

Reviews

Review of Jordan Zlatev, Timothy P. Racine, Chris Sinha, and Esa Itkonen (eds.). *The Shared Mind: Perspectives on intersubjectivity*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008, xiii + 391 pp., ISBN: 978-90-272-3900-6.

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The Shared Mind. Perspectives on intersubjectivity is an interdisciplinary selection of fifteen chapters discussing the social dimension of human cognition relative to its ontogenesis, phylogenesis, and its manifestations in language. The book is divided into three parts: *Development* (Chapters 2–7), *Evolution* (Chapters 8–11), and *Language* (Chapters 12–15). The sections are preceded by a foreword and the editors' introductory Chapter 1, and followed by author and subject indexes.

In the Foreword, Colwyn Trevarthen, whose work is referenced in several articles in the volume, outlines his research findings on intersubjectivity in its primary and secondary phases. He points out how the development of consciousness is contingent on interaction and how we are apt to sympathize with our community members and feel instantaneously what the other's internal experiences are, without having to theorize on or simulate them. This exclusively human capacity for intersubjective sensitivity to and awareness of the other as a whole person is the result of the imaginative and empathetic human mind being not only corporeally conditioned but also socially motivated—a mainstream current of thought in socio-cognitively-oriented linguistics and a view that runs throughout *The Shared Mind*. Chapter 1, apart from providing a chapter-by-chapter summary of the volume, shows how the social dimension of the mind—here interpreted in terms of perceptual, emotional, psychological and linguistic co-experiencing—is constitutive of human nature. Hence, the volume unanimously rejects an individuated condition of man. The editors underline how the approach espoused by the contributors recognizes

the significance of the socio-culturally and experientially engaged embodied mind. They delineate the philosophical background against which to contemplate this intersubjective view on the subject and indicate the important points of contention in their research area.

Section one investigates the developmental aspects of human social cognition, thus exploring experimentally its various phases and the interrelations between them. It starts with Gallagher and Hutto, who put forward the *Embodied Interaction Theory* and the *Narrative Practice Hypothesis* to account for intersubjectivity. *Interaction*, conditioned by *perception* and *context*, enables the subject to co-participate in the other's situated experience. On the other hand, sensitization to social niceties and to schematized prototypical rationales behind events and actions, as inculcated through childhood exposure to narratives, makes mutual understanding possible. Simulating or theorizing on the other's mental life is, therefore, superfluous. Other subjects are always situated in a certain story of events unfolding around us, and it is the story that we interpret, not their minds.

Barresi and Moore, following a slightly different developmental path to intersubjectivity, propound the *Intentional Relations Theory* to elucidate the subject's awareness of the *ontological match* between the self and the other. Sharing and apprehending the other's mental life are viable only when the directly observable third-person and imaginatively construable first-person perspectives are distinguished and subsequently integrated in one *intentional schema*. Likewise, Susswein and Racine focus on the distinction between intersubjective sharing and understanding, emphasizing the importance of action and the subject's sensitivity to the embedding practice and communicated intention. Intersubjectivity, viewed as a "refinement" of interaction, is treated here in classificatory terms, which means that the behaviors instantiating it are "logically primary". In a similar vein, Brinck accentuates that the simultaneous match and mismatch between the self and the other, enabled by subjects' continuous mutual engagement, are a prerequisite for the development of intersubjectivity. This development is gradual and proceeds from interaffectivity through interattentionality to interintentionality. The final phase, coextensive with nonlinguistic intentional communication, is the result of decontextualizing and generalizing the already acquired interactive and cognitive capacities.

Hobson and Hobson, focusing on cooperative aspects of social cognition, indicate how *intersubjective responsiveness* is requisite for normal social functioning. They discuss three studies contemplating distorted patterns of paralinguistic interaction observable in autistics, who fail to enter a coordinated interpersonal network of relations. It is indispensable that the subject be emotionally immersed in interaction with others by identifying with their corporeally instantiated stances, failing that no apprehension of another agent's mental state can occur, let alone perspective shifts.

Rodriguez and Moro accentuate the contextual underpinnings of intersubjectivity, similarly to Gallagher and Hutto. In doing so, they advance a *pragmatic and semiotic approach* to objective reality, whose alleged transparency, literality and naturalness are questioned here. The channels of *convention and communication* are claimed to be equally important for the objective and intersubjective planes of reality. This is because *objects* are always *contextualized* by an intersubjective world and are cognized actively, which is reminiscent of the Wittgensteinian principle of meaning being posterior to use. The meaning of objects is, therefore, acquired via triadic interaction with community members and starts as early as the second month of life.

