

Articulating the Communicational Infrastructure from a Coordinative Perspective

Abstract

A central concern in integrational linguistics is to keep theoretically distinct accounts of first- and second-order ideas about language use without relapsing into the extremes of cognitive or social determinism (Toolan, 1996). The purpose of this contribution is to address this issue from a particular coordinative perspective provided by the *activity modalities* (Taxén, 2009). These modalities – *contextualization, objectivation, spatialization, temporalization, stabilization, and transition* – indicate generative mechanisms, grounded in phylogenetically evolved neurobiological capacities, which make possible the development of ontogenetic, coordinative abilities. This approach provides a coherent view of biomechanical, macrosocial (here called *communal*), and circumstantial factors of the communicational infrastructure that, according to Harris (1996), must be in place before individuals can engage in any communication process whatsoever. I propose that first order activity is related to circumstantial factors. Second order constructs may be seen as communal “attractors”, which enable individual lines of action to be fitted together into contextualized and coordinated joint action. The analysis is illustrated by concrete examples. Although in an incipient stage, I suggest that the activity modality perspective may open up alternative ways for inquiries into the epistemology of language.

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