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Language – Emotion – Behavior

Evolutionary-Biology, resilience and the concept of psychopathy; are the results compatible?

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No survival of human being without language. What does that mean?

An important part of Evolutionary-Biology is to explore the meaning of linguistic representation of thoughts, feelings and action. Development of language makes the feeling of identity possible. Language represents the meaning of the social and cultural community. To manage the evolutionary conditions a reliable interpersonal context should be combined with a realistic apperception of events and an experience of action, which is based on partnership and goal-orientated.

In forensic research and practice this view is well known. In their fundamental research about the concept of psychopathy R.D. Hare et al. describe some specificities in language of psychopaths in the context of their affects and behavior. Psychopaths often show behavior based on deceiving and conning. There often is a remarkable gap between speech and action. Often there are problems in coherence and cohesiveness of language, a segregation of speech, emotion, mimesis and action. Sometimes we find confusion in emotional polarity.

Another approach to the social and investigative meaning of language and behavior is to be found in research on resilience. Besides other traits researchers found high competence of speech and reading facilities in persons, they called resilient. The ability to manage conflicts verbally seems to be combined with an achievement-orientated attitude toward life and high reliability in relationships. They seem to have no affinity to neutralize moral standards.

The examples I choose to demonstrate the aspects of language-emotion-behavior are founded on research about observations in an interpersonal context.

Two offenders speaking about their risk

Male thirty years incarcerated since seven respectively nine years

Offences: Attempted murder and other similar but less serious offenses.

Doctor: What was part of the motivation of your offence?

Offender: It's about narcissistic insult.

Doctor: What does that mean?

Offender: There is no emotional feeling. I have overcome that.

Doctor: How would you assess your risk of reoffending?

Offender: Not as high as others do. I want my liberty, that's my goal. It's my right to have my opinion.

Doctor: What can you do to reduce the risk of reoffending?

Offender: I'll change my place of domicile. Today I am able to demonstrate compassion for my victim.

Male forty years incarcerated since seven years.

Offences: Robbery, Rape and violation.

Doctor: What can you do to reduce the risk of reoffending?

Offender: I have changed my attitude towards the human being and towards my offenses. It has happened voluntary.

If it wouldn't have happened voluntary, it would be useless. In former times (*then he started to describe how earlier he started thinking when he felt he was treated unjust or when he thought about injustice in general. He described how he started thinking to revenge this injustice quite a long time before committing a crime.*

Then he described, how in his fantasy he started to revenge even if it meant that he would commit a crime as well.) "When I start thinking in that context today I know that's a problem. I have to do something."

Doctor: What would you do in that case?

Offender: Act immediately. Contacting a person of my confidence. My doctor, the forensic psychiatric service. I can get help anywhere. (*Then he started to describe step by step whom he would contact. He continued that there would be a risk to reoffend, when he felt unjustly treated in the context of a stressful life event. Then he explained that when he starts thinking about that, he has to stop it immediately. If he doesn't succeed to stop it, it would be important that he realizes that, and immediately contact somebody for help.*)

Doctor: What about your future?

Offender: Most important is that there will not be another victim.

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<p>Evolutionary Biology is discussed as the ultimate source of both language and culture, but it is argued that qualitatively different modes of thinking and knowing emerge therefrom. Aspects of cognitive organization (memory, concepts) and knowledge systems (time, psychosocial awareness) are considered within a model of collaborative construction that both retains and integrates individuality and social conventionality.(1)</p>	<p>Psychopathy is a socially devastating personality disorder defined by a constellation of affective, interpersonal, and behavioral characteristics, including egocentricity, manipulativeness, deceitfulness, lack of empathy, guilt or remorse, and a propensity to violate social and legal expectations and norms.(2)</p> <p>"Because some of the most illuminating insights into the emotional life of psychopaths are provided by close scrutiny of their psycholinguistic processes, I emphasize work that has implications for understanding the complex interplay of the psychopath's language, affect and predatory behavior."(11)</p>	<p>Resilience describes protective factors in the personality which help to develop resistance to enable to handle difficult life conditions in a constructive manner regarding personal interests without neglecting or hurting interests of others.(3)</p> <p>Several clusters of protective factors and processes were identified that enabled most of high risk individuals observed by E.E. Werner et al. in a longitudinal study from their perinatal period over 32 years to become competent, confident and caring adults.(20/21/22)</p>
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2.

<p>Pre-suppositions All humans (normally endowed) share certain general perceptual and cognitive structures, predispositions, and potentials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All humans share social-cultural groups and environments wherein these structures, predispositions, and potentials develop. •Infants are immature humans. Infants live in and experience a world like our own, but their experience of it differs because of their biological and social place in it and their goals and functions in it. •Humans share functions and adaptations to the environment. Among these are cultural institutions, artifacts useful for food preparation, clothing and shelter, as well as the production of goods and services. These functions and artifacts are developed by groups of humans (i.e. not by individuals working alone). All have long histories. •Humans, equipped with human minds, are capable of joining in the activities surrounding these functions. •Infants are adapted to the support of human groups, and families are adapted to the support of infants and children. Part of the support involves socialization and pedagogy, teaching children how to be productive members of the group. •Infant minds develop over years in the context of-and, so far as we know, only in the context of-the cultural surroundings of human groups, situated in their own 	<p>"The ability to evaluate things as good or bad, as safe or dangerous, clearly has implications for our survival and well-being. This obviously requires the integration of several cognitive and affective processes. With respect to linguistic stimuli, for example, the individual presumably must determine the physical characteristics of the word, match this information with a stored (and retrieved) lexicon, extract and use the word's denotative and connotative/affective meanings, integrate these meanings with other percepts and stored experiences, and prepare to make a motor response."(12)</p>	<p>"The resilient youngsters in our study <i>all</i> had at least one person in their lives who accepted them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental idiosyncracies, physical attractiveness, or intelligence."(23)</p> <p>"...Emotional support came from a youth leader, or from a minister or church group. With their help the resilient children acquired a faith that their lives had meaning and that they had control over their fate."(24)</p> <p>Confidence in some center of value, (not tied to a specific formal religious affiliation) enables them to perceive the traumatic experiences of their childhood or youth constructively even if they caused pain and suffering. A central component in their lives appeared to be a feeling of confidence, that the odds can be surmounted. They had no tendency to neutralize moral standards. (20,21,22)</p> <p>Some characteristics within the individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very active, • the girls were described as affectionate, • boys and girls had a tendency to seek out novel experiences and positive social orientation. • They got along well with their classmates • Their individual dispositions led
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and symbols but in the types of mental models they construct". (8)		
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5.

