

Talking about causation: linguistic and psychological perspectives

Initiative: zukunft.niedersachsen (nur ausgewählte Ausschreibungen)

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Causation is a central concept in human experience. For example, our experience that autumn's rainy weather depresses our mood or see that cold wind caused our skin to turn red. The concept of causation is studied in many different disciplines among them philosophy, linguistics and cognitive psychology. Philosophical accounts of causation have strongly influenced theoretical models in linguistics and psychology. But there is hardly any joint research of psychologists and linguists on causation. This project, the scientists are aim to bridge this gap and investigate people's notions of causation by combining methodologies of both fields. They plan to experimentally study the different notions of causation that people entertain when they use different causative constructions like "X caused Y" to describe causal relations in the world. The project takes linguistic analysis as the starting point for empirical research using experimental methods from psychology. The results of their experiments will show cognitive psychologists, studying causal reasoning, which notions of causation are encoded in the questions they ask their participants. They will show linguists whether their theoretical frameworks capture the notions of causation represented in people's mind.

Projektbeteiligte

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