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The Serial Position Effect

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The introduction should state why the problem is important, develop the background of the problem through a review of the literature, and state the hypothesis. Of course, you would not include a paragraph, such as this one, that describes what belongs in the introduction.

The serial position effect states The serial position effect consists of two phenomena – the primacy effect and the recency effect.... This is important because

Glanzer (1966) studied the serial position effect by presenting a list of 15 words, one at a time....

There are two conditions in the present experiment. Both conditions have the participants seeing a list of 30 words. In one condition the participants perform a distracter task for 30 seconds after seeing the list of words. The participants in the other condition immediately recall the words after seeing them. The hypothesis states that the primacy effect should be observed in both conditions, but because the last several items cannot be rehearsed in working memory during the distracter task, the recency effect should only be observed in the condition without the distracter task.

Method

Participants

Twenty-nine female and four male college aged students participated in the study. Each student participated in both conditions. The researchers treated the participants according to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (2002).

Apparatus

A Java application controlled the presentation of the stimuli on various types of computers.

Procedure

Each student participated in two conditions – no distracter condition and distracter condition. The order of presentation of the two conditions was randomly assigned to each student. In both conditions, the students saw a list of 30 words presented one at a time. Each word was five letters long, Each word was preceded by a fixation point for 500 ms, followed by the word for 1000 ms, and a blank screen for 1000 ms. In the distracter task condition, after viewing the words, the students were asked to.... Then both conditions were asked to recall the words by The recall was scored by Then the other condition was presented.

Results

The hypothesis stated We calculated the proportion of students who recalled a word in each serial position.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of students who recalled a word for each serial position for both the no distracter condition (solid line) and distracter condition (dashed line.) Consistent with the hypothesis, the first several items were recalled better than the middle items for both the no-distracter and distracter conditions. Consistent with the hypothesis, the last several items....

Discussion

The data support the primacy effect for both conditions, and the recency effect in the no-distracter condition. As predicted, the recency effect was not observed in the distracter condition. This is consistent with Glanzer (1966) and suggests that the recency effect may be due to

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution because (give some limitations)

Future research might include...

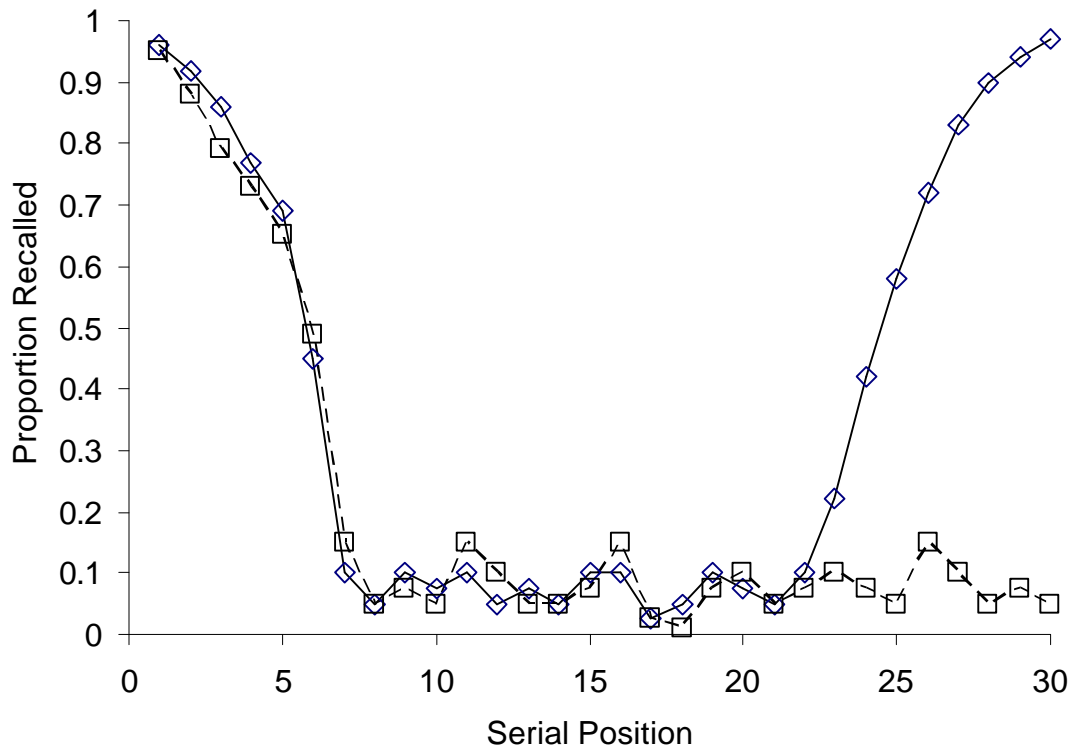
References

American Psychological Association (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060-1073.

Glanzer, M. (1966). Encoding in the perceptual (visual) serial position effect. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 5, 92-97.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The proportion of students who recalled the word in each serial position. The solid line shows the results for the no-distracter condition and shows the typical primacy and recency effects. The dashed line shows the results for the distracter condition. Only the primacy effect is present.



—◇— No-Distractor - □ - Distracter