

Autonomous Semantic Grounding Through Sensorimotor Learning

CSCS 636

Spring 2016

Yoonsuck Choe, Ph.D.

Department of Computer Science & Engineering

Texas A&M University

With N. Smith, H.-F. Yang, and N. Misra.

1

2

What If They Are Cortical
Responses to Something

We are Clueless!

3

4

They Are Visual Cortical Responses to Oriented Lines

We are Still clueless!

This is a problem of *grounding* (Harnad 1990), a problem that gets more severe as the representations become deeper and more complex.

5

6

Overview

- Grounding internal representations on action
- Learning internal representations together with grounding
- Perceptual vs. motor representations

Part I: Grounding

Choe et al. (2007); Choe and Smith (2006); Choe and Bhamidipati (2004)

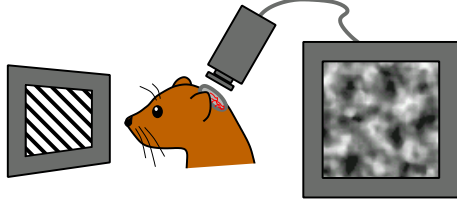
7

8

What Is Grounding?

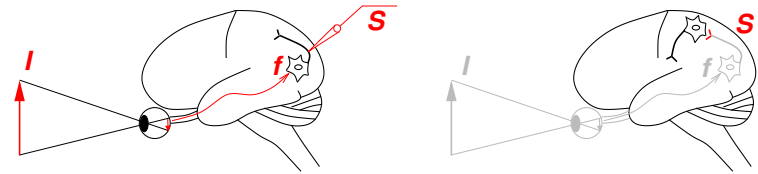
... How can the meanings of the meaningless symbol tokens, manipulated solely on the basis of their (arbitrary) shapes, be grounded in anything but other meaningless symbols? ...
 – Harnad (1990)

- Given a representation, figure out what it represents/means.
- Given an activity pattern in the brain, figure out what information it carries (decoding, decompression, etc.).



Miikkulainen et al. (2005); Weliky et al. (1995)

Grounding in the Brain



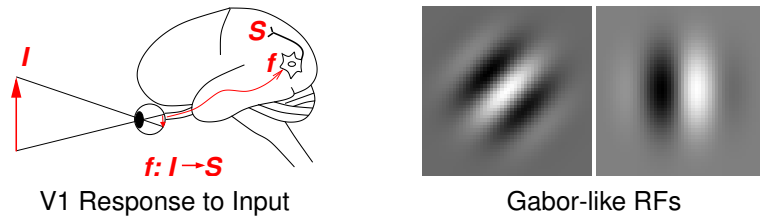
(a) External observer

(b) Internal observer

The problem of grounding, **within** the brain:

- **External observer** (e.g., a neuroscientist) **can figure out** how spike S relates to input I .
- **Internal observer cannot** seem to, which does not make sense at all.

Example: The Visual Cortex

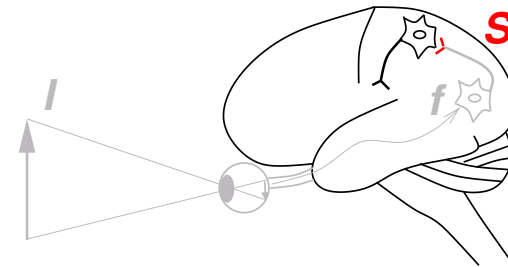


V1 Response to Input

Gabor-like RFs

- With access to both I and S , Hubel and Wiesel (1959) figured out $f : I \rightarrow S$ in V1 (oriented Gabor-like receptive fields Jones and Palmer 1987).
- But even before that, and with access to only S , humans had no problem perceiving orientation.

Possible Solution: Allow Action



- A major problem in the picture is the **passiveness** of the whole situation.
- Adding action **can help solve** the problem.
- But **why** and **how**?

