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LANGUAGE OF THOUGHT HYPOTHESIS

There are various theories about the relation between [language](#) and thought. One prominent version in contemporary philosophy is called the [language](#) of thought hypothesis. It states that thinking happens in the medium of a mental [language](#). This [language](#), often referred to as Mentalese, is similar to regular languages in various respects: it is composed of words that are connected to each other in syntactic ways to form sentences. This claim does not merely rest on [an](#) intuitive [analogy](#) between [language](#) and thought. Instead, it provides a clear definition of the features a representational system has to embody in order to have a linguistic structure. On the level of syntax, the representational system has to possess two types of representations: atomic and compound representations. Atomic representations are basic whereas compound representations are constituted either by other compound representations or by atomic representations. On the level of semantics, the semantic content or the meaning of the compound representations should depend on the semantic contents of its constituents. A representational system is linguistically structured if it fulfills these two requirements.

The [language](#) of thought hypothesis states that the same is true for thinking in general. This would mean that thought is composed of certain atomic representational constituents that can [be](#) combined as described above. Apart from this abstract characterization, no further concrete claims are made about how [human](#) thought is implemented by the [brain](#) or which other similarities to natural [language](#) it has. The [language](#) of thought hypothesis was first introduced by Jerry Fodor. He argues in favor of this claim by holding that it constitutes the best explanation of the characteristic features of thinking. One of these features is productivity: a system of representations is productive if it can generate [an](#) infinite number of unique representations based on a low number of atomic representations. This applies to thought since [human](#) beings are capable of entertaining [an](#) infinite number of distinct thoughts even though their mental capacities are quite limited. Other characteristic features of thinking include systematicity and inferential coherence. Fodor argues that the [language](#) of thought hypothesis is true as it explains how thought can have these features and because there is no good alternative explanation. Some arguments against the [language](#) of thought hypothesis are based on neural networks, which are able to produce intelligent behavior without depending on representational systems. Other objections focus on the idea that some mental representations happen non-linguistically, for example, in the form of maps or images.

Computationalists have [been](#) especially interested in the [language](#) of thought hypothesis since it provides ways to close the gap between thought in the [human brain](#) and computational processes implemented by computers. The reason for this is that processes over representations that respect syntax and semantics, like inferences according to the modus ponens, can [be](#) implemented by physical systems using causal relations. The same linguistic systems may [be](#) implemented through different material systems, like brains or computers. In this way, computers can think.

ALPHABET OF HUMAN THOUGHT

The [alphabet](#) of [human](#) thought (Latin: alphabetum cogitationum humanarum) is a concept originally proposed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz that provides a universal way to represent and analyze ideas and relationships by breaking down their component pieces. All ideas are compounded from a very small number of simple ideas which can [be](#) represented by a unique character.

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