

Lecture 03: Experience of Action

s.butterfill@warwick.ac.uk

1. The Interface Problem (Recap)

How does it come about that intentions and motor representations, with their distinct representational formats, are related in such a way that, in at least some cases, the outcomes they specify non-accidentally match?

2. The New Interface Problem

1. In action observation, motor representations of outcomes sometimes facilitate the identification of goals in thought.
2. So where motor representations influence a thought about an action being directed to a particular outcome, there is normally a motor representation of this outcome, or of a matching outcome.
3. But how could motor representations have content-respecting influences on thoughts given their inferential isolation?

3. Mylopoulos and Pacherie's Proposal

'As defined by Tutiya et al., an executable concept of a type of movement is a representation, that could guide the formation of a volition, itself the proximal cause of a corresponding movement. Possession of an executable concept of a type of movement thus implies a capacity to form volitions that cause the production of movements that are instances of that type' (Pacherie 2011, p. 7; Mylopoulos & Pacherie 2016).

Other proposals include Burnston (2017) and Shepherd (2018).

4. A Question about Experiences of (Speech) Actions

Indirect Hypothesis: experiences revelatory of action are all experiences of bodily configurations, of joint displacements and of effects characteristic of particular actions. Some such experiences are influenced by motor representations in ways that reliably improve veridicality. And such experiences can provide reasons for judgements about the goals of actions providing that the subject knows, or is entitled to rely on, certain facts about which bodily configurations, joint displacements and sensory effects are characteristic of which actions.

Direct Hypothesis some experiences revelatory

of action are experiences of actions as directed to particular outcomes. In observing action we experience not only bodily configurations, joint displacements, sounds and the rest but also goal-directed actions. Further, such experiences stand to motor representations somewhat as perceptual experiences stand to perceptual representations. These experiences provide reasons for judgements in something like the way that, on some views, perceptual experience of a physical object might provide a reason for a judgement about that object.

5. Action Experience

The *Action Index Conjecture*: motor representations of outcomes structure experiences, imaginings and (prospective) memories in ways which provide opportunities for attention to actions directed to those outcomes. Forming intentions concerning an outcome can influence attention to the action, which can influence the persistence of a motor representation of the outcome.

References

Burnston, D. C. (2017). Interface problems in the explanation of action. *Philosophical Explorations*, 20(2), 242–258.

Mylopoulos, M. & Pacherie, E. (2016). Intentions and Motor Representations: The Interface Challenge. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, forthcoming, 1–20.

Pacherie, E. (2011). Nonconceptual Representations for Action and the Limits of Intentional Control. *Social Psychology*, 42(1), 67–73.

Shepherd, J. (2018). Skilled Action and the Double Life of Intention. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, n/a–n/a.