The first section underlines that the intersubjective plane of human cognition is indispensable for normal social functioning. It requires both a distinction between the self and the other and their subsequent imaginative integration within one schema of a PERSON, which is evocative of Husserl's intentional unity determined by immanent internal perception. The subject's self-understanding and not only their understanding of others is contingent on their ability to recognize the connection between their embodied mind and the other's 'mindful' body (see Krawczak 2010). A key factor here is empathy, which is not only foundational to experiencing others, but which also preconditions subjectivity (Husserl 2000). It therefore does not come as a surprise that it is the emotional, rather than attentional or intentional, dimension of intersubjectivity that develops first ontogenetically. The subject should therefore be an agent actively participating and emotionally engaged in interaction with other subjects and objects, which will enable both experience sharing and understanding.

Overall, all development is therefore interactive and socio-cognitive, with both intersubjective and objective planes of reality being acquired in a particular cultural context. As Merleau-Ponty (1981) might have had it, children enter a world whose intersubjective and objective planes are already in place—it is an interacting world, and a world that has already been interacted with. The child only needs to acquire the institutional interactive system through joint action. However, it is crucial that experience be decontextualized and generalized to ever new situations. A conclusion to be drawn here, inherited from Merleau-Ponty, is that the abilities to co-experience common space and imaginatively transcend one's bodily boundaries to embrace others' emotional and psycho-somatic stances are what intersubjectivity revolves around.

Section two focuses on the evolutionary aspects of social cognition. It opens with Pika, who concentrates on simian gesturing relative to its intentionality, referentiality, and convergence with/divergence from the gesturing of humans. Although the great apes manifest certain forms of nonverbal intentional communicative behaviors, most of the gestures used by non-captive apes appear to be dyadic and imperative. *Triadic gestures*, observed in captive apes, include

food begging or pointing, with the latter occurring only among non-wild apes *interacting with human caretakers*. The use of conventionalized gestures by apes seems to be ontogenetically *ritualized via repeated individual interactions*, rather than being culturally imitated or understood as laden with communicative intentions, as is the case with humans.

Leavens, Hopkins and Bard attribute the scarcity of referential gestures in apes to *epigenetic reasons*. More specifically, it is due to the lack of the proper environmental conditioning. Apes in captivity are reared in impoverished conditions, as opposed to linguistically-trained primates developing close relations with their caregivers. Pointing is said to flow from the combination of the *Referential Problem Space*—dependence on caregivers—with “cognitive capacities for means-ends reasoning”.

Zlatev, in turn, concentrates on the *co-evolutionary link* between intersubjectivity and bodily communicative acts. Intersubjectivity is seen as a physically-grounded, multifaceted capacity, sensitizing the subject to others’ mental states, which can be either merely shared or understood. Naturally, understanding requires “third-order mentality” and higher-level empathetic capacities, enabling imaginative perspective-shifts. This kind of knowledge is conditioned by the developmental stage of mimesis, immediately preceding verbal communicative skills, and is largely human-specific. It is postulated that ontogenetically intersubjectivity seems to ground language, which, in turn, enables its higher stages, while phylogenetically, nonverbal communication appears to have grounded triadic mimesis. Hence, *co-evolution* of the two seems the answer.

Hutto also raises the issue of third-order knowledge and imitative capacities, whose development he links with *Mirror Neuron Systems*, which are much less sophisticated in simians, thus indicating why nonhuman primates have only limited emulating capabilities. Insofar as mimetic capacities alone suffice to elucidate the acquisition of tool-making skills and more advanced intersubjective skills such as ensuring group cohesion, Hutto proposes the *Mimetic Ability Hypothesis* to account for the development and evolution of socio-cognitive phenomena. Pre-linguistic third-order intersubjectivity, therefore, rests on interactively fired bodily-grounded imagination.

