
Is syntax equals to language? A debate on a trait of human uniqueness.

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Abstract

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Language has been considered one of the characters that distinguish humans from other species. But syntax is the trait that might be separating our communication system from those of other species. Only syntax is not language. Language is a merging of various aspects that enables us to communicate. As we know, it has been set forth that it would be better to place the idea of syntax in the context of an evolving sociability, because its biologization does not explain what language really is. Therefore in this work I will restate some of the observations of incipient syntax in other species and reintroduce some evidences of how some processes of cultural learning can be equated to language "acquisition". Specifically I will show how the reading and writing learning process exhibits similarities to that of oral learning. The correspondences can help us explain not a gene or a prewired grammar in our species, but the importance of learning in general, the role of highly systematic cultural practices in language learning and brain specialization. Accordingly I propose that a social approach centred in learning can give us a better understanding of the origins of language and some bases to rethink what is uniquely human.

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