The Faculty of Language: What Is it, Who Has It, and How Did It Evolve?

The Faculty of Language: What Is it, Who Has It, and How Did it Evolve? was one of the most difficult paper that i had to read so far. After reading twice, I still barely understand the main point of this paper, but there are few things I enjoyed reading about this paper. The most interesting topic on this paper was the part of the fundamental differences between human and non-human vocal interpretation and how FLB and FLN are differently characterized among them.

I personally believed that the investigation into the evolution of the faculty language very well depicts how languages in general differ. I believed that even though the language all animal use are different from each other, there are overlap of certain qualities. In sensory-motor, there should be uniquely human quality, gradual vs. saltational evolution and evolved as unique adaptation just as mentioned by natural selection. However I do not agree with conceptual-intentional figure, as I do not believe that uniquely human conceptual-intentional feature should be between gradual vs. saltational evolution and evolved as a unique adaptation. I believed that uniquely human features are as the name says should be unique to human, not be shared by non-human.

Besides its very profound and well supported contents, I believe that one of the proposed hypotheses might need more attention and if possible modification. As FLB indicates that it cover rather broad area of understanding the language therefore can be applied to any means of communication whether it is for human or animal, it might be too much to hypothesis that FLB is strictly homologous to animal communication. The main reason i oppose this hypothesis is the level of the use of conceptual-intentional compared to animal. Based on how human uses conceptual-intentional, animal has very little of such traits. I understand the reasoning behind the hypothesis, but for me it might have been better to have more supportive evidence or concrete exemplar for the hypothesis. Following my logic, i do agree that Only FNL is uniquely human as it is more concrete way of defining how human languages are.

I might have been wrong about my opinion due to my lack of full understanding of the paper, but I did enjoy reading papers by Chomsky.
**Social Catalysis: enhancing communication in mediated spaces**

If I were to ask to answer the question “what is the main difference between analog and digital” I would say “lack of subtle detail in emotion”. This is apparent when any signal is transformed into an electric signal understood by computer. However, the transformation of those subtleties to a lower dimension (computer understandable) might convey misinformation therefore result in misunderstanding and miscommunication. The favorite part about this paper for me is the authors’ effort to minimize, if not trying to have any discrepancy when transformation occurs, the gap. These efforts can be easily seen from her work in *Telemurals* which I think is the central piece of what social catalysis means and should be. The efforts from the author to represent social catalysis caught my attention and I was able to see the persistency till the end of the paper.

Minimizing social distance in the form of Double frame in *Telemurals* was the first one. I really liked the insightful understanding of how two or more frames within the same frame affected how participants felt about their distance, and how this problem was resolved by having overlay of images next to each other. I believed that those subtle improvements in visualization could indeed bring the gap between transformations of social cues and space and make it more sociably approachable. I believe that this minimization of social distance can be also seen in her *Visiphone*. By having real time visualization of how conversation is being taken place, both participants are voluntarily adjusting their style of conversation which in turn results in closing their distance in conversation.

The other favorite part was the visualization of participants based on their interactivity. I believe that this visualization (rendering) directly corresponds to how the conversation might look if it had form. At the start of conversation, nothing is none about the person (in *Telemural* having only silhouettes) then as conversation goes on many information about the person is revealed and get to know them better (in *Telemural* having more concrete cartoon-like visualization).

Many of her works has been shown during the class, so I was very familiar with the works and easy to follow the flow of the paper. While during the class, her works were presented discontinuously focused on one or two specific features, as this paper continuously presents her works with social catalysis, it became more clear and concrete of what it means by social catalysis.