Experimental Evidence

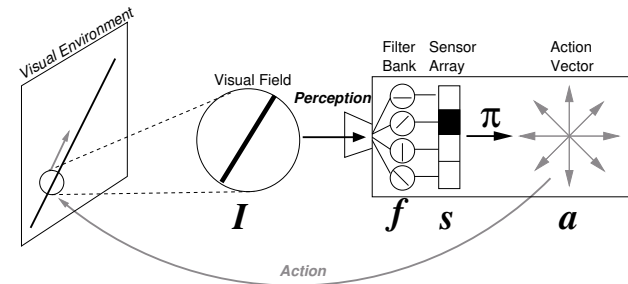


Bach y Rita (1972; 1983)

- Vibrotactile array linked to a video camera.
- Passive viewing results in **tactile** sensation.
- Moving the camera results in a **vision-like** sensation.
- Sensation as related to **voluntary/intentional action** may be the key!

13

Approach: Grounding Through Action



- Direct access to **encoded internal state** (sensory array) only.
- Action is enabled, which can **move the gaze**.
- How does this solve the grounding problem?

14

Action for Unchanging Internal State

- Diagonal motion causes the *internal state* to **remain unchanging** over time.
- Property of such a movement **exactly reflects** the property of the input I : Semantics figured out through action.

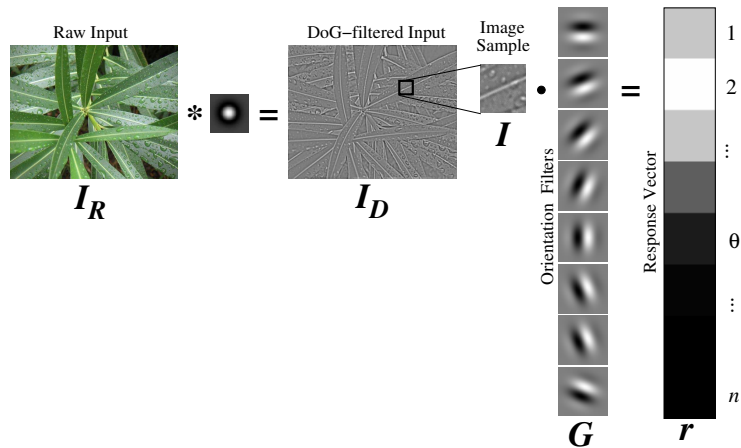
15

Task

- Given an encoded sensory signal s , we want to learn action a that **maximizes the invariance** in the internal state over time.
- The learned action a will give **meaning** to s .
- This is basically a **reinforcement learning** task.

16

Methods: Orientation Response



Sensory state:

$$s = \arg \max_{1 \leq \theta \leq n} r_{\theta}.$$

Methods: Reinforcement Learning

Learn policy $\pi : S \rightarrow A$.

- Reward ρ : Similarity between previous and current internal state.
- Learning reward function $R(s, a)$:

$$R_{t+1}(s_t, a_t) = R_t(s_t, a_t) + \alpha \rho_{t+1},$$

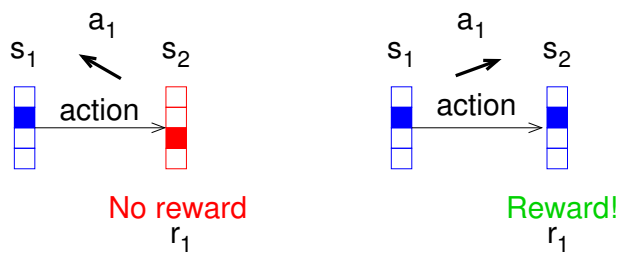
followed by normalization.

- Policy π derived from learned $R(s, a)$.

17

18

RL: Reward and Penalty ρ



Reward actions a that maintain invariance in s .

- If $s_1 = s_2$, Reward.
- If $s_1 \neq s_2$, Penalty.

RL: Reward and Penalty ρ

Reward actions a that maintain invariance in s .

- If $s_1 = s_2$, Reward.
- If $s_1 \neq s_2$, Penalty.

