# ２０２１年度

## 大学院文学研究科博士課程後期３年の課程入学試験

## （　春期・一般選抜　）問題

筆記試験　　**英 語 学**　　専攻分野

試験開始の合図があるまで、この問題冊子を開いてはいけない。

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**（春期・一般選抜）**問題

専門科目（　**英語学**　専攻分野）

**次の英文を読んで設問に答えなさい.**

Over the years, there have been countless suggestions about the way language originated in humans, and the proposals have fascinated specialists and laypersons. We may wonder why people are so interested in the study of the origin of language. A first reason, still implicit in most current studies, can be found in the last pages of the *Discours de la méthode,* where Descartes observes that humans are unique in having the capacity to use language to think creatively and discuss ideas, whereas animals cannot go beyond what a machine does. Indeed, this has led to all the cultural and technical achievements that clearly demarcate us from other species. Language is the main cause of our imprint on this planet, which we see wherever we turn. Descartes reasons (1637/1991: 121-4) that humans' capacity for language is due to the different nature of their *âme* ('mind/soul'), which is not merely mechanistic, and so allows the creativity of language. Thus, **(A)**language becomes part of an argument for both the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Our reasoning mind cannot originate from the mechanistic power of matter; it must therefore originate from a being that is not material, i.e., from God. Moreover, since the *âme* is entirely independent from the mechanistic body, the human *âme* is not subject to dying with the body: it is immortal.

Though few scholars would adhere to this kind of reasoning today, the uniqueness of language among species remains a central reason why people are interested in its origin. The study of the origin of language therefore falls into the broad class of studies we perform when we compare two closely related species: we want to know as precisely as possible what distinguishes them. For instance, scholars have shown that chimpanzees and humans have in common a large set of cognitive and communicative abilities. These similarities enable us to reconstruct some capacities of our last common ancestor, as well as to determine what distinguishes us from other primates—most tangibly, full-blown language. It is thus natural to ask what the exact nature of this trait is and why we are unique in possessing language.

A second reason to study the origin of language is the role that language may have in the evolution of life. Maynard Smith and Szathmáry (1995) argue that language is a novel mechanism that brought about radical changes in the way evolution works. These two evolutionary biologists propose eight major transitions in the evolution of life:

(1) *Eight major transitions in the evolution of life*

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| Replicating molecules | Populations of molecules |
| Independent replicators | Chromosomes |
| RNA | DNA |
| Prokaryotes | Eukaryotes |
| Asexual clones | Sexual populations |
| Protists | Animals, plants, fungi |
| Solitary individuals | Colonies |
| Primate societies | Human societies, language |

A common feature of these transitions is that they give rise to a new mechanism for the transmission of information: "each new level of information transmission is a new niche, which gets colonized by new kinds of entities" (Hurford 2007b: 247). According to Maynard Smith and Szathmáry (1995), the most recent of these evolutionary transitions is the emergence of language, which is a new mechanism that enables a system of cultural transmission with unlimited heredity: linguistic expressions can convey unbounded semantic information. If language is in any way a major transition in the evolution of life, as they suggest, this is certainly a good reason to look into the origin of this element, just as we do with elements of the other

transitions. By treating the origin of language like we treat the origin of any of these other transitions, we avoid **(B)**the pitfall of dualism.

A third reason to look into the origin of language comes from the biological grounding of language that we find in the generative model introduced by Noam Chomsky. If one adopts a biological view of language universals and proposes genetically determined aspects of grammar—some kind of innate linguistic system—then this raises the issue of how these innate 'organs' could have evolved in the first place. To postulate that some principle is innate is explanatory insofar as we explicate how it has emerged. In a biological view of language universals, parents and children receive the same *replicator sets, "a set of factors each of which makes some predictable causal contribution to the organism's biological organization" (Sterelny 2001: 339). If the uniqueness of language is attributed to some brain structure, it is legitimate to ask how this property emerged in humans, and how this replication started, just as it is legitimate to ask this question about any other biological property of humans. The question is extremely difficult, since the empirical basis for the study of the origin of language is quite slim. For instance, fossil bones tell us very little if anything at all about the way language functions. But the empirical basis may not be so desperately poor if we look at other kinds of fossil.

A fourth reason to look into the origin of language is that it provides a test for linguistic theories. I think this is the most important reason to study origins. For instance, if a theory assumes a dualist view in which Man is body and soul, as Descartes did, then, since the soul is not part of the mechanistic world and hence does not fall into the realm of scientific inquiry, the question of the origin of the soul cannot even be asked in science, nor the question of the origin of language, if language is a by-product of the soul. On the other hand, in a theory that considers the human being as a body with genes and a brain, the question of the origin of language can be raised. **(C)**Whether a linguistic theory can address the question of the origin is a good test of its value. If you must provide an account of how language got to be the way it is, this imposes constraints on what you can say about the nature of language. We should be wary of a general linguistic theory that cannot provide a reasonably good basis of explanation for the origin of language. This is not an overly strong condition imposed on linguistic theory due to some implicit and unscientific assumption about our specialness. Questions of origins also arise in other scientific disciplines: the origin of species, of life, of the universe. In physics, the question of the origin of the universe turned out to be a decisive factor in the abandonment of Newton's theory that assumed notions of absolute time and space in a static universe: this is not compatible with an expanding universe that evolves dynamically in time, and an origin in which matter, space, and time are radically different from what they are now. History is important in cosmology: there would be no theory of the big bang without it. Our universe is what happened and is happening after.

