Intentionality Qalmri

Foundations of Mind
4/21/2009

Last week...

• What is intentionality is
• What features might be important to recognizing other agents as intentional
• What kinds of agents can have intentionality

The Intentionality Qalmri

• On the website you will find the composite data for the class
• The following slides outline what was done and what we are expecting you to do for this assignment.

What was shown

• 4 movies were shown to each of the sections
• Each of the 4 movies involved the movement of a target object
• Each class member answered either yes, maybe or no to 22 questions about each movie

The Questions

• The questions aimed to examine 3 different ‘traits’ of objects
• The three traits examined were:
  – How *mechanistic* the object seemed
  – How *animate* the object seemed
  – How *intentional* the object seemed
Mechanistic

- Three questions examined how many people assigned mechanistic traits to the target object of each movie
  - Does it need electricity?
  - Is it magnetized?
  - Does it roll?

Animate

- Another series of questions examined the proportion of people who assigned animate traits to the objects
  - Can it die?
  - Can it grow?
  - Can it reproduce?
  - Does it need food?
  - Does it need water?
  - Is it alive?
  - Does it move by itself?

Intentional

- Finally, another series of questions examined how willing people were to assign intentional traits to the target objects.
  - Can it be happy?
  - Can it communicate?
  - Can it feel pain?
  - Can it hear?
  - Can it make choices?
  - Can it make plans?
  - Can it see?
  - Can it think?
  - Can it want something?

Score tabulation

- A standardized score was calculated for each of the questions:
  - Score = 1(% of yes) + 0.5(% of maybe) + 0(% of no)
  - Higher scores = higher proportion of people who answered yes

Your job

- 1 graph
  - Compare composite scores for Clip 1 & Clip 3
  - Compare composite scores for Clip 2 & Clip 4
- Talk about:
  - Did your ratings for a clip fall clearly in one category or did it fit in multiple categories?
  - Specifically talk about the similarities and differences between the pairs of clips and what specific features may have had the strongest influence on your ratings

Import features to think about...

1. Is it self propelled?
2. Does it have a defined head – such that the head leads direction of motion?
3. Bilateral symmetry or radial symmetry?
4. Move in parallel to axis of bilateral symmetry?
5. Interactions are contingent with environmental features?
6. Interactions contingent with another agent?
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• Broad Question
  ◦ Think about how understanding intentionality fits with the previous sections we studied, what questions can help us understand the foundations of intentional reasoning?
  ◦ Ex.: Do people categorize intentional/non-intentional is systematically similar ways across individuals?

• Specific Question
  ◦ Do some features lead to stronger beliefs in intentionality/animacy than others?
  ◦ Focus on one or two key features and how they affected your ratings in the three different categories (mechanistic, animate & intentional)
  ◦ Look for any big differences on individual questions, and how that might relate to which factors are critical for understanding intentionality

Sample specific questions

• How does an agent’s interactions with the environment affect our perceptions of its intentionality?
• How does manner of motion (contingent vs. independent) affect our perceptions of intentionality?
• BAD: Are some factors more important than intentionality than others?
  ◦ Too broad, how would you make specific predictions and clear alternatives?

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• Alternatives
• Logic (If...then’s for each alternative)
• Results (graph and a written description)

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• Inferences
  ◦ How does it relate to the broad question? Do some features cue stronger beliefs of intentionality than others? Is this the result of innate beliefs or experience with other agents in the world?
  ◦ What are some follow-up questions to study? If NIH gave you a big fat juicy grant to study this topic, what kind of experiment would you design?