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# The effect of categorical distinctiveness on recognition memory

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## Abstract

In this study, we examined how categorical distinctiveness is related to memory. In the first stage, participants searched for a target image to remember among five distractor images belonging to another category. The categorical visual search was organized differently: in the low categorical distinctiveness (LCD) condition, the target image was surrounded by perceptually similar images, from the same superordinate category (e.g., cat / dogs); in the high categorical distinctiveness (HCD) condition, it was surrounded by dissimilar objects, from another superordinate category (e.g., cat / chairs). In the second stage, participants performed a recognition test. We expected that visual search would lead to a distortion in remembering, a shift of the memory trace to the prototype (Lupyan, 2008): more false alarms in the LCD condition than in the HCD condition. Our hypothesis was fully confirmed.