Frequent phrases are easier to recall, but not easier to recognize

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Is the retrieval of phrases in episodic memory similar to the retrieval of single words?
- Phrases may act like “big words” as evidenced by frequency effects for phrases (Aron & Snider, 2010)
- Are high frequency phrases (e.g. alcoholic beverage) remembered more easily than low frequency phrases (e.g. psychic nephew)?
- We examine both yes-no recognition and free recall

Exp. 1: Recognition memory for words and phrases
- Discriminability decreases as a function of word frequency
- High and low frequency phrases are equally well-recognized but frequent phrases get more yes responses (Jacobs et al., in press)

Exp. 2: Recall of varied adjective-noun phrases
- High frequency leads to more recall of one or both words
- High frequency also tends to prevent incomplete recall

Exp. 3: Recall of highly compositional adjective-noun phrases from spoken corpus (COCA) (e.g. angry crowd)
- Imageability and compositionality not correlated with phrase freq.
- Prediction: Possibly more limited frequency effects than with Google

What about recall?
A multinomial framework
Three likely outcomes for recall: omissions, partial recalls (one of the two words), and complete recall.

What does phrase frequency matter?

Omissions: Nothing retrieved

Experimental Context (cue for recall)

Something retrieved

Here?

One word

Both words

Like Experiment 2, high frequency phrases are more likely to lead to recall of both words.

Unlike Experiment 2, frequency does not predict whether there is some recall.

References