19

20

Reward Probability Table $R(s, a)$

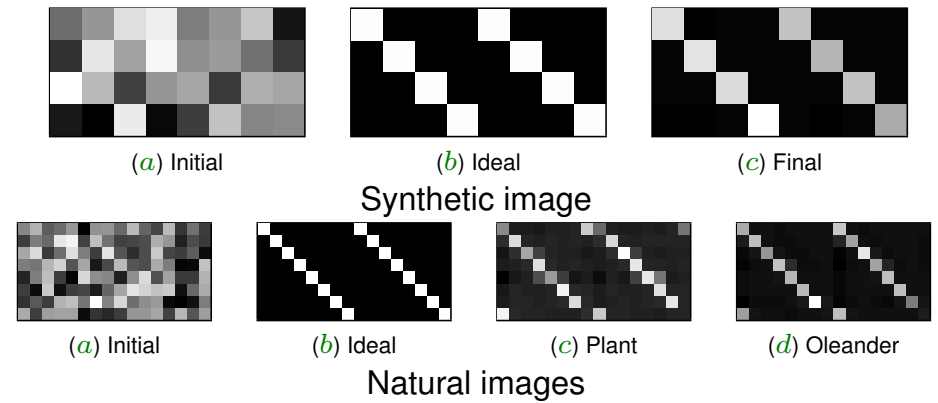
A: direction of motion

S: sensory state (orientation)

| | → | ↗ | ↑ | ↖ | ← | ↙ | ↓ | ↘ |
|---|-----|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| ⊖ | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ⊘ | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 |
| ⊙ | 0 | 0 | $R(s, a)$ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 |
| ⊗ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 |

- Reward probability $R(s, a)$ can be tabulated.
- In an ideal case (world consists of straight lines only), we expect to see two diagonal matrices (shaded gray, above).

Results: Learned $R(s, a)$

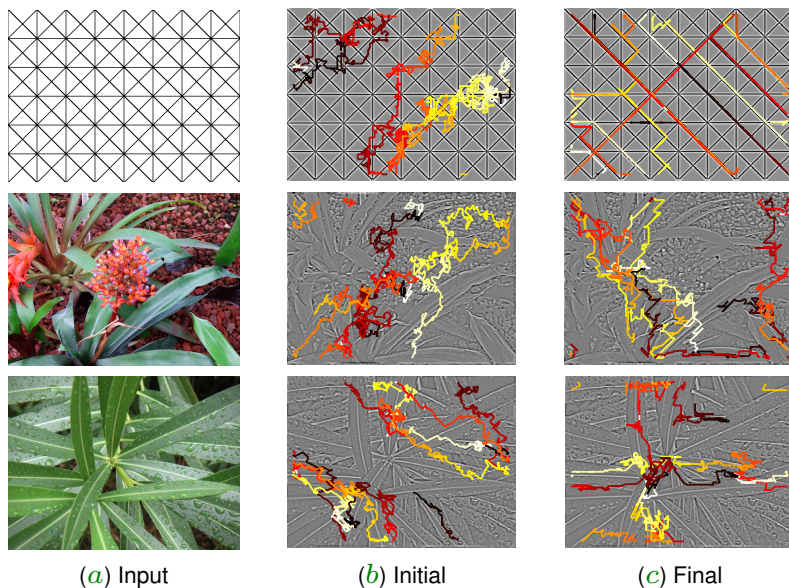


- Learned $R(s, a)$ close to ideal.

21

22

Results: Gaze Trajectory

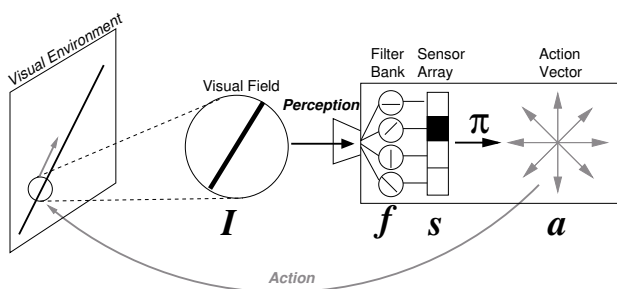


Results: Demo

23

24

Part I: Summary



Part II: Learning Internal Representations

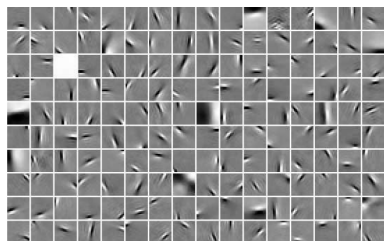
Yang and Choe (2007)

- (1) Using **invariance** as the only criterion, (2) particular **action pattern** was learned, (3) that has the **same property** as the input that triggered the sensors.

