Can Animals Understand Human Languages?

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I have tested my theory which states that animals may react specifically to a word only if they are trained to recognize the sound. I tested this theory by investigating a dog's ability to comprehend words. I also researched a parrot's ability to speak as there is more to that than just having the ability to speak and converse regularly. These two organisms give us an insight into the entire animal kingdom and help test the theory entirely, this is also proven by the difference between humans and animals language comprehension skills being chalked up to the difference between logic and specific cerebral function vs recognition and imitation.

INTRODUCTION

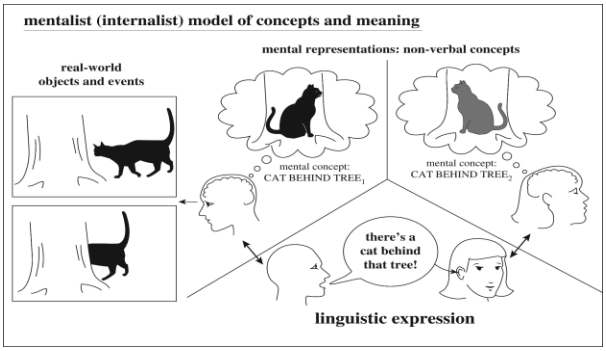
In this research paper, I would like to explore the effect of human languages on animal brains. To investigate whether or not they have the ability to understand them, My hypothesis is that the animals do not understand the languages. This investigation will have an impact on mankind's ability to train and communicate with animals. I would like to state that for some parts of this paper I will study the ability for dogs to comprehend as a metaphor for the animal kingdom but later on I will discuss the vast animal kingdom's language skills.

An article by howstuffworks.com [1] states that dogs comprehend human language at the level of a 3 year-old, which begs the question of whether this level can be improved to perhaps the comprehension level of a 7 year-old and whether this true understanding or simple sound recognition. The website also states that well-trained dogs know around 160 words which piques the interest because if dogs could understand our languages shouldn't the number be much higher?

METHODOLOGY

We have established that dogs, a relatively intelligent species, can recognise our languages and they have been proven to have the ability to improve their 'understanding'. However, is the aforementioned statement true for all species? Well no, as even the animals that show an apt for comprehension, do so by simply associating the sound with a command or instruction. [2] An example would be parrots as despite being able to 'converse with humans' they can only imitate the sound as their brains cannot compute the meanings of phrases and the ability to form new ones. So essentially animals are not able to comprehend our languages.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS



In the figure shown above, there is a normal event taking place and it shows how a human could react to it. The human would react by forming logically rooted

sentences whereas a dog would simply bark. [3] Barks do not have a meaning, they are just a way of expressing raw emotion (anger, happiness) and they have no logical stem. It shows how differently animals and humans react to and comment on their surroundings.

CONCLUSION

The differences between human and animal behavior can be explained when observing the cerebral output of their brains. Humans have cerebral tissues known as [5] Wernicke's Area and Broca's Area (both found on the brain's left side), which help comprehend and produce meaningful language respectively. This is why even though animals can recognise sounds and associate activities with those sounds they cannot understand the meaning and logic behind those repetitive strings of sound. So, in conclusion, no animals cannot understand human language, they can only recognise the distinctive sounds.

REFERENCES

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