

Re: The fun with the "categorization"

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From: Glen M. Sizemore (gmsizemore2_at_yahoo.com)

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You are asking the wrong questions. Can you not see that the very way that you ask the questions defines what form the answers are supposed to take?

All "learning" is "unconscious" except for those that have been trained to observe their own behavior. But we cannot be trained to describe all of that and we sometimes find ourselves responding to stimuli, and we cannot say anymore than that – sometimes (as in the Hefferline experiments) some cannot even say that. In the case you mentioned, triads that are solvable are composed of words that have occurred frequently together in extended discussions, readings, etc. This tends to make the words a sort of single stimulus class. Technically speaking, such words (or larger phrases) are linked "intraverbally." That is, hearing or reading these words alter the probability of responses that tend to occur with them in discussions, text etc. The behavioral mechanism is stimulus control; the term "vertebrate" is more likely to be part of reinforced speech than "backswing" when the discussion is about "mammals" and "reptiles." This means that, for example, when the discussion is about "the beach," responses like "boat" and "surfing" increase in probability because, all things being equal, speech contain these terms is likely to be reinforced by attention from one's listeners. Otherwise one is "changing the topic." In experiments like the one you describe, we detect these sorts of behavioral changes, especially when you present three related words – this has the effect of strongly influencing the probability of other related responses. We can detect this effect, even if the responses strengthened do not include "giving the answer." So, stuff like this, as well as some of the "memory illusion" stuff is only confusing when you think in terms of "knowledge of semantics" rather than the variables that alter the probability of responses, and the contingencies responsible for our ability to describe our behavior.

Similarly, if you want to see good research getting at issues like this, you could do enough reading to be able to understand the "equivalence class" literature that appears in JEAB and elsewhere.

sci.cognitive: Re: The fun with the "categorization"

"MrPat" <mrpat@blue-g46 875£"yyonder.co.uk> wrote in message
news:<WkvHc.13257\$Cr5.10923@fe2.news.blueyonder.co.uk>...
> "David Longley" <David@longley.demon.co.uk> wrote in message
> news:ingzGHB rNP7AFw13@longley.demon.co.uk...
>> *Has it occurred to you that it might suffice just to look more closely*
>> *at what the experimenters are actually doing, ie their methods?*
>> --
>> *David Longley*
>
> *Well the extracts from the essay only give a brief overview of the method;*
> *they don't go into details.*
>
> *If you haven't read the second extract (quote) from the essay about*
> *unconscious thought have a look, it is a short quote: how come people may not*
> *be consciously able to solve the triad of words, but they can state whether*
> *it is soluble or not. It would appear that this is only possible because*
> *they are dealing with the semantics of the problem at some other level than*
> *conscious thought and this is how they know the problem is soluble or not.*
> *Otherwise explain how you think they know.*
>
> *I'm open to learn more about this and your viewpoint, if you aware of the*
> *details of the method in this experiment or similar priming type experiments*
> *where the presence of unconscious 'processes' are inferred by the*
> *experimenters, how would you criticize them? Please don't lauch into a*
> *generalised statement about intensional language and lack of control of*
> *variables using language that is too technical for me. See if you can start*
> *with simple primitive concepts that I understand and build on from there—I'm*
> *not an expert.*
>
> *It maybe that to do that is too onerous for you to attempt, but it would*
> *help me to further understand these type of experiments and your viewpoint.*