

第3回 共創言語進化セミナー

日時 2020年10月1日(木) 10:30-12:00 JST
(9/30 (Wed) 18:30-20:00 PDT)

場所 Zoom (参加ご希望の方は登録サイトから登録下さい。会議室情報を追って連絡いたします)

言語 英語 登録サイト: <https://forms.gle/vbRueYSoFRjJpVES6>

講演者 Prof. Terrence Deacon (University of California, Berkeley)



カリフォルニア大学バークレー校人類学部およびHelen Wills神経科学研究所教授。新学術領域「共創言語進化」国際アドバイザリーボードのメンバーを務める。Deacon氏は、ヒトの進化生物学と神経科学を架橋することで人間の認知の進化を解き明かす研究で世界をリードし、多数の重要な業績を出している。特に、1997年の著書"The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain" (邦訳『ヒトはいかにして人となったか—言語と脳の共進化』) は世界的なベストセラーであり、言語進化・認知進化の研究に大きなインパクトを与えた。

The symbol un-grounding process and the semiotic basis of grammar and syntax

It is widely assumed by linguists and psychologists that words are abstract sign vehicles arbitrarily mapped to corresponding mental concepts and categories of objects. This assumption leads to two troubling implications: 1) difficulty explaining how symbolic reference is established (the so-called "symbol grounding problem") and 2) difficulty explaining the source of the systematic regularities of grammar and syntax (i.e. whether nature or nurture - innate mental algorithms or serendipitously widespread social conventions). These explanatory dilemmas derive from a reductive oversimplification of the symbol concept that ignores the fact that symbolic reference is hierarchically dependent on non-symbolic forms of reference (e.g. systematic relationships among iconic and indexical forms of reference).

I suggest instead that we need to invert this logic and consider a bottom-up analysis of the construction of symbolic reference. This can be termed the "symbol un-grounding process." Iconic and indexical signs are intrinsically grounded in the sense that the sign vehicles themselves embody features (similar form and physical correlational features, respectively) that link them to what they refer. But symbolic forms, like words and morphemes which specifically lack intrinsic features to ground their reference, instead must depend on relations between sign vehicles to provide referential grounding. This means that what we describe as grammar and syntax are the expression of necessary iconic and indexical semiotic constraints that symbolic reference depends on for its referential grounding. In this sense many of the most nearly universal features of grammar and syntax derive neither from nature nor from nurture, but are expressions of semiotic universals. Failure to respect these constraints results in ambiguity of referential grounding.

This also undermines the so-called "poverty of the stimulus" argument, because it means that young children acquiring their first language actually receive extensive feedback about their use of grammar and syntax—in the form of failure to communicate or interpret reference. In addition, infants acquire considerable experience respecting the constraints of iconic and indexical communication prior to and during the early stages of language acquisition via their communicative interactions with caretakers and supported by their innate tendencies to point and track the attention of others.

参考文献

Deacon, T.W. (1998) The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain, W.W. Norton & Company

(『ヒトはいかにして人となったか—言語と脳の共進化』金子隆芳訳(1999)、新曜社)

Deacon, T.W. (2011) Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged from Matter, W.W. Norton & Company.

その他言語、脳機能、進化に関する文献: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=terrence+deacon&btnG=

