

Did Homo erectus use an RRG grammar?

Daniel Everett
Bentley University

In this talk I discuss the evolution of human language, based on Everett (2017) and Barham and Everett (2019). I will argue that tools of Homo erectus show the origins of symbols (in the Peircean sense) and hence that language originated nearly 2 million years ago. I will discuss the role of syntax in supporting the semiotics of language (what Peirce referred to in 1865 as “Universal Grammar”) and argue that Role and Reference Grammar provides the best available model for understanding syntax at each stage of grammatical and semiotic evolution.

References

- Everett, Daniel. 2017. *How Language Began: The Story of Humanity's Greatest Invention*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Barham, Larry and Daniel Everett. 2019. "Tools, Symbols and Evidence for Language in the Lower Palaeolithic." Ms. University of Liverpool and Bentley University.