



Animal Communication

02/12



Upcoming

- First homework assignment due next week



Animal vs. Human Communication

- Humans happen to have the perfect articulatory mechanisms to speak
- Creativity: with a finite amount of tools, we can create infinite messages (recursion)
- Main differences then:
 - Recursion
 - Creativity
 - Innate
- Similarities:
 - Learning (limited)
 - Instinctual
 - Sensitive period



Critical vs. Sensitive Period

- Sensitive: a period of time where something can be learned in an **easier** way than if it were learned later
 - Ex: We can learn a 2nd language whenever we want! So our sensitive period, at least as far as L2 learning is concerned, last our entire lives!
 - What about the bird's sensitive period?
- Critical: the time period where if something is not learned, it cannot be learned later
 - Ex: native language/ability to learn native language



Homework Due 02/19

Answer ONE of the two following questions in a one page (or 250 word) essay. If you are typing up your essay, please make sure it is double spaced.

Due 2/19

Choice 1: List the six language functions mentioned and summarize them in your own words (one line each).

Choice 2: Choose one/two function(s) that you think we can't apply to animal communication (and briefly explain why).



Homework

- So what's the difference between animal and human language?
 - Stay relevant!
- If you answer the question, you'll be fine.
- Remember: the difference between production and perception is important



6 functions of language?



6 functions of language

1. Referential
2. Emotive
3. Phatic
4. Conative
5. Metalingual
6. Poetic



6 functions of language

1. Referential: reference to things outside immediate context
2. Emotive: The same sentence can mean different things with the help of linguistic cues (ex. sarcasm)
3. Phatic: The act of maintaining conversation/attention using language
4. Conative: conversation with an addressee, sentence structure (i.e. grammar)
5. Metalingual: the process of discussing linguistic objects' meaning, structure, etc. (ex. Word definitions)
6. Poetic: the message itself conveyed by linguistic objects



Which are shared with Animals?



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- Phatic: birds for example utilized phatic communication in order to keep up the passing of information.



Which are shared with Animals?

- Phatic: birds for example utilized phatic communication in order to keep up the passing of information.
- Any else??



What necessarily cannot be shared with animals?

- Metalingual
- Conative
- Poetic
- Why?



What necessarily cannot be shared with animals?

- Metalingual :
 - As far as we can tell, humans are the only animals that can refer to an abstract concept/definition/meaning of a linguistic object
 - Ex: What does 'conversation' mean?
- Conative
 - As far as we can tell, humans are the only animals with sentence structure rules.
 - I.e. There is an important difference between Imperative and Declarative sentences.
- Poetic
 - Meaning/message of an utterance.
 - Animals that communicate must be trying to convey some kind of **meaning** to their target audience
 - But can these meanings be composed into a more complex **message**?



Maybe Animals can...?

- Convey **referential** information?
 - Ex: Wolves discuss a future meal
 - ???
- Convey emotion to one another??
 - Ex: sadness?

REMEMBER: to think about these functions as **within species** constructions. Meaning, if a dog has learned to look sad to gain attention from their owner, this is a **learned behavior** not something **innate** to them