

Linguistic Evolution through Language Acquisition



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著者:Ted Briscoe

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This is a study of how children acquire language and how this affects language change over generations. Written by an international team of experts, the volume proceeds from the basis that we can not only address the language faculty per se within the framework of evolutionary theory, but also the origins and subsequent development of languages themselves; languages evolve via cultural rather than biological transmission on a historical rather than genetic timescale. The book is distinctive in utilizing computational simulation and modelling to help ensure the theories constructed are complete and precise. Drawing on a wide range of examples, the book covers the why and how of specific syntactic universals; the nature of syntactic change; the language-learning mechanisms required to acquire an existing linguistic system accurately and to impose further structure on an emerging system; and the evolution of language(s) in relation to this learning mechanism.

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