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Sommario/riassunto

Pierre-Yves Oudeyer combines insights from neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and linguistics to explore questions about the origins of speech. He puts forward the startling proposal that speech can be spontaneously generated by the coupling of evolutionarily simple neural structures connecting perception and production. He tests this hypothesis through a computational system and shows that the linking of auditory and vocal motor neural nets produces syntactic rulesthat exhibit the fundamental properties of modern human speech systems. This fascinating account will interest all those interested in the evolution of speech.