Abstract

Judgments of learning (JOLs) are often reactive on memory for cue-target pairs. This pattern, however, is moderated by relatedness, as related but not unrelated pairs often show a memorial benefit compared to a no-JOL control group. According to Soderstrom et al.’s (2015) cue-strengthening account, JOLs direct attention towards intrinsic cues which aid retrieval. However, reactivity may also reflect specific processing of cue-target associations, which is applied whenever semantic associations are available, even when these associations are indirect. The present study tested this possibility using mediated associates (e.g., lion – stripes) which are directly unrelated to each other and indirectly related through a non-presented mediator (e.g., tiger). Based on a cue-strengthening account, no reactivity would be expected for mediated associates. Alternatively, if cue strengthening primarily reflects enhanced processing of cue-target relations, memory benefits would be expected whenever pairs are semantically related, even if pairs are indirectly related through mediators. Overall, reactivity extended to mediated associates in cued recall (Experiment 1) and recognition tests (Experiments 2 and 3). Interestingly, JOL reactivity was consistently found on recognition of non-mediated unrelated pairs (Experiments 2-4). Thus, positive reactivity on related pairs for cued-recall testing likely reflects increased activation of cue-target associations. However, because recognition is based on familiarity cues, reactivity occurs globally for all pair types, regardless of cue-target relations.

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