

HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN LANGUAGES

Human and non-human languages can be differentiated based on anatomic peculiarities of human brains and non-human brains. Moreover, human cognitive abilities and the social context of human communication makes human language differ from non-human language to the greatest extent. “The difference between human and other animal communication” by Mano Singham is focused on the differences between human and non-human communication, the specific nature of human brains and its ability to produce or reiterate immense volumes of information in comparison with other non-human beings or machines [2]. The author presents a universal perspective while explaining the abilities of children to distill syntactic patterns from the speeches of their parents or people around them. On the example of citations taken from the works of other well-known linguists, such as Chomsky and Pinker, human language is differentiated from a non-human language using structural features of the language.

Another article by Ulla Hedeager “Is language unique to the human species?” provides quite another perspective [3]. The author intends to claim that language is universal both for humans and non-humans. Nevertheless, the main difference between human and non-human communication is considered by the author in terms of the predictability of animals in the process of communication and unpredictability of human language. Moreover, she refers to the structural features developed by Charles Hockett (1967) when talking about human language. The claims by Hockett and Chomsky are considered to be improper in terms of natural social context. The most appealing approach for Hedeager is to consider language based on biological factors.

In the article “A defining difference between man and non-human primates” (2001) the difference between human and non-human languages is provided from the medical perspective [1]. A structural approach is applied by physical anthropologists and for the language is just a means to explore the structural difference of human and primates’ brains. The human ability to communicate, to understand different concepts, etc. is explained by the scientists by left-side differences of the human brains in comparison with primates’ brains. Nevertheless, the article provides an unprejudiced perspective on human and non-human language differences.

James Keightley in the article “To What Extent Does Language Make Humans Distinctive To Other Animals” underlines that communication is relevant to humans and non-humans and human language is just a tool for humans to

communicate [4]. The author gives examples of the way bees or animals communicate, but he underlines that there are similarities and differences between communication and language among humans and non-humans. The author also provides ideas of cognitive linguists, who assign the important role of communication to previous experience and further interpretation of the acquired meaning is dependent on the previous experience as well. From the perspective of Social Constructionists, language is considered in the social context mediating communication among people. The author provides a broad consideration of human language, but he talks not so much about non-human language as a means of communication. He underlines the main difference between human and non-human languages refers to the anatomic features.

Therefore, based on recent studies on the peculiarities of human and non-human languages, the difference between them is clear considering different structural features and the role language plays as a means of communication. The main difference between these languages should be found from the perspective of biological, cognitive and social sciences. This is a perspective for multifaceted consideration of the given phenomenon.

REFERENCES

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