

We are treated
equally with respect
to status



We can define a concept as an idea or mental image that allows objects to be categorized or grouped together systematically. Note that the categories which are formed through conceptualization are in no way portraying actual (e. g.

biological) categories, they rather display the way humans think or feel of objects belonging together. The categorization process tends to happen faster if objects are considered stereotypical of a particular category) compared to them being considered atypical), a phenomenon called the typicality effect. The idea is derived from the prototype approach, which, together with the exemplar theory form the two conceptual representational model of concept knowledge. Classical theory of categories implies the following consequences: word meanings (respectively: concepts) can essentially be defined in terms of features, which have to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient; these features serve as criteria for determination of category membership. Membership has an essential all-or-nothing nature and all members of a category are treated equally with respect to status within the category. Eleanor Rosch criticized these implications by demonstrating, that e. g it doesn't hold true that each member of a category is treated equally, since studies proved that people's response times differed when asked to classify elements of a category: the response times were faster for elements they perceived more " prototypical" examples of a category compared to elements they perceived as atypical examples.

This proves that categories have internal structure (or at least people perceive it that way) making some members of a category " better" or more

“ prototypical” examples of that category. parThis new approach, the prototype theory, assumes that concepts are organized in such ways that they are coordinated around potentially typical properties of the category members. Members of a category have many of the features/prototypes associated with the category. A prototype is therefore an idealized or average representation of properties within a conceptual category. This idealized example of a category can then serve as a reference for the categorization of further objects or stimuli.

The conclusion that members of a category can be rated with regard to how “ good” or how prototypical examples of a category they are is also called the extit{prototype effect}. This effect is supported by studies showing that people classify never seen prototypes of a category faster than they classify studied or formerly known exemplars. parExemplars are examples of members belonging to a specific category, but rather than being the “ best” representative of a category, they are a specific remembered instance of a member belonging to a specific category.

With increased encounters, the objects or member of a category will form a stronger representation in memory. (????????? WAS IST DAS FÜR !

SATZ?????)parFeatures and prototypes thus differ in terms of their nature:

Features, as mentioned above, serve as criteria when determining the category membership of an object; a prototype on the other hand, is a summary representation or the “ best” example/member of a category.

Prototype- and exemplar theories are very much alike in the sense that during the categorization process, both assess similarity of an object/stimulus to an ideal member of the category, however, a exemplar

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differs from a prototype in such way that it may be “shaped” or affected by the context of the specific instance it was encountered (which can of course vary on depending on the background of the individual), whereas a prototype is a summary representation.