

“Gießener Abendgespräche Kognition und Gehirn“

Mittwochs, 18.00 bis 20.00 Uhr, Raum F009

11.11.2015

„Defeasible Reasoning: The Role of the Amount and Frequency of Exceptions and the Specificity of the Conditional Rule“

Dipl.-Psych. L. Estefania Gazzo Castañeda
(Universität Gießen)

Contrary to classical logic, everyday reasoning is often non-monotonic and defeasible: Valid inferences can be withdrawn in light of new information. A conditional rule such as “If Anna eats lots of candies, then she will get cavities” is not followed anymore, if people take exceptions into account, such as regular visits to the dentist, or good dental hygiene. This talk aims to investigate the circumstances influencing defeasible reasoning more thoroughly.

During the first half, I will investigate how the mere amount of exceptions (e.g., in the upper example two: going to the dentist and brushing one’s teeth) or the general frequency of exceptions (i.e., in how many of 100 cases does someone eat candies and not get cavities) affects reasoning. In the second half, I will investigate the role of the specificity of the conditional rule. Does it make a difference if the conditional rule is phrased with a specific agent (e.g., “Anna” in the upper example), or instead only generally (e.g., “If a person eats lots of candies, then the person will get cavities”)? The results will be discussed in light of recent reasoning theories.