The evolutionary aspects of intersubjectivity discussed in section two accentuate the significance of socio-cultural conditioning for the emergence and enrichment of nonverbal intentional behaviors, which accounts for the rarity of triadic intersubjectivity among primates unexposed to close relations with humans. What comes to mind, being further indicative of the significance of the environmental conditioning of social cognition, is the case of feral children and their largely insurmountable intersubjective impairments. Socio-cognitive development relies heavily on the overall context of the community, which sets interactively the parameters enabling it. What makes us human is, therefore,

the intricate combination of our genetic determinants with the social ones. With regard to the former variables, this section underlines the critical role of neurally-conditioned aptitude for imaginative perspective shifts, co-action and imitation. The threshold of nonverbal intentional behaviors which the great apes, at least at large, do not really seem to have crossed as yet is that of triadic intersubjectivity or sophisticated imitating abilities. Still, research showing that culturally transmitted and intersubjectively learnt gestures are used in primate interaction may cast new light on the phylogenesis of symbolic verbal and nonverbal human communication, if only hypothetically. There seems to have been a close phylogenetic link between developing nonverbal communicative systems and increasing intersubjective awareness, which might well be mirrored in the ontogenetic relation between language acquisition and expanding social cognition.

Section three turns to the interrelations between intersubjectivity and language. It opens with Itkonen, who accentuates the centrality of *normativity* to language and intersubjectivity. The dynamic normatively-structured intersubjective dimension of human reality depends on a multi-level *common knowledge*, incarnated in *interaction* with the intersubjective and objective reality. Common knowledge is therefore derived from the conventionalization and generalization of a plethora of third-order mentalities.

The normative character of language is also evoked by Verhagen, who construes intersubjectivity as “mutual sharing”. He indicates that norms are necessarily intersubjectively grounded, as they presuppose a common denominator agreed on intersubjectively in the process of coordinating social structures. This “intersubjective coordination” is enabled by the inherent *argumentativeness* of language. Lexical meaning emerges from context and is thus understood in terms of what it contributes argumentatively to its utterance. Hence, communication takes place through *co-constructed* discourse, which is rendered coherent via establishing argumentative connections.

The co-construction of a discourse space and the importance of context and intersubjective coordination also come to the fore in Janzen and Shaffler. They explore the tripartite intersubjectivity operating in interpreted discourse and the importance of contextualizing in the process of negotiating meaning and coordinating other subjects’ knowledge. Intersubjectivity is thus understood as a perpetually and collectively proceeding negotiation of meaning. The paper focuses on ASL-English interpretation, its character and the strategies used by interpreters. The interpreter should be context-sensitive, utilizing a range of strategies. The interlinguistic transfer of meanings molded along grammatical, socio-cultural and rhetorical parameters makes it incumbent on the interpreter to neutralize any possible “mismatches”. The article shows how important it is for the interpreter to remain practically invisible, while actually actively co-constructing meaning.

Sinha and Rodriguez underscore that intersubjectivity is tantamount to *normatively* regulated interaction with *objects* and other subjects. The material, especially *artefactual*, plane of human phenomenal experience is an essential component of intersubjectivity because it is in triadic interactions that the subject first comes to recognize that they are simultaneously the subject and object of conception. The intersubjective “psyche” is shown to be as much about inter-cognition and inter-physicality, as it is about “interobjectivity”. Objects are thus seen as socially structured and institutionalized “signifiers of their . . . canonical functions”, and, as has been demonstrated experimentally, the “social affordances” of objects outplay the purely physical ones.

Section three, devoted to verbal intersubjectivity, treats it as a matter of inter-objective and intersubjective interaction substantiating the collective element in man, and oriented toward online negotiation and co-construction of meaning as well as indirect manipulation of the environment. At an abstract plane, language emerges as a dynamic phenomenon dependent on interaction (cf. Krawczak 2007), which is why it is only through what Dilthey called *Verstehen*, rather than *Erklärung*, that we can account for its development. On a communicative dimension, language transpires to be a state-of-the-art device taking intersubjectivity off the ground, away from the purely physical and toward the inferential and intercognitive planes of human experience. This is reminiscent of Keller’s (1994) approach to the problem, positing that language is a macro-structural “phenomenon of the third kind” reliant upon a mutually relevant multitude of micro-structural individual events. Keller (1994) also acknowledges the argumentative and manipulative nature of language by emphasizing that language is used primarily to achieve interactive success by making the interlocutor (re)act in a desirable way. Interaction enabling argumentation and social success is therefore prioritized in this section, and the intersubjective level is complemented by the interobjective plane, both of which are equally susceptible to cultural filtration and regulation. Neither institutional nor material objects are context-free. This is to say that it is always the Kantian thing for me—and by extension for my culture—rather than the thing in itself that I ever come into actual contact with.

