

Taking interaction seriously - but not too seriously

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Proponents of the so-called “interactive turn” in social cognition research (De Jaegher et al. 2010) maintain that a complete overhaul of the mainstream “mindreading paradigm” in social cognition research is necessary in order to do justice to the centrality of social interaction. We deny that such an overhaul is necessary in order to integrate any insights arising from the interactive perspective that are worth integrating. In this paper, we identify several ways in which social interaction is important for social cognition research, and argue that all of them are compatible with and can enrich – and in some cases already have enriched – the mainstream mindreading paradigm.

References:

-De Jaegher, H., Di Paolo, E., & Gallagher, S. (2010). Can social interaction constitute social cognition? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14(10), 441-447.

Toward a second-person neuroscience

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In spite of remarkable progress in the burgeoning field of social neuroscience, the neural mechanisms underlying social interaction are only beginning to be studied. Recent conceptual and empirical developments indicate the need for investigations of real-time social encounters in a truly interactive manner, based on the premise that social cognition is fundamentally different when we are engaged with others in interaction, rather than merely observing them. This talk outlines the theoretical conception of this second-person approach to other minds, reviewing evidence from neuroimaging, psychophysiological studies and related fields to argue for the development of a second-person neuroscience.

Infants’ appreciation of others’ beliefs in interpersonal interactions

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Recent research using looking-based methods suggests that infants in their first and second year already expect others to act according to their beliefs (e.g. Kovács et al., 2010; Scott & Baillargeon, 2009; Southgate, Senju, Csibra, 2007). In this talk, I will present a series of studies which investigated whether 12- to 18-month-old infants are able to not only recognize others’ beliefs, but also to actively use their understanding of belief when interacting with another person. Results reveal that infants in their second year clearly differentiate between a person holding a false belief and a person being ignorant and that they tailor their communicative acts accordingly.

References:

- Kovács, Á.M., Téglás, E. & Endress, A.D. (2010). The social sense: susceptibility to others' beliefs in human infants and adults. *Science*, 330, 1830-1834.
- Scott, R. M., & Baillargeon, R. (2009). Which penguin is this? Attributing false beliefs about identity at 18 months. *Child Development*, 80, 1172-1196.
- Southgate, V., Senju, A., & Csibra, G. (2007). Action Anticipation Through Attribution of False Belief by 2-Year-Olds. *Psychological Science*, 18, 587-592.