

## **The Finishing Touch – TRANSFER, not MERGE**

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Traditionally, it is assumed that the ability to process natural language appears at the time when the pre-existing intellectual capacity is combined with a new functionality called MERGE. If that is correct, then MERGE is the defining property of the uniquely-human Linguistic Faculty.

I would like to suggest that it is actually TRANSFER, not MERGE, that sets apart linguistic computational systems. After all, it is impossible to process natural language with MERGE alone, as long as the phase-by-phase TRANSFER is not there. Without TRANSFER and Externalization, Linguistic Intelligence is not complete.

Similarly, if a computational system has MERGE, it would still need Lexicon. How can Lexicon develop before MERGE, if there is no use for it? AGREE may be in place before MERGE, or vice versa, but in any case it is needed before the introduction of TRANSFER.

Not only MERGE is far from being the final step on the way towards natural language processing, but it is likely that MERGE is present even in animal intelligence. Being as good as they are at orientation in space, animals apparently have control of linear order. If so, from a purely mathematical point of view, the computational system at work in animals would seem to be able to manage Directed Acyclic Graphs.

Of course MERGE plays a very central role in Language Faculty, but as explained above, it seems that there may be an additional step after it.