25

26

Theories of RF Formation



Hoyer and Hyvärinen (2000)

Well-developed understanding on how RFs form:

- Olshausen and Field (1997): Sparse coding; Barlow (1994): Redundancy reduction; Bell and Sejnowski (1997): Information maximization; Miikkulainen et al. (2005): Self-organization through Hebbian learning.

However, how is the resulting code to be used remains a question.

27

Questions

- The motor-based grounding experiment assumed that **receptive fields** are **given and fixed**.
- Can these be **learned** (developed) along with the grounding process?

28

Learning RFs along with Their Grounding (Decoding)

- Grounding (decoding): Same as Part I.
- RFs develop through local learning:

$$g_{ij} = \frac{g_{ij} + \alpha(I_{ij} - g_{ij})}{\sum_{mn} g_{mn} + \alpha(I_{mn} - g_{mn})},$$

where g_{ij} is the afferent connection weight and I_{ij} the input pixel value.

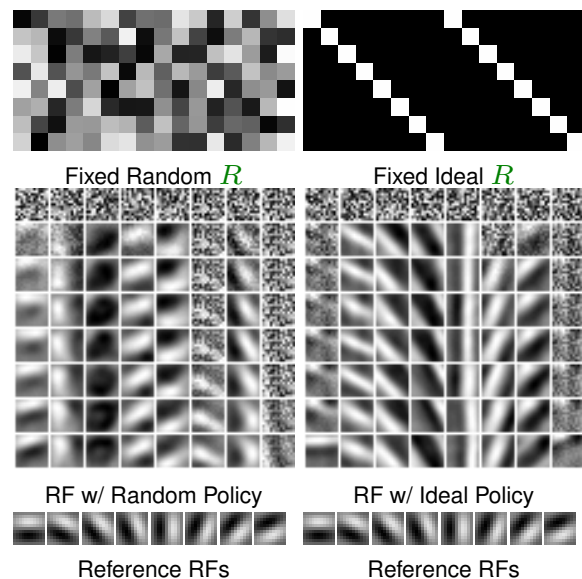
29

Experiments

1. Effects of different action policy on RF learning.
 - Random $R(s, a)$
 - Ideal $R(s, a)$
2. Simultaneous learning of RF and action policy.
 - RF learning through normalized Hebbian learning
 - Reinforcement learning of $R(s, a)$ based on internal-state invariance

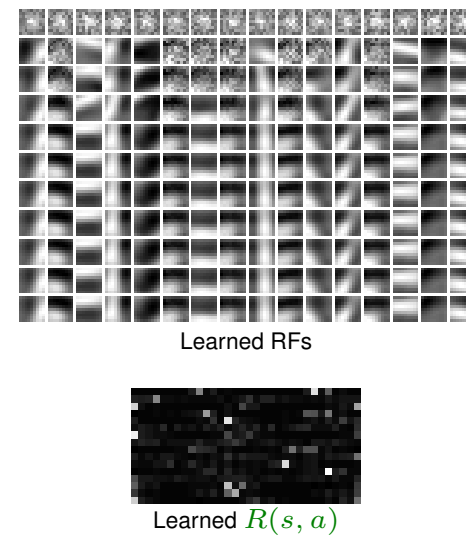
30

Effects of $R(s, a)$ on RF Learning



31

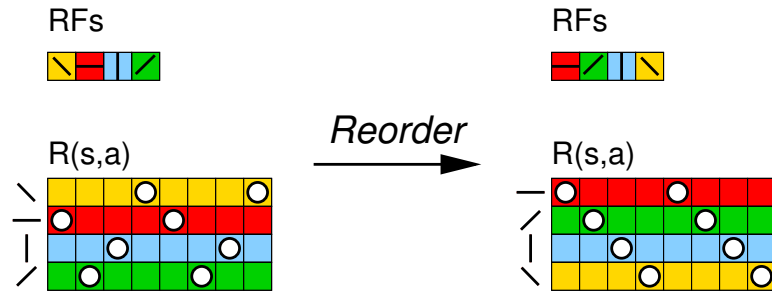
Simul. Learning of RFs & $R(s, a)$



- Seemingly unordered RFs and $R(s, a)$ results.

