

Embodied memory judgments: a case of motor fluency.

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Source

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Abstract

It is well known that perceptual and conceptual fluency can influence episodic memory judgments. Here, the authors asked whether fluency arising from the motor system also impacts recognition memory. Past research has shown that the perception of letters automatically activates motor programs of typing actions in skilled typists. In this study, expert typists made more false recognition errors to letter dyads which would be easier or more fluent to type than nonfluent dyads, while no typing action was involved (Experiment 1). This effect was minimized with a secondary motor task that implicated the same fingers that would be used to type the presented dyads, but this effect remained with a noninterfering motor task (Experiment 2). Typing novices, as a comparison group, did not show fluency effects in recognition memory. These findings suggest that memory is influenced by covert simulation of actions associated with the items being judged-even when there is no intention to act-and highlight the intimate connections between higher level cognition and action.

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