

Suggested Thesis Topics – Spring Semester 2027

Topics by Beatrice Kuhlmann

Age Differences in Associative Memory: A Storage or Retrieval Problem?

A robust finding in research on aging and episodic memory is that age differences are greater for associative information (e.g., word pairs) than for individual items (e.g., single words). It remains unclear whether these differences reflect difficulties in storing information in episodic memory, retrieving it, or both. Multinomial processing tree (MPT) models allow these processes to be disentangled. In previous studies, we have applied such models and found different results for memory for word pairs depending on whether the pairs were semantically associated or unassociated. However, these findings were confounded by the use of different MPT models. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate memory for semantically associated versus unassociated word pairs in younger and older adults using the same MPT model.

Topics by Nikoletta Symeonidou

Mood and Stereotype-Based Source Judgments

Some studies suggest that people in a positive mood, compared with those in a negative mood, rely more heavily on stereotypes and holistic (top-down) processing. However, this effect has rarely been investigated in the context of source judgments—that is, judgments about the origin or source of information. When attributing information to a source, we often rely on stereotypes, particularly when we can no longer accurately remember the actual source (e.g., *“I must have gotten that cake recipe from my grandmother—she always enjoys baking cakes.”*). However, whether our mood can influence such stereotype-based source judgments has received little research attention to date and could be investigated in an experimental study.