

Generalizing the Materials Based Bias Effect

In recognition memory tests, subjects may demonstrate liberal, conservative, or no response biases based on the principles of signal detection theory. A number of studies found a clear conservative bias among subjects when presented with complex images (e.g., paintings, photographs of scenes) as stimuli. This raised an interest in testing the generality of these results across cultures. For other studies with stimuli being English words, bias tended to be liberal or neutral. The ambiguity behind these materials-based differences in response bias has led studies to focus on aspects like language in specific. Whether response bias of bilingual subjects varies by the language used for word stimuli remains a question. Here I will discuss my ongoing efforts to better understand response bias variation across materials and individuals. Specifically, I aim to explore whether multilingual participants show differences in response bias for words in their first vs. additional language(s), and to test the generality of the materials based bias effect into other cultures.