"It is one of the primary advantages of human language, that it enables the sharing and comparison of experience, thus the enrichment of understanding of the world for individuals". (9)	"...Ideas of mutuality of sharing and of identification are beyond his understanding in an emotional sense; he knows only the book meaning of words (Grant 1977, S.50)" (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of both, males and females, want permanency and security from marriage, but a significantly higher proportion of females expect intimacy and sharing from such a relationship. • Personal competence and determination are their most effective resources in coping with stressful life events.
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6.

Clear and coherent narrative includes mimetic representation in rich and not contradictory linguistic representation. (10)	<p>Psychopaths are often convinced that lying is necessary: Psychopaths in organizations often create different perceptions among the staff. The consequences are communication difficulties within the staff and an inability to discuss different opinions. This prevents to develop a realistic fact-orientated perception about what is going on. (17)</p> <p>Cohaesion and Coherence in the speech of psychopathic criminals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychopath used relatively few cohesive links between sentences. • failed to provide appropriate referents in discourse. • failed to link action and resolution in stories • showed significant clinical impairment in their ability to communicate. • showed a communication that is related to a discourse which has tendency to slip off tracks and a failure to directly answer the listeners question. • the results suggest that effective connections among speech units in psychopaths discourse are not as numerous as those found in nonpsychopaths. (19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researchers found dispositional attributes of the individuals such as activity level, sociability, at least average intelligence, competence in communication skills (language, reading, problem solving skills) and an internal locus of control • when they told their live stories, however, it was usually without rancor but with a sense of compassion and above all with optimism and hopefulness. • The rediscovery of the healing powers of hope in the stories of individual lives may be the most precious harvest of those who venture forth into research on risk, resilience and human development. (25) <p>These described skills need as a foundation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable behavior in relationships and attachment • established through a narrative context • Communication skills, good writing and reading skills, • Ability to speak about conflicts and try to find achievement orientated and sharing orientated solutions • the unit of language and action,
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historical niches.(4)		them to select or construct environments that, in turn, reinforced and sustained their active, outgoing disposition and rewarded their competences.
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3.

<p>"Language takes its place here as the child comes to share the history and culture of the community and as the child becomes aware of her own history. Through these processes the human child comes into her own as a thinking individual in a shared human culture. Without language she is cut off in essential ways from others and from herself."(5)</p>	<p>Psychopaths not seldom show the inability to understand or experience what others describe as intense emotional feelings.</p> <p>"There are emotions – a whole spectrum of them – that I know only through words, through reading and in my immature imagination. I can imagine I feel these emotions but I do not." Jack Abbott 1981 in Hare.(13)</p> <p>"Compared with nonpsychopaths, psychopaths made little use of emotional polarity they appeared to base their judgements more on learned associations between the words than on their emotional significance."(14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are advanced in communication, locomotion and self-help skills, • They have better reasoning and reading skills than high risk children who developed problems • Especially the girls use the skills they had effectively. • They have a positive self-concept and an internal locus of control,
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4.

<p>The script theory recognized "two critical aspects of human memory – its basis in everyday events and activities and its social cultural component, both of which are central to the developmental model. Activities such as "how to go to a restaurant" implied organization in terms of goals, social roles, temporal-caused related actions and props." (6) Young children seem to be absolutely dependent upon activities being carried out in exactly the same format every time. The later flexibility of the adult is probably linked to "the child's ability to use language as a meditational tool, substituting stability in language for stability in action". (7)</p> <p>"Thought and language are so closely related as to be two sides of the same coin; there are many forms of thought that are literally unthinkable without language and other semiotic devices. Most importantly, where humans differ from apes and other mammals is not so much in their possession of signs</p>	<p>Williamson, Harber and Hare (1991) noted that the "inability to experience or appreciate the emotional significance of everyday life events appears to be a fundamental problem for psychopaths". P.260. (15)</p> <p>Their "deficiency becomes apparent when the test of action comes to him." (16)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have a nurturant, responsible and achievement orientated attitude toward life. The resilient girls were assertive, achievement-orientated and independent. • Participation in extracurricular activities played an important part in the lives of the resilient youth, especially activities that were cooperative enterprises.
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		an action orientated language behavior; the ability to understand the emotional connotation of speech.
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Conclusion: The research performed here is founded on the knowledge of the importance of sociability of the human being. Regarding this point of view we can conclude that the results of Evolutionary Biology, resilience and the concept of psychopathy about the topic Language-Emotion-Behavior are probably compatible in some of the fundamental results that are: language is the medium to share experience and to communicate different opinions. It seems to be an advantage for this purpose to connect language and action and to use language in a cohesive and coherence way, in a clear manner, achievement orientated and keen to understand each other. This ability in the use of language seem to label persons called resilient. Symptoms of a severe social disturbance as we find it in persons denominated psychopaths may often be revealed in a socially devastating communication style.

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