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Linguistic birds : exploring cognitive abilities in zebra finches by using artificial grammars

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift

Linguistic Birds

Exploring cognitive abilities in zebra finches by using artificial grammars

by Jiani Chen

1. Zebra finches can use both positional and transitional information to encode auditory sequences. (This thesis: chapter 2)
2. The evolutionary precursor to human language affixation may have been shared with non-human animals. (This thesis: chapter 3)
3. The precursor of more complex abstractions might be based upon a stimulus bound rule learning mechanism. (This thesis: chapter 4)
4. The ability to detect relations between non-adjacent items in vocal sequences is not linked to having language or to whether or not such dependencies are present in the natural vocalizations of animals. (This thesis: chapter 5)
5. Finding shared cognitive capacities that are relevant to language may well be a better way to study the evolution of language than comparing the communication systems of different species.
6. A cognitive capacity present in one domain of a species is not necessarily restricted to the same domain in different species.
7. Animal communication can also be subtle even if its signal structure is less complex than that of human language.
8. Natural selection promotes certain types of learning. What is learned can , in turn, afterwards affect the trajectory of natural selection.
9. Keeping in mind that the human species is a member of the animal kingdom helps to understand humans.
10. Although studying the common properties of different things is important, withholding respect for the differences (between cultures or species) is a great obstacle for the development of mankind.