Stimuli Size and Font Size's Impact on Judgments and Recognition

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