

An Intentional Treasure Hunt

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In my talk I want to show how the notion of intention has been dealt with in some of the Cognitive Science research. After having identified intention as a ‘Wittgenstein theme’, my ambition is to introduce a fairly comprehensive picture of this notion. Aiming at that, I’ll report about relevant research lines from different Cognitive Science perspectives and how these have recently begun to interact. I start out with the role of intentions in Searle’s Pragmatics. This will be followed by remarks on single intentions, the main topic in intention and Theory of Action research. Lack of time will keep me from going back to Davidson’s Causal Theory of Action, however, two advanced paradigms of the Causal Theory will be brought to the fore for further reference, ‘Representational Causalism’ and the ‘Revised Causal Theory’; they bridge the gap between the philosopher’s art of detailing, ‘Carnapian’, explication and the experimental Neuro-Sciences. It is shown that there is already a systematic link between the Causal Theory of Action, Neurophysiology and Neuropsychology. The question of whether to conceptualise intentions as primitive or structured has been an issue in the Neuro-Sciences from the very beginning, in the talk it is also shortly dealt with from the point of view of AI and the Philosophy of Language. Attempts to define ‘intention’ straightforwardly lead to specify its relations to other mental states such as wants, desires and beliefs. Finally, and leading directly up to the topic of the pre-SEMdial meeting, I come to the relation between intention and interaction as seen from current Philosophical Theory of Action via a little detour on H. Clark’s concept of cooperative language use and early plan-based dialogue description. As we know since incipient CA, dialogue is a social practice, so we expect CPs’ mental states to be responsive to each other. Indeed, this seems to be the case as models in the Philosophy of Social Practices have made plausible and experiments on joint attention and joint action show.

Selected Bibliography

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