Forgetting in Everyday Life

[Author]

[Institution]

Author Note

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Short term memory is a useful tool, especially when one needs to remember a detail for a short period of time and has immediate implications. The test that I undertook presented me with a list of 12 words that I was to memorize and then reproduce to the best of my ability. I would have to admit that I did not do really well at all the first time around. I didn’t really understand the mechanics involved in the test that I was taking. However, the second time around I was better able to understand how the test worked and perform a whole lot better. I was able to correctly identify nine of the twelve elements given in the list.

The phenomenon I experience here was short-term memory. Even though I am writing this immediately after taking the test, I cannot remember no more than a couple of words at most. This is because an individual can only hold 7 items at most at a time. This limited capacity is followed by limited duration. The storage capacity of short term memory is relatively fragile and this information can easily be lost with passage of time or a simple distraction. More often than not, short term memory only lasts long enough for encoding purposes, which includes translating visual ques into sounds (Schwarb, Nail, & Schumacher, 2016).

During the test, I best remembered the words from the beginning of the end. The words that I memorized next I remember slightly better than the words present at the very end of the list. This is probably because I focused on the beginning of the list in a much better manner than the ones at the end. In fact, I do not even remember the words that were present at the very end, and can even still recall few of the words from the very beginning of the text. Another reason that I can think of is that fact that I was too preoccupied with remembering the list that I rushed through it over and over again without really focusing on what I was memorizing. I was more engrossed in getting to the end of the list and then start again, which made me lose focus by the end of the text and remain distracted to start over again. This must have impacted the storage capacity of my short-term memory (Brydges, Gignac, & Ecker, 2018).

According to George Miller, our memory primarily comprises of chunks of text, that is stored. As mentioned earlier, there are seven items, give or take a few, that can be adequately remembered by an individual. Miller regarded 5 to 9 as the magic number, where an individual can immediately remember an occurrence. Miller worked with memory extensively to understand what makes an individual remember something better. He regarding that the method of chunking and clustering information, i.e. reducing them down to a group allows an individual to remember them better, especially when in comparison to list of objects with no connection to one another (Cowan, 2015).

By clicking on the option on the page, which gave me the option of looking at other data available on the subject and how the said data would work. According to the data shown, it was observed that it was easier for females to remember things and objects stored under short term memory than males. However, the difference between the two sets of data was rather negligible. Additionally, around 50% of the people attempting the test did not even state their gender, which puts the validity of the statistics on display under question. Furthermore, with regard to age, it was shown that younger individuals did way better on the test than older people did. This is probably because memory dwindles over time, with people not being able to remember sweeping details with as much clarity as they could earlier. Furthermore, again around 35% individuals did not define their age group, which reduces the accuracy of the data being presented. Furthermore, the test could be attempted more than one times. The stats fail to address if the individuals taking the test did what they did only once or did they do it in a repeated manner. If the statistics failed to discriminate between the number of times a single individual took the test, it could severely affect the validity of these statistics in the first place.

Finally, I do have certain reservations with regard to the test that I just attempted. The test contained a set of words, most of which had no connection or context to one another. I only got to work with a single set of words, and the list remained the same no matter how many times I attempted the test. As far as I remember, even the order of the words remained the same regardless of the fact that the fact that each new test reassessed the capacity and the time span of my short-term memory. Furthermore, the choice to select whether I had attempted the test before was something I informed the system at my own discretion. In my opinion, for the test to truly hold water, the candidate should be presented with a new list every time. If not, they should at least be presented with reordered list of words so that the candidate has to re-memorize the words once again or at least focus on them again.

**References**

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