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Journal

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

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Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed

The Effects of Familiarity and Typicality on Naming Objects and Faces

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Abstract: It is found that when we name an object or a face, we often use basic level name (e.g., dog) rather than a name at superordinate level (e.g., animal) or subordinate level (e.g., Labrador). In addition, although abundant evidence generally suggested that both familiarity and typicality influence object recognition, how each of the two factors involves categorization in terms of naming is not fully investigated yet. The present studies were performed to examine the familiarity and typicality effects on naming either an object or a face. Names for basic, superordinate, and subordinate levels were prepared for testing the speed and correctness of object/face identification. As a result, familiarity, not typicality, induced a down-shift pattern for naming. In contrast, typicality led to overall faster responses. The findings of the study indicated that familiarity and typicality have dissimilar effects on categorization by naming.