

PSYCO 354 Quiz 8

Define 'FINST', or 'finger instantiation'. Why is this term important to cognitive science?

Name:

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In Pylyshyn's theory of seeing and visualizing, a 'FINST' or 'finger instantiation' is an attentional index that can be linked to some object in the real world. Once this index is attached, it sticks to the object, moving with it as the object moves, as the perceiver moves, or both. The visual features of the object can be accessed whenever needed via the index.

FINSTs are important because they reflect very different thinking about visual cognition. For instance, a FINST only points to an object, does not deliver its features, and can pick out an object even though these features are not detected. So FINSTs pick out objects before features, which is the opposite of other theories like Treisman's. Also, more than one FINST can be deployed at the same time, indicating a different notion of attention from the single attentional spotlight. Finally, FINSTs in Pylyshyn's theory offer a way to consider it as a hybrid between classical, connectionist, and embodied approaches.