'Let’s think the unthinkable’: what our brains’ responses to impossible verbs can tell us about linguistic representation
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I’ll discuss the goals and preliminary achievements of an ongoing collaboration with Alec Marantz (NYU/NYUAD) and Christina Manouilidou (U Ljubljana) in which we are using MEG recordings of brains processing morphologically complex words to address long-standing questions about the linguistic properties and status of verbal elements. Some of these questions include: what role does grammatical/lexical category play in licensing multi-morphemic structure building? What, if anything, is ‘selection’? Can we dissociate restrictions on linguistic structure building from restrictions/constraints on interpreting linguistic structures? What is ‘argument structure’ and what is its relationship to ‘event semantics’?

I’ll present data from recent experiments involving violations of derivational affixation restrictions in Greek and English, and discuss the ways in which these data sets might give us a road map for addressing these questions.