32

Reordering RFs



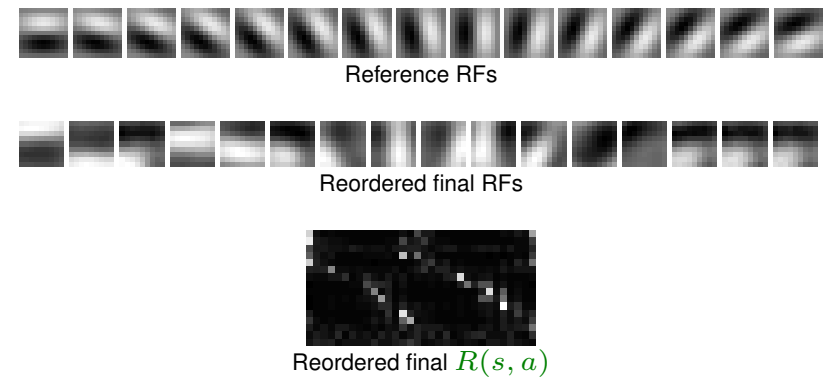
- The $R(s, a)$ result looks bad because each row's corresponding RF orientation is not ordered.
- Reordering RF orientation reorders the rows in $R(s, a)$.

Part II: Summary

- Action policy strongly influences RF properties, by altering the input statistics.
- Certain action policies may give better RFs, faster.
- Receptive fields and action policy can learn simultaneously, from scratch, thus allowing encoding/decoding to evolve together.

33

Reordered RFs and $R(s, a)$



- However, reordering the RFs and their corresponding $R(s, a)$ rows shows the true underlying structure! (Not perfect, but a good start!)

34

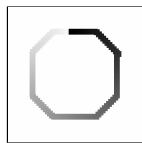
Part III: Perceptual vs. Motor Representations

Misra and Choe (2007)

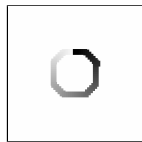
35

36

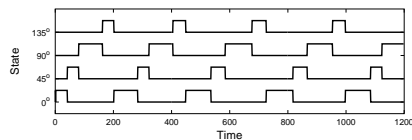
Learning About Shapes



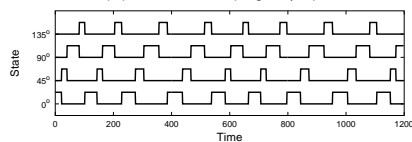
(a) Eye position (large input)



(c) Eye position (small input)



(b) Internal state (large input)

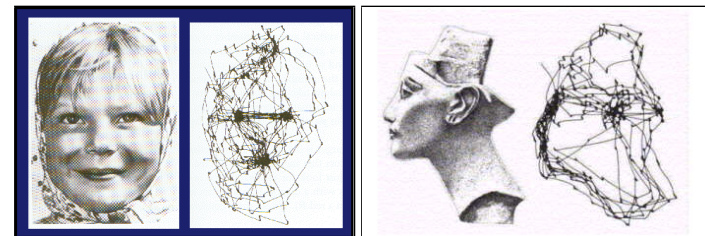


(d) Internal state (small input)

- For complex objects, a history of sensory activity may be needed (i.e., some form of memory).
- Invariance can be detected in the spatiotemporal pattern of sensor activity.

37

Motor System and Object Recognition



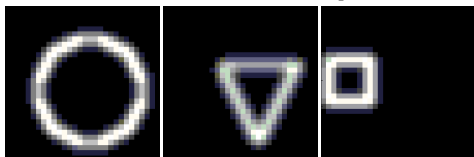
Yarbus (1967)

- When we look at objects, our gaze wanders around.
- Could such an interaction be necessary for object recognition?

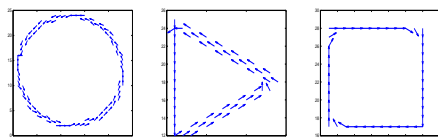
38

Advantage of Motor-Based Memory

(Habit, or Skill)



(a) Sensor-based Representation

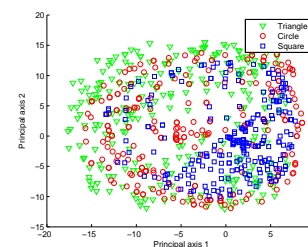


(b) Motor-based Representation

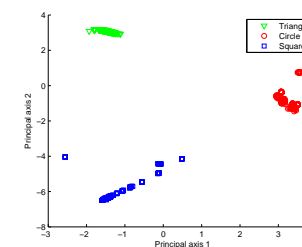
- Sensor-based representations may be hard to learn and inefficient.
- Motor-based approaches may generalize better.
- Comparison: Make both into a 900-D vector and compare backpropagation learning performance.