Though he has contributed to a very influential paper on the origin of language (Hauser, Chomsky, & Fitch 2002), Noam Chomsky has regularly raised doubts regarding the relevance for linguistic theories of studying the origin of language: "it may be that our ancestors were imported on earth some 30,000 years ago. This would not force us to change textbook sections on the physiology of the kidney or the eye, nor our view of the language faculty. Only history or material causes would change, not our account of function. So evolutionary history is orthogonal to the actual explanation of function in organic systems" (Chomsky 2000b: 162). I disagree with **(D)**this view. Just as the current functioning of the universe is intimately linked to its history, so is the functioning of language. As Schoenemann aptly puts it, "a believable characterization of natural language itself will—whether we like it or not—necessarily be constrained by what is evolutionarily likely. A model of language which is evolutionarily implausible is not just '... a problem for the biologist ...' (Chomsky 1972: 70), but actually calls the model itself into question" (Schoenemann 2005: 48).

Chomsky's ambivalence about studying the origin of language is understandable from someone who espouses the view that language depends on specific brain systems with multiple elements (UG): the difficulty may seem insurmountable, and the topic best avoided. But the difficulty of the task, or the fact that there are some rather fanciful scenarios out there, is not a counterargument to the utility of making sense of origins. The study of the factors that led to the emergence of language is not a precondition for the study of its current features, no more than is the study of its acquisition or its historical changes.

**(E)**However, these are all important additional sources for understanding language, and one should be wary of a linguistic theory that is not compatible with what we know about learning processes and historical development, or supposes implausible or mysterious evolutionary developments. We know about design laws and what can come out of them. It is perfectly legitimate to ask whether there is a plausible origin for language, as determined by a linguistic theory, given those laws, and what the best account of linguistic properties is, including the plausibility of the evolution of an organism with those traits. I will show in what follows that taking the question of origin as one of the factors relevant for the study of language helps us gain a deeper understanding of what language is, and why it is as it is.

In order to have an adequate theory of the origin of language, we must solve two evolutionary puzzles: a puzzle of emergence and a puzzle of design (Hoefler 2009:1).

*Question 1*: How and why did language emerge in humans and not in other species?
*Question 2*: How and why did language evolve with the properties that we observe rather than some other set?

The first question addresses the problem of bridging the gap from a stage where our ancestors had no language to a stage where they had language as we know it today. The second question concerns the fact that language is not just any random system of communication or thought organization. To answer Question 2, before we can assume anything about how language emerged in humans, we have to determine what language is, and what those properties of language are whose origin we are trying to account for.

There are numerous structural properties that have been attributed to language. Many have been recently proposed and many are not widely accepted because they depend on narrow theoretical assumptions. It would be a formidable task to look at hundreds of properties in exploring the origin of language. Instead, I will investigate two properties of language from which many others derive, and for which there is a very broad consensus among scholars: Saussurean signs, and type-recursion. We can therefore rephrase Question 2 as follows:

*Question 2a*: How and why did language evolve with Saussurean signs?
*Question 2b*: How and why did language evolve with type-recursion?

As Pinker and Jackendoff (2005: 217) remark, "Recursion is said to be human-specific, but no distinction is made between arbitrary recursive mathematical systems and the particular kinds of recursive phrase structure found in human languages." I refer to the latter as **(F)**'type-recursion', embedding an element of type X within other X elements indefinitely (Noun Phrase into Noun Phrase, Sentence into Sentence, PP into PP, and mixes thereof). We want to know why language has recursion, and also why it has type-recursion rather than other kinds of recursion.

There is general agreement that these are two key innovations, as expressed by Chomsky (2005a: 4):

... at least two basic problems arise when we consider the origins of the faculty of language and its role in the sudden emergence of the human intellectual capacity: first, the core semantics of minimal meaning-bearing elements, including the simplest of them; and second, the principles that allow infinite combinations of symbols, hierarchically organized, which provide the means for use of language in its many aspects.

If we can explain why language evolved with these two basic properties, we are heading in the right direction.

[Adapted from Denis Bouchard (2013), *The Nature and Origins of Language*, Oxford University Press]

*注　replicator：（自己）複製子（遺伝子のように自らの複製を作る分子）

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問 1　下線部（A）についてその理由を本文に即して説明しなさい.

問 2　下線部（B）の内容を本文に即して説明しなさい.

問 3　下線部（C）についてこのように言える理由を本文に即して説明しなさい.

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問 4　下線部（D）についてその内容を本文に即して説明しなさい.

問 5　下線部（E）を日本語に訳しなさい.

問 6　下線部（F）について Free Merge の観点から所見を述べなさい.