Induction and interaction in the evolution of language and conceptual structure

Jon W. Carr















Kinship terms are simple and informative

English FF FM MM MF MZy FZe FBe MB MZe FBy ИВе Alice (♀) Ze Be DD SD SS DS MM MF FF FM FZe FBe Bob (♂) ByD ByS ZeS ZeD BeD SD SS DD DS

- mother(x, y)
 father(x, y)
 daughter(x, y)
 son(x, y)
- sister(x,v)
- $\leftrightarrow \texttt{PARENT}(x, y) \land \texttt{FEMALE}(x)$
- $\leftrightarrow \texttt{PARENT}(x, y) \land \texttt{MALE}(x)$
- $\leftrightarrow \texttt{CHILD}(\mathtt{x}, \mathtt{y}) \land \texttt{FEMALE}(\mathtt{x})$
- $\leftrightarrow \texttt{CHILD}(x,y) \land \texttt{MALE}(x)$
- $\leftrightarrow \exists z \text{ daughter}(x, z) \land PARENT(z, y)$

Kemp & Regier (2012)



Kinship terms are simple and informative



Kemp & Regier (2012)



Simple



Simple

Informative



Simple

Learning exerts pressure for simplicity



Kirby, Cornish, & Smith (2008)



Simple

Informative

Communication exerts pressure for informativeness



Kirby, Tamariz, Cornish, & Smith (2015)



Simple

Informative

Learning + Communication exerts pressure for simplicity and informativeness



Kirby, Tamariz, Cornish, & Smith (2015)

Semantic category systems





Semantic category systems





Semantic category systems







Compactness

Simplicity and informativeness of semantic category systems

Simplicity



Informativeness

Simplicity and informativeness of semantic category systems

Simplicity



Informativeness

Hallmark features of simple and informative category systems



Simplicity pressure from induction favours

Few categories Compactness

Informativeness pressure from interaction favours

Many categories Compactness

Hallmark features of simple and informative category systems



Simplicity pressure from induction favours

Few categories Compactness

Informativeness pressure from interaction favours

Many categories Compactness

Are semantic categories compact because of simplicity or informativeness?







Can iterated learning give rise to informative languages?

Carstensen, Xu, Smith, & Regier (2015)





Can iterated learning give rise to informative languages? Carstensen, Xu, Smith, & Regier (2015)









Can iterated learning give rise to informative languages? Carstensen, Xu, Smith, & Regier (2015)





Simplicity bias



Informativeness bias





 $D = [\langle m_1, s_1 \rangle, \langle m_2, s_2 \rangle, \langle m_3, s_3 \rangle, \dots]$

$$,\langle m_n,s_n\rangle]$$





 $D = [\langle m_1, s_1 \rangle, \langle m_2, s_2 \rangle, \langle m_3, s_3 \rangle, \dots, \langle m_n, s_n \rangle]$

likelihood $(D|L) = \prod P(s|L,m)$ $\langle m, s \rangle$

















 $D = [\langle m_1, s_1 \rangle, \langle m_2, s_2 \rangle, \langle m_3, s_3 \rangle, \dots, \langle m_n, s_n \rangle]$

likelihood $(D|L) = \prod P(s|L,m)$ $\langle m, s \rangle$





















 $D = [\langle m_1, s_1 \rangle, \langle m_2, s_2 \rangle, \langle m_3, s_3 \rangle, \dots, \langle m_n, s_n \rangle]$

likelihood $(D|L) = \prod P(s|L,m)$ $\langle m,s \rangle$













































































Bayesian iterated learning under an informativeness prior







Bayesian iterated learning under an informativeness prior







Model results

Experimental stimuli



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Converged-on category systems



2 categories (1/12)										
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3 categories (8/12)



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4 categories (1/1								
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	o	0	0	\odot	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	
	o	O	0	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	
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	o	0	Ø	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	
	ø	0	0	0	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	





Model results under best-fit parameters



Can iterated learning give rise to informative languages? Carstensen, Xu, Smith, & Regier (2015)







Model results under best-fit parameters



Hallmark features of simple and informative category systems



Simplicity pressure from induction favours

Few categories Compactness

Informativeness pressure from interaction favours

Many categories Compactness





A pressure for informativeness prevents degeneration

Kirby, Cornish, & Smith (2008)

Experiment 1 Iterated learning

 tuge tuge tuge	tuge tuge tuge	tuge tuge tuge	
tupim miniku tupin	tupim miniku tupin	tupim miniku tupin	
poi poi poi	poi poi poi	poi poi poi	

Experiment 2 Iterated learning with an informativeness pressure

 n-ere-ki n-ehe-ki n-eke-ki	l-ere-ki l-aho-ki l-ake-ki	renana r-ene-ki r-ahe-ki	
n-ere-plo n-eho-plo n-eki-plo	l-ane-plo l-aho-plo l-aki-plo	r-e-plo r-eho-plo r-aho-plo	
n-e-pilu n-eho-pilu n-eki-pilu	l-ane-pilu l-aho-pilu l-aki-pilu	r-e-pilu r-eho-pilu r-aho-pilu	

]))

Continuous, open-ended stimulus space





Transmission design

Iterated learning



Transmission design

Iterated learning



Transmission design

Iterated learning





Iterated learning with communicative interaction

MDS dimension 1

MDS dimension 1

Communicative interaction gives rise to sublexical structure

Communicative interaction gives rise to sublexical structure

Iterated learning

Iterated learning with interaction

Conclusions

Conclusions

- •
- with simple, compact structure

Languages are shaped by competing pressures from induction and interaction • The human inductive bias is best characterized by a preference for simplicity • Therefore, iterated learning gives rise to simple, inexpressive category systems

Side-note: Compact structure also happens to be a feature of informativeness, obscuring the mechanism • But! The presence of communicative interaction prevents this process getting out of hand by permitting the emergence of higher-level forms of linguistic structure

• The framework developed in the CLE (which, by the way, has many parallels with a body of work from Regier and colleagues) is resilient to more realistic assumptions about meaning

Thanks!