39

Class Separability



(a) Visual Memory

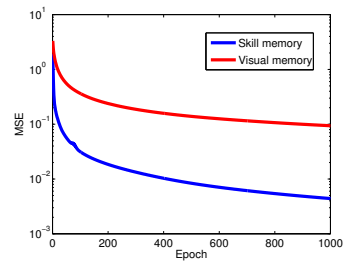


(b) Motor Memory

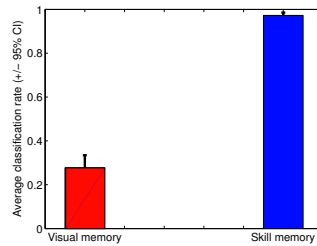
- Comparison of PCA projection of 1,000 data points in the visual and motor memory representations.
- Motor memory is clearly separable.

40

Speed and Accuracy of Learning



(a) Training Speed



(b) Generalization Accuracy

- Motor-based memory resulted in faster and more accurate learning (10 trials).

Part III: Summary

Motor-based representations of shape are

- More separable in the representational space,
- Faster to learn,
- Better at novel tasks (generalization), compared to sensory representations.

41

42

Related Works (Selected)

- Graziano (2009): Motor areas encoding a map of whole gestures (motor primitives?).
- Fuster (1997): perception-action link at all levels.
- Rizzolatti et al. (2001): Mirror neurons
- Salinas (2006): Sensory RF coding dictated by downstream requirements.
- Sejnowski (2006): Importance of “projective fields”.

Wrap Up

43

44

Discussion

- Main contribution: Discovery of the invariance criterion for sensorimotor grounding, development, and recognition.
- Importance of self-generated action in autonomous understanding.
- Richer motor primitive repertoire can lead to richer understanding (compare different animals).
- Tool use can dramatically augment motor primitive repertoire.

45

Conclusions

We must ask how the brain understands itself.

- Action is important for understanding/grounding.
- Simple criterion (state invariance) can help link sensory coding with meaningful action.
- RFs can be developed along with grounding.
- Motor-based representations are more effective for shape recognition.

47

Discussion: Implications on IT

- In current IT, meaning/semantics is external to the system (c.f. the Chinese room).
- This leads to brittleness, and the systems require constant human intervention.
- Same with information theory, which is, by design, deprived of semantics.
- A new paradigm for autonomous IT systems based on intrinsic semantics is needed, and it will require not just perception/sensation but also a lot of motor function/action.

46

Credits

- Contributors: Kuncara A. Suksadadi, S. Kumar Bhamidipati, Noah Smith, Stu Heinrich, Navendu Misra, Huei-Fang Yang, Daniel C.-Y. Eng
- Choe et al. (2008, 2007); Choe and Smith (2006); Choe and Bhamidipati (2004); Choe (2011)

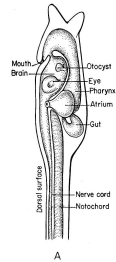
48

Why Do We Have a Brain?

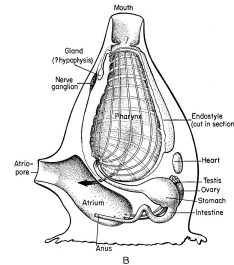
- Survival and reproduction? Think again!



Tree
(no Brain)



Tunicate
Free-floating
(w/ Brain)
Linás (2001)



Tunicate
Settled
(w/o Brain)

Sources: <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/jbednar/> and <http://bill.srn.arizona.edu/classes/182/Lecture-9.htm>

49

Choe, Y., and Smith, N. H. (2006). Motion-based autonomous grounding: Inferring external world properties from internal sensory states alone. In Gil, Y., and Mooney, R., editors, *Proceedings of the 21st National Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2006)*, 936–941.

