

Re: Is language development evolutionary, or designed by the culture?

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- *From:* Tak To <[takto@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:takto@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
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Ken Shackleton wrote:

In my original question, I was looking for the consensus view on how language changes over time....not the origin of language per se.

I have read in several sources that language evolves...using precisely the same mechanisms that have been observed in biological evolution. This view makes perfect sense to me, but I was looking for other opinions.

I am curious as to exactly what "mechanisms" were put forth. Note well that biological evolution is governed by changes in the genes, as distinct from changes in the (other parts) of the body. So while the body might store more fat when moved to a colder climate, there is not yet any theory that says the body would produce different genes in the sperms/eggs because of the environment. This directly contradicts fact that a person's language changes in response to the environment -- in fact, language is learned from the environment!

All in all, there are far more mysteries in biological evolution than in language evolution. For examples, there are far, far less variations in genes in a species to make complex evolutionary changes (e.g., the emergence of an organ that would produce a chemical poisonous substance to other animals but not itself, plus the modification of the tooth structure so as to be a mean to deliver the substance, etc) even plausible.

As someone here has suggested, language changes is more like fashion changes; or brownian motion, or chaotic systems.

Tak

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