Categorisation and idealised cognitive models

I Prototype structure

Try Rosch’s experiments for yourself.

a. List as many attributes as you can for each level of the following taxonomy. What do your findings show?

VEHICLE

CAR

SPORTS CAR  SALOON (UK)  ESTATE CAR (UK)
SEDAN (US)  STATIONWAGON (US)

b. List all the motor movements relating to each level of the following taxonomy. What does this experiment reveal?

CUTLERY

SPOON

TEASPOON  TABLESPOON
c. Collect judgements from three non-linguists for the following members of the category kitchen utensil. Ask them to rank the members on a 1 (good example) to 7 (bad example) scale. Discuss your findings in the light of Rosch’s claims.

*bread bin; pepper mill; blender; plate; bowl; sink plunger; cafetière; rolling pin; chopping board; salad spinner; fork; saucepan; frying pan; saucer; grater; scales; juicer; spatula; knife; spoon; microwave; teacup; mixer; teapot; mug; toaster; nutcracker; whisk; oven; wooden spoon; peeler; sink plug.*

2 Idealised cognitive models

a. What are the idealised cognitive models (ICMs) against which the following terms are understood: bachelor, spinster, boy, girl?

b. How do these distinct ICMs contribute to the quite different connotations associated with the pairs bachelor–spinster and boy–girl? (You will need to state first what the common connotations associated with each of these words are.)
3 The theory of ICMs

In view of the theory of ICMs, give a detailed account of why the following concepts might be judged as non-prototypical with respect to their corresponding categories. You will first need to state your assumptions about the prototypical attributes associated with the categories in question.

(1) STEPFATHER [category: FATHER]
(2) 977 [category: CARDINAL NUMBERS]
(3) OSTRICH [category: BIRD]
(4) TARZAN [category: BACHELOR]
(5) NORTH KOREA [category: NATION]

4 Radial categories

Consider the category KNIFE.

a. What are the various subcategories associated with this category?

b. What is the prototype? Explain your reasoning.