UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Guardian and Daily Mail Readers' Implicit Attitudes to Immigration

Permalink

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 39(0)

Authors

Lynott, Dermot
Walsh, Michael
McEnery, Tony
et al.

Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed

Guardian and Daily Mail Readers' Implicit Attitudes to Immigration

Dermot Lynott
Lancaster University, UK

Michael Walsh
University of Stuttgart, Germany

Tony McEnery
Lancaster University, UK

Louise Connell
Lancaster University, UK

Liam Cross
University of Buckingham, UK

Abstract: The implicit association test (IAT) measures bias towards often controversial topics (race/religion), while newspapers typically take strong positive/negative stances on such issues. In a pre-registered study, we developed and administered an immigration IAT to readers of the Daily Mail (typically anti-immigration) and Guardian (typically pro-immigration) newspapers. IAT Materials were constructed based on co-occurrence frequencies from each newspapers' website for immigration-related terms (migrant) and positive/negative attributes (skilled/unskilled). Target stimuli showed stronger negative associations with immigration concepts in the Daily Mail corpus compared to the Guardian corpus, and stronger positive associations in the Guardian corpus compared to the Daily Mail. Consistent with these linguistic distributional differences, Daily Mail readers exhibited a larger IAT bias, revealing stronger negative associations to immigration concepts compared to Guardian readers. This difference in overall bias was not explained by other variables, and raises the possibility that exposure to biased language contributes to biased implicit attitudes.