

The List Length Effect In Recognition Memory: An Analysis Using Remember-Know Responses

Angela Kinnell
Simon Dennis
University of Adelaide

It has been widely accepted that there is a list length effect in recognition memory, that is, that as the length of the study list increases, recognition performance deteriorates. Dennis and Humphreys (2001), however, identified a null list length effect and proposed that previous research had failed to control for a number of potential confounds which may themselves have given rise to the effect. A partial replication of their study later identified a positive list length effect, however this study also included remember-know (RK) judgments in the study design (Cary & Reder, 2003). The present study was designed to determine whether the list length effect finding could be driven by the inclusion of the RK task which may induce recall, where the list length effect is well accepted. Participants were recruited into one of two conditions; a control condition with normal recognition instructions and a RK task condition. List length was varied within subjects and word frequency was varied within each list. Analysis revealed a null list length effect in both the normal instructions and RK task conditions. Thus, this study supports previous findings of a null list length effect even with the presence of the RK task.