all three processes showed bilateral activation within the posterior STS area. This finding is thus in line with previous research which has implicated this area of the STS in crossmodal processing. The present results indicate that SP, AVI and ToM activate close and to some extent overlapping substructures within the pSTS area. It is however, not possible to discern the precise extent of the overlapping activation, or coactivation within the STS, using the present method. As mentioned, previous research has indicated that sections of the STS are not wholly functionally subdivided. This has led many in the field to suggest that areas of the STS which show overlapping activation to multiple mental processes, as the pSTS has shown in relation to SP, AVI and ToM, are multifunctional in nature. It is proposed that these multifunctional cortical structures subserve a host of mental processes by way of network coactivation. That is, the multifunctionality of the pSTS might be based on coactivations with other brain regions, with specific activation being determined by the nature of the network interactions and the specific processing demands. In the present case – speech perception, audiovisual integration, and theory of mind processing demands. This supposition is further substantiated by neuroanatomical findings showing bidirectional connections of the STS region with an array of other cortical structures and by studies reporting temporally associated activity between the STS area and other brain regions (Hein & Knigh, 2008). Recent advances in fMRI analysis method, which have made explicit testing of the network assumption possible, have also reinforced the network coactivation hypothesis. One such approach, Dynamic Causal Models (DCMs), permit analysis of activity within the STS region as part of an integrated neural network.

It does so by exploring changes in neural activity in different brain regions as a function of external input and not within a restricted anatomical model (Friston, Harrison, & Penny, 2003). A few recent studies which have applied such DCM models (e.g., Noppeney, Josephs, Hocking, Price, & Friston, 2007; Sukhbinder, Stephan, Warren, Friston, & Griffiths, 2007) have shown strong connections between the STS and early auditory regions. In the case of the current study, such an analysis could reveal preceding neural activations elsewhere to the STS activation, making it clearer how the different sub-structures of the STS activate. It could consequently reveal in greater nuance to which level the different sub-structures within the pSTS are overlapping in activation and could be multifunctional.

Continued research into the processing role of the STS should extend the use of a design that includes testing multiple paradigms in relation to STS activation, as well as employ DCM modelling to further investigate the functional connectivity of the STS region to other cortical areas, in order to better uncover the basis of STS activity and potential multifunctionality.

5. Acknowledgments

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7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix 1

Table 3

Foci of significant brain activations associated with ToM, global analysis, $p < 0.05$ (FWE), $CI > 10$.

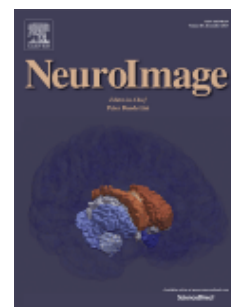
<u>set level</u>		<u>cluster level</u>		<u>peak level</u>			<u>area</u>
P	c	$P_{FWE-corr}$	k_E	$P_{FWE-corr}$	T	Z	MNI, mmm
0.000	17	0.000	8314	0.000	12.47	Inf	-30 -42 -18
				0.000	12.3	Inf	-48 -62 12
				0.000	11.77	Inf	-50 -70 8
		0.000	5931	0.000	11.31	Inf	-50 18 18
				0.000	10.89	7.78	-52 26 12
				0.000	10.52	7.64	-46 10 30
		0.000	3577	0.000	10.67	7.69	48 -66 16
				0.000	10.54	7.64	48 -52 12
				0.000	9.72	7.28	40 -76 18
		0.000	846	0.000	8.09	6.46	28 -40 -18
				0.002	5.99	5.19	40 -52 -22
		0.000	1164	0.000	7.97	6.39	44 18 24
				0.000	6.7	5.65	58 28 14
				0.000	6.62	5.6	54 12 50
		0.000	159	0.000	7.49	6.12	-10 42 56
		0.000	263	0.000	7.43	6.09	-18 -80 -42
				0.002	6.12	5.28	-6 -84 -30
				0.002	6.05	5.23	-14 -78 -32
		0.000	233	0.000	7.17	5.94	22 -58 18
		0.000	247	0.000	6.9	5.78	16 -84 -32
				0.001	6.49	5.52	16 -82 -42
		0.000	163	0.000	6.52	5.53	-8 18 52
		0.000	119	0.003	5.89	5.12	32 28 -12
		0.002	63	0.004	5.87	5.11	-4 -24 -14
		0.003	54	0.004	5.87	5.11	6 -58 44
		0.019	11	0.006	5.73	5.01	48 8 -36
		0.002	69	0.006	5.72	5.01	-10 -4 -4
		0.020	10	0.012	5.49	4.84	-54 -6 -22
		0.011	22	0.015	5.41	4.78	-30 20 60



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