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Retrieval of Analogous Events Belonging to the Same Schema-Governed Category: The Role of Critical Dimensions

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Abstract

Analogies comparing exemplars from the same schema-governed category have received limited attention. We examined whether schema-governed category membership and similarity along a category's critical dimensions influence the retrieval of analogous events. In Experiment 1, participants were presented with base–target pairs that either shared or did not share a schema-governed category and varied in their similarity on the category's critical dimensions. Participants preferentially retrieved bases from the target's schema-governed category and, within that category, favored bases that were more similar to the target along critical dimensions. Experiment 2 replicated the effect of dimensional similarity using the retrieval of previously encoded autobiographical events. Together, these findings indicate that analogical retrieval is jointly constrained: schema-governed category membership operates as a coarse structural filter, whereas similarity along critical dimensions of a shared category imposes a finer-grained selection among eligible candidates.

Keywords: analogy; retrieval; relational category