

Librería
Bonilla y Asociados
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Título: Predicative Minds

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Precio: \$350.00

Editorial:

Año: 2009

Tema:

Edición: 1ª

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780262026369

The predicative mind singles out and represents an item in order to attribute to it a property, a relation, an action, an evaluation; it thinks, and says, of a house that it is big, of a car that it is to the left of the house, of a cat that it is about to jump, of a hypothesis that it is plausible. The capacity to predicate appears to be neither innate nor learned, yet it is universal among humans. Puzzling in evolutionary, developmental, and philosophical terms, the mental competence for predication still awaits a coherent and plausible explanation. In this exploration of the predicative roots of human thinking, Radu Bogdan takes up the challenge.

Bogdan argues that predication is not only an outcome of development but also a by-product of uniquely human features of development, many of them social in nature and unrelated to representation, cognition, and thinking. Humans develop predicative minds for disparate reasons, which bear initially on physiological coregulation, affective and manipulative communication, and the socially shared acquisition of words. Once developed, the competence for predication in turn redesigns human thinking and communication. Predication is at the heart of conscious, deliberate, explicit, and language-based human thinking, and it is the fuel of higher mental activities. Understanding the uniqueness and representational power of the human mind, Bogdan contends, requires an explanation of why and how predication came to be.