Ostensive Learnability as Criterion for Theory-Neutral "Observation" Concepts

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In the first part of my paper I discuss six objections against the existence of theory-neutral observation sentences. I argue that although these objections make correct points, they do not exclude the existence of observations that are weakly theory-neutral in the sense that they do not depend on acquired background knowledge (although they may depend on the 'implicit theories' that are contained in the hardware of our visual cortex). In the second part of the paper I discuss a final objection to theory-neutral observations, namely the problem of language-dependence of observation sentence. In order to circumvent this objection I suggest an experimental method - the method of ostensive learning experiments - by which the degree of theory- and language-independence of an observable property can be tested. A similar method has also been used to test whether native members of 'primitive' tribes (e.g. Aborigines) can learn observational concepts of western (e.g. contemporary English) languages for which they don't have a word in their language.