



Concepts and the Appeal to Cognitive Science

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Theorists of concepts have long endorsed the “standard view,” which holds that concepts are a single kind of mental representation storing a single kind of information. Working from the “standard view,” a number of competing theories of concepts have been developed. For example, imagist, definitionist, prototype, exemplar, and theory theories of concepts. The open question, however, is what is the best theory of concepts?

This book undertakes an in-depth analysis of theories of concepts and of the explanations formulated in cognitive science. Then, it provides two reasons for thinking that we cannot decide on the best theory of concepts by appealing to the explanatory results of cognitive science. First, because there exists a plurality of different kinds of cognitive scientific explanations. Second, because one’s choice about which explanations are genuinely explanatory will depend on one’s specification of the explananda of cognitive science.

This series explores issues of mental representation, linguistic structure and representation, and their interplay. The research presented in this series is grounded in the idea explored in the Collaborative Research Center “The structure of representations in language, cognition and science” (SFB 991) that there is a universal format for the representation of linguistic and cognitive concepts.

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