

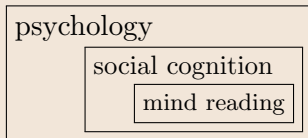
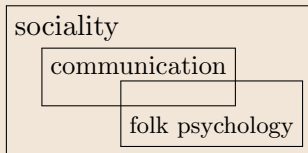


Folk psychology and mind reading



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Barcelona Lectures — Day 5



- Paradigms:
 - Folk psychology: attribution of intentions and beliefs
 - Mind reading: gaze following
- The relationships between folk psychology and mind reading are a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

(Cf. Geurts & Rubio Fernández 2015)
- If there is some truth to Vygotsky's view, mind reading may be shaped, at least in part, by folk psychology.
 - But what would that imply?

- Mentalist pragmatics entails that folk psychology (esp. belief/intention attribution) must have preceded linguistic communication.
- Normative pragmatics entails that linguistic communication may have enabled the evolution of folk psychology.

How might this have happened?

- Folk psychology is likely to have been shaped, at least in part, by our psychology.
- But it is doubtful that the practice of attributing intentions and beliefs emerged wholesale out of our psychological capacities. (Cf. attribution of emotions.)
- But then how did this practice evolve?

1. Wilma said/thought: “I’m sick.”
2. Wilma said/thought (that) she was sick.
3. Wilma said/thought to herself: “I’m sick.”
4. Kurrur-ngkay ka-na-ngka-marra ja-n
 black will cook SAYS
 “He wants to make tea.” (Warrwa – McGregor 2007)
5. A-teshe ti-yurujre ku-ta-ja otto-ja mala-ti ana tumumu
 sleeping my owner SAID go out go that frog
 “Knowing that his owner was sleeping, the frog went outside
 and left.” (Yurakaré – Pascual 2014)

- Quotative expressions are often exapted for mental-state attribution.
 - ☞ QA-HYPOTHESIS (v.1)
The practice of attributing beliefs and intentions evolved out of the quotative use of language.
- There are other pathways of language change that may have been involved in the evolution of folk psychology.

Beliefs and intentions:

1. are propositional attitudes,
2. constrain their owners' behavioural dispositions,
3. are private,
4. and their attribution is normative.

This is the target of our implementation of the QA-hypothesis.

- Given $C_{x,y}p$, x 's commitment is:
 - SOCIAL iff $x \neq y$
 - a SELF-COMMITMENT iff $x = y$
- The purpose of self-commitments is self-coordination.
- Social talk (other-directed) \rightsquigarrow social commitments
Self talk (self-directed) \rightsquigarrow self-commitments
- Self talk derives from social talk.

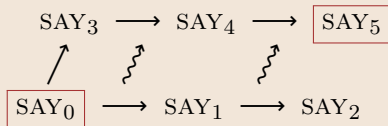
Self-commitments:

1. are propositional attitudes,
2. constrain their owners' behavioural dispositions,
3. are private,
4. and their attribution is normative.

- ☞ Telic self-commitments are intentions.
Atelic self-commitments are beliefs.

QA HYPOTHESIS (v.2)

The practice of attributing self-commitments evolved out of direct quotation.



By uttering “ y SAY₀ S”, x undertakes to act on the proposition that:

- y uttered S and
- y is therefore committed to some z to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

(Implicit constraint: $y \neq z$.)

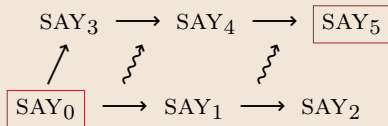
- Direct quotation is a linguistic universal.
- Direct quotation is a simple device, both cognitively and linguistically.
- Quotation was a useful addition to our ancestors’ communicative repertoire.

The first component of SAY₀'s meaning fades away (bleaching).

- By uttering “ y SAY₁ S”, x undertakes to act on the proposition that:
 - y said something and
 - y is therefore committed to some z to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

- By uttering “ y SAY₂ S”, x undertakes to act on the proposition that y is committed to some z to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

SAY₂ attributes *social* commitments to others or oneself.



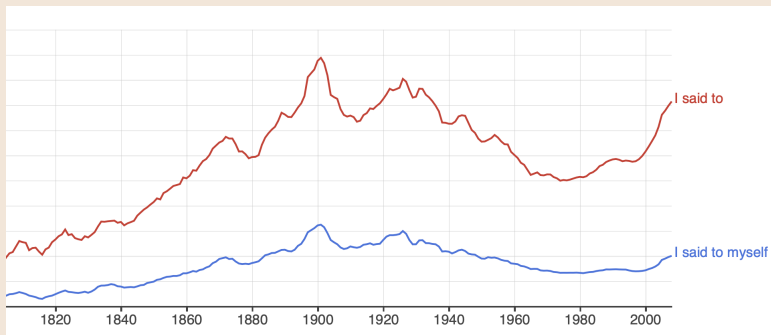
By uttering “ y SAY₃ S”, x undertakes to act on the proposition that:

- y said S to y and
- y is therefore committed to y to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

Q: Why would x quote y 's self talk?

A: This makes most sense if $x = y$.

- Quotation of social talk is an established practice already.
- Lexical change is not restricted to frequent expressions.
- Self talk is common, and salient to *ourselves*.
- Reporting one's own self talk is common in modern English:



I said to myself:

1. "Stuff it. I'll do it my way."
2. "I can, I can." And then I couldn't.
3. "I'm going now."
4. "This is it."
5. "I must quit racing."

- By uttering “*y* SAY₄ S”, *x* undertakes to act on the proposition that:
 - *y* said something to *y* and
 - *y* is therefore committed to *y* to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

- By uttering “*y* SAY₅ S”, *x* undertakes to act on the proposition that *y* is committed to *y* to act on $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

- ≡ By uttering “*y* SAY₅ S”, *x* undertakes to act on the proposition that *y* believes/intends $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.

- We now have a model of the evolution of overt belief/intention attribution.
- What about implicit attribution?
- The social practice of belief/intention attribution may have paved the way for the private practice:
- Once our ancestors had acquired the social use of SAY₅, they were bound to start saying to *themselves* things like, “Betty SAY₅: ‘There will be war’.”
- Will that do?

