

Comments about writing style

Michael Kubovy

Example 1

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Discrete Emotions and Persuasion: The Role of Emotion-Induced Expectancies

David DeSteno
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Richard E. Petty and Derek D. Rucker
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Duane T. Wegener
Purdue University

Julia Braverman
Northeastern University

Before you proceed rewrite:

“To our minds, the penchant for focusing study of the role of affective states almost solely on happiness and sadness, though providing many insights into the ways in which affect shapes attitude change, may mask a truer understanding of the potential influence of emotion on persuasion. Indeed, the bifurcation of emotional phenomena into positive versus negative states stands in direct opposition to the view espoused by many classical practitioners of persuasion. It also represents a gross oversimplification of emotional experience; distinctions among negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, disgust) and among positive emotions (e.g., gratitude, joy) are lost.”

Joseph M. Williams
*Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and
Grace*

New York: Longman, 2003 (Seventh Edition)

Characters should be subjects

“To our minds, the penchant for focusing study of the role of affective states almost solely on happiness and sadness, though providing many insights into the ways in which affect shapes attitude change, may mask a truer understanding of the potential influence of emotion on persuasion.”

“the penchant”

- is a simple subject,
- but the main character is not mentioned

Who is the main character?

Actions should be verbs

“To our minds, the penchant for focusing study of the role of affective states almost solely on happiness and sadness, though providing many insights into the ways in which affect shapes attitude change, may mask a truer understanding of the potential influence of emotion on persuasion.”

“the penchant for focusing study of”

– is the whole subject

“may mask”

– plays the role of verb

What is the action?

My rewrite

“To our minds, the penchant for focusing study of the role of affective states almost solely on happiness and sadness, though providing many insights into the ways in which affect shapes attitude change, may mask a truer understanding of the potential influence of emotion on persuasion. Indeed, the bifurcation of emotional phenomena into positive versus negative states stands in direct opposition to the view espoused by many classical practitioners of persuasion. It also represents a gross oversimplification of emotional experience; distinctions among negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, disgust) and among positive emotions (e.g., gratitude, joy) are lost.”

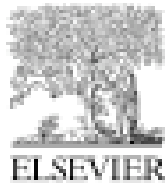
“Psychologists who study the role of affect in attitude change have oversimplified the problem. By focusing on happiness and sadness, they disregard other negative emotions (such as anger or disgust) and positive emotions (gratitude or joy).”

What I left out:

“though providing many insights into the ways in which affect shapes attitude change”

“stands in direct opposition to the view espoused by many classical practitioners of persuasion”

Example 2



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Cognitive Psychology 48 (2004) 95–126

Cognitive
Psychology

www.elsevier.com/locate/cogpsych

Evidence against a central bottleneck during the attentional blink: Multiple channels for configural and featural processing[☆]

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Reorganize paragraph

“The attentional blink has been demonstrated over an impressive range of task conditions, with virtually every class of stimulus showing reliable evidence of AB interference. Nevertheless, the current results suggest that the AB effect may not be the result of a central processing bottleneck in visual perception. We have observed that a T₁ processing load (digit discrimination) that is capable of inducing long-lasting AB interference in letters may have no effect at all on the accuracy of face discrimination. These data are incompatible with the idea that AB interference reflects competition between objects for a single obligatory stage of visual processing. Instead, we hypothesize that multiple processing channels may be available for the discrimination of faces. The present results can be explained by assuming one channel that processes feature-based information, and another channel that processes configural information. This multi-channel account predicts that AB interference will be observed when T₁ processing occupies every channel that is available for discriminating the second target. According to this hypothesis, face discrimination did not suffer from AB interference when T₁ was a digit because the digits were discriminated using only the feature-based channel. Thus, the configural channel was still available for the accurate discrimination of faces during the AB period.”

The key ideas

“The attentional blink has been demonstrated over an impressive range of task conditions, with virtually every class of stimulus showing reliable evidence of AB interference. Nevertheless, ***the current results suggest that the AB effect may not be the result of a central processing bottleneck in visual perception.*** We have observed that a T_I processing load (digit discrimination) that is capable of inducing long-lasting AB interference in letters may have no effect at all on the accuracy of face discrimination. These data are incompatible with the idea that AB interference reflects competition between objects for a single obligatory stage of visual processing. Instead, we hypothesize that multiple processing channels may be available for the discrimination of faces. ***The present results can be explained by assuming one channel that processes feature-based information, and another channel that processes configural information.*** This multi-channel account predicts that AB interference will be observed when T_I processing occupies every channel that is available for discriminating the second target. ***According to this hypothesis, face discrimination did not suffer from AB interference when T_I was a digit because the digits were discriminated using only the feature-based channel.*** Thus, the configural channel was still available for the accurate discrimination of faces during the AB period.”

My rewrite

“The attentional blink has been demonstrated over an impressive range of task conditions, with virtually every class of stimulus showing reliable evidence of AB interference. Nevertheless, ***the current results suggest that the AB effect may not be the result of a central processing bottleneck in visual perception.*** We have observed that a T_I processing load (digit discrimination) that is capable of inducing long-lasting AB interference in letters may have no effect at all on the accuracy of face discrimination. These data are incompatible with the idea that AB interference reflects competition between objects for a single obligatory stage of visual processing. Instead, we hypothesize that multiple processing channels may be available for the discrimination of faces. ***The present results can be explained by assuming one channel that processes feature-based information, and another channel that processes configural information.*** This multi-channel account predicts that AB interference will be observed when T_I processing occupies every channel that is available for discriminating the second target. ***According to this hypothesis, face discrimination did not suffer from AB interference when T_I was a digit because the digits were discriminated using only the feature-based channel.*** Thus, the configural channel was still available for the accurate discrimination of faces during the AB period.”

The AB may be due to limited resources in multiple channels, rather than a single central bottleneck. We hypothesize that the discrimination of digits and letters uses a channel that processes features, whereas the discrimination of faces uses a channel that processes configural information. Hence we find that if T_I requires the processing of digits, then we will observe a prolonged AB for letters but none for faces.

Example 3

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NEIGHBORHOODS AND NEIGHBORS: DO THEY CONTRIBUTE TO PERSONAL WELL-BEING?

Susan J. Farrell, Tim Aubry, and Daniel Coulombe
University of Ottawa

Paragraphs should not be not about authors

“MacMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed four elements as being central to sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. ...”

Better

Four elements are central to sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (MacMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Paragraphs should be linked

“MacMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed four elements as being central to sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.... Therefore it becomes important to consider elements of the neighborhood that contribute to the development and maintenance of sense of community.

Research to date has identified only a few neighborhood-level variables that are associated with sense of community in residents.

Weenig, Schmidt, and Midden (1990) found...

Wilson and Baldassare (1996) examined...

Although the dimensions of privacy ... and density of housing ... have been considered ...”

Better

Four elements are central to sense of community: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (MacMillan & Chavis, 1986)....

Two dimensions of the neighborhood affect its residents' sense of community: privacy and density of housing.