



Thinking, Reasoning, and Development

30 June – 2 July 2010

Uni Mail – Geneva

19th Advanced Course

Thinking, Reasoning, and Development

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11h 30

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From sentence meaning to human reasoning

Abstract:

Piaget opened the door to several lines of systematic investigation, the most obvious of which was the study of developmental and adult reasoning. Less obviously, work stemming from the Piagetian tradition has laid some of the groundwork for investigating the role of pragmatic understanding in reasoning (e.g., part of the difficulty in the class inclusion problem lies in its unusual comparison of a class to its subclass). Thus, it comes as no surprise to note that the modern field of reasoning is intimately connected to investigations of pragmatic comprehension. However, with a couple of notable exceptions, pragmatics is usually employed in rather selective ways, i.e., to address a specific reasoning problem, to account for unforeseen outcomes or to refer to effects concerning content and background knowledge. In this talk, I aim to show how an Experimental Pragmatic approach (i.e. a combination of linguistic-pragmatic theory with methods from the fields of psycholinguistics and reasoning), allows one to separate pragmatic influences from semantic ones and provides a basis for better understanding a) the lexical meanings of logical expressions and, b) developmental milestones.