The Shared Mind, without any structural reservations, enters gracefully the current climate of opinion which spreads dynamically across the world of Cognitive Linguistics, popularizing the view that the subject should be restored to his or her most natural habitat—the community. The mind is therefore recognized as being not only embodied, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, encultured. Hence, our intersubjective awareness flows from our holistic engagement in and with the culturally stylized world of objects and other subjects, rather than from simulating or theorizing. We are, after all, social creatures and it is the social dimension in man, variously referred to as the *shared, common, collective, distributed* or *intersubjective*, that actually over-

rides everything else and enables the full constitution of the subject as a person. Such persuasions are, nonetheless, hardly revolutionary, which the editors admit themselves.

The intersubjective approach to the subject has evolved in a ‘stage-like’ manner, drawing on a variety of philosophical currents of thought, the most prominent among which are perhaps the phenomenological ones. To exemplify this, suffice it to say that such phenomenologists as Husserl or Merleau-Ponty emphasize that it is the physical and socio-cultural situation of the subject and his or her ability to empathize, to express his or her internal life and understand the other’s verbal and nonverbal expression, and to entertain a multi-order cognition that actually constitute and define the intersubjective subject (see Krawczak 2010). It seems that the intersubjective element in man requires both the ‘fictive’ paradigmatic co-sharing or co-understanding of experiences on the basis of perspective shifts as well as match-and-mismatch between the self and the other, and what might be called ‘syntagmatic’ co-participation, interaction or coordination, which instantiate, mold and maintain the social. Therefore, it does not seem necessary to juxtapose the shared-knowledge/experiences-aspect of intersubjectivity and the aspect of co-participation, as they complement one another. It must be emphasized that the subject has long been recognized as an interactive agent whose capacities for cognizing the objective and intersubjective planes of reality derive from their corporeally conditioned experience. That being so, the interpretation of intersubjectivity that seems the most cogent should combine the two facets of the conceptualizer’s bodily and social grounding. This will accentuate the fact that intersubjectivity is an interactively and, *a fortiori*, physically anchored cognitive capacity for empathetically-underlain sensitivity and responsiveness to other subjects’ experiences, expressed either verbally or behaviorally. This interactive capacity of the mind draws on culturally filtered, sustained and modulated collective awareness of norms, conventions and alternative routes leading to communicative success. This awareness of the other and simultaneous openness to him or her is undoubtedly a prerequisite for normal social functioning. To finish off on a phenomenological note, we could conclude that the subject is an intersubjective relational network (Merleau-Ponty 1981: 456), which is why, as Husserl (2000: 301, fn.1) puts it:

the concepts I and we are relative: the I requires the thou, the we, and the ‘other’. And, furthermore, the Ego (the Ego as person) requires a relation to a world which engages it. Therefore, I, we and world belong together; the world as communal enviroing world, thereby bears the stamp of subjectivity.

We might add, the subject engaged in this world of contextualized subjects and objects necessarily and invariably bears the stamp of intersubjectivity.

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Review of Vyvyan Evans and Stéphanie Pourcel (eds.) *New Directions in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009, 519 pp., ISBN 978-90-272-2378-4.

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In keeping with its title, the reviewed collection focuses on the new developments in the analytical models, data collection practices and methodologies in Cognitive Linguistics. The key objectives of the book are defined by the editors as “taking stock of what cognitive linguistics, as an enterprise, has achieved” and “examining new avenues of investigation and exploration, new methods, new analytical means, and new ideas” (p. 1).

The volume includes the introduction by the editors and 21 chapters organized in five parts. The diversity of the issues addressed in the book is quite successfully integrated into a representative sample of research across diverse analytical and methodological approaches.

The thematic organization of the volume leads the reader from well-established themes of research in Cognitive Linguistics towards unexplored domains, drawing on the parallel disciplines of psycholinguistics, language acquisition, and cognitive sciences. The first part of the book addresses the core questions of lexical semantics focusing on polysemy and near-synonymy. The middle sections cover the approaches to metaphor, blending, construction grammar, and embodied cognition. In the last part, the discussion shifts to sociolinguistics and language acquisition that are currently gaining recognition in the cognitive linguistic community, and finally, moves to the largely unexplored territory of film studies, discourse and narrative analysis.

The theoretical frameworks set by the authors are marked by a broader vantage than is often found in (cognitive) linguistic studies. Firstly, there are several proposals for integrated models of semantic representation that take into