

Codability, Semiotics, and Aliens

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Semiotics:

Semiotics is the study of signals and meaning,
With the first theories of signal based
approaches to the study of language coming
from Ferdinand De Saussure in his seminal work
“Cours de Linguistique Général,” published
In 1916



Ferdinand De Saussure

“They are unaware of two important aspects: on the one hand that the most important function of language does not consist in designating things, but in relating and combining words in different ways; and on the other hand that language is continually moving and transforming itself.”-De Saussure

Semiotics

- Semiotics is the study of all signals and the way that we interact with them
- This includes visual signals, auditory signals, olfactory signals, tactile signals and culinary signals (Tobin 1990)
- When we see something, for example, there is an underlying “thing-ness” likened to the actual object that we assign as the object’s meaning before giving it a name

Semiotics



Semiotics:



Semiotics:





Codability:

- Codability in language is the ability of a person to create information based solely on a sensory interaction with an outside object or concept (Van de Geer 1972)
- This process happens just before we assign something a name (as we saw with the picture slides)
- We can code large amounts of information with very little exposure to stimulus
- For example, you were able to tell what was going on in the astronaut picture despite never having seen it before and seeing it for less time than the time it took to explain it

Logograms

- Logograms are symbols in some languages which represent words or ideas, and are not phonetically linked
- Logograms can be anything from a complex picture to a meaning carrying symbol
- Logograms are the basis for Heptapod language in Arrival

Logograms and Arrival



Summary thus far...

- Logograms are the perfect case study for semiotic analysis as well as proof of codability in language

Arrival

- Would likely have a full team of semioticians well versed in logograms
- Heptapod language used logograms extensively
- Probably other than some minor issues with linguistics branch expertise, a fairly accurate representation of what would happen

Our First Alien Encounter

- Key Goals would include: establishing communication, learning of the language or teaching a terrestrial language if physically possible, establishing reason for visit

References:

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