



Lecture 6

Eyewitness testimony

Part B: Results, Discussion

Eyewitness Memory

- Has been a subject of interest in Psychology for over a century
- Many studies have demonstrated errors in eyewitness memory.
 - E.g. Munsterberg (1908), Buckhout, (1974)
 - Studies examining memory for staged incidents
 - Many errors in accounts of those witnessing these events

Eyewitness Memory cont'd

- Rattner (1988)
 - reviewed 205 cases of wrongful arrest
 - found that 52% of these involved mistaken eyewitness testimony
- Cutler and Penrod (1995)
 - by 1995, over 2000 publications existed on reliability of eyewitness testimony

Eyewitness Memory cont'd

- Many reasons for inaccuracies in eyewitness testimony
 - delay between witnessing and recall
 - selective attention
 - effects of misleading news reports
 - the state of the witness during the event
 - prejudices and biases of witness
- Manner in which witness is questioned can also affect reliability of testimony
 - This is the focus of the current study.

Questioning Witnesses

- Loftus and Palmer (1974)
 - demonstrated effects of 'leading' questions
 - participants viewed video of RTA, afterwards asked to estimate speed of cars
 - use of adjective 'smashed' in questioning witnesses lead to higher estimates of speed than use of 'hit'

Questioning Witnesses

- Morris and Morris (1985)
 - looked at effect of question order
 - compared four different types of order
 - questions about main character asked first followed by other characters
 - questions about main event first followed by other events
 - questions following the time sequence of the events
 - randomly ordered questions

Questioning Witnesses

- Morris and Morris (1985) cont'd
 - Found that questions ordered according to time sequence produced most accurate recalls
 - suggestion that chronological questioning encourages witnesses to reconstruct event in same manner as the memory entry was made.

Questioning Witnesses

- In addition to understanding causes of errors in testimony, much research conducted on improving eyewitness memory.
- Development of the technique of the 'Cognitive Interview' (Geiselman et al. 1984)

Questioning Witnesses

- Cognitive interview
 - procedure for interviewing witnesses based on findings of memory research
 - components of interview
 - restate encoding context
 - report all details regardless of confidence
 - recall from different perspectives
 - recall in different orders

Questioning Witnesses

- Results of Morris and Morris (1985) may challenge the efficacy of the last component of interview (recall in different orders)
 - better to recall events according to time sequence in which they occurred
 - use of different orders now used less in revised CI (Geiselman and Fisher, 1989)
- Cognitive interview now widely used by Police service



Present study

- We will now review the design of the current experiment.



The research hypothesis was...

1. There will be a significant difference in performance between the two conditions.
2. Participants in the 'chronological' condition will perform significantly better than those in the 'random' condition.
3. There will be no significant difference in performance between the two conditions



The design of the experiment was...

- 1. Related/Within-subjects**
- 2. Unrelated/Between-subjects**

The independent variable was...

1. The number of correctly answered questions.
2. The questions presented to participants.
3. The order in which the questions were presented.



The dependent variable was...

1. The number of correctly answered questions.
2. The questions presented to participants.
3. The order in which the questions were presented.

Data analysis

- To investigate if the difference between the conditions is statistically significant:
 - we have two conditions
 - an unrelated/between design
- Appropriate statistical test here:
 - the Mann-Whitney test

References

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- Munsterberg, H. (1908) *On The Witness Stand*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company.
- Rattner, A. (1988). Convicted but innocent. *Law and Human Behavior*, 12, pp. 283-294.

Introduction

- Broad (general)
 - Define eyewitness testimony
 - Problems with it (reconstruction)
 - Key theory/research (Loftus and Palmer)
 - How have researchers measured EWT?
- Narrow (specific)
 - What effects EWT?
 - What have the studies found?(order effects)
 - Research (e.g. Morris and Morris)
- Rationale
 - Why is EWT important?
 - Why study it?
- Aim (outline your study an aim) and hypothesis