Choe, Y., Yang, H.-F., and Eng, D. C.-Y. (2007). Autonomous learning of the semantics of internal sensory states based on motor exploration. *International Journal of Humanoid Robotics*, 4:211–243.

Choe, Y., Yang, H.-F., and Misra, N. (2008). Motor system's role in grounding, receptive field development, and shape recognition. In *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Development and Learning*, 67–72. IEEE.

Fuster, J. M. (1997). *The Prefrontal Cortex: Anatomy, Physiology, and the Frontal Lobe*. Lippincott-Raven. Third edition.

Graziano, M. (2009). *The Intelligent Movement Machine: An Ethological Perspective on the Primate Motor System*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Harnad, S. (1990). The symbol grounding problem. *Physica D*, 42:335–346.

Hoyer, P. O., and Hyvärinen, A. (2000). Independent component analysis applied to feature extraction from colour and stereo images. *Network: Computation in Neural Systems*, 11:191–210.

Hubel, D. H., and Wiesel, T. N. (1959). Receptive fields of single neurons in the cat's striate cortex. *Journal of Physiology*, 148:574–591.

52

References

Bach y Rita, P. (1972). *Brain Mechanisms in Sensory Substitution*. New York: Academic Press.

Bach y Rita, P. (1983). Tactile vision substitution: Past and future. *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 19:29–36.

Barlow, H. (1994). What is the computational goal of the neocortex? In Koch, C., and Davis, J. L., editors, *Large Scale Neuronal Theories of the Brain*, 1–22. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bell, A. J., and Sejnowski, T. J. (1997). The “independent components” of natural scenes are edge filters. *Vision Research*, 37:3327.

Choe, Y. (2011). Action-based autonomous grounding. In Modayil, J., Precup, D., and Singh, S., editors, *AAAI-11 Workshop on Lifelong Learning from Sensorimotor Experience*, 56–57. Palo Alto, CA: AAAI Press. AAAI Workshop Technical Report WS-11-15.

Choe, Y., and Bhamidipati, S. K. (2004). Autonomous acquisition of the meaning of sensory states through sensory-invariance driven action. In Ijspeert, A. J., Murata, M., and Wakamiya, N., editors, *Biologically Inspired Approaches to Advanced Information Technology*, Lecture Notes in Computer Science 3141, 176–188. Berlin: Springer.

Jones, J. P., and Palmer, L. A. (1987). An evaluation of the two-dimensional gabor filter model of simple receptive fields in cat striate cortex. *Journal of Neurophysiology*, 58(6):1233–1258.

Linás, R. R. (2001). *I of the Vortex*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Miikkulainen, R., Bednar, J. A., Choe, Y., and Sirosh, J. (2005). *Computational Maps in the Visual Cortex*. Berlin: Springer. URL: <http://www.computationalmaps.org>. 538 pages.

Misra, N., and Choe, Y. (2007). Shape recognition through dynamic motor representations. In Kozma, R., and Perlovsky, L., editors, *Neurodynamics of Higher-Level Cognition and Consciousness*, 185–210. Berlin: Springer.

Olshausen, B. A., and Field, D. J. (1997). Sparse coding with an overcomplete basis set: A strategy employed by v1? *Vision Research*, 37:3311–3325.

Rizzolatti, G., Fogassi, L., and Gallese, V. (2001). Neurophysiological mechanisms underlying the understanding and imitation of action. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 2:661–670.

Salinas, E. (2006). How behavioral constraints may determine optimal sensory representations. *PLoS Biology*, 4:2383–2392.

Sejnowski, T. J. (2006). What are the projective fields of cortical neurons? In van Hemmen, L. J., and Sejnowski, T. J., editors, *Twenty Three Problems in Systems Neuroscience*, 394–405. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

50

54

Weliky, M., Kandler, K., Fitzpatrick, D., and Katz, L. C. (1995). Patterns of excitation and inhibition evoked by horizontal connections in visual cortex share a common relationship to orientation columns. *Neuron*, 15:541–552.

Yang, H.-F., and Choe, Y. (2007). Co-development of visual receptive fields and their motor-primitive-based decoding scheme. In *Proceedings of the International Joint Conference on Neural Networks 2007 Post conference Workshop on Biologically-inspired Computational Vision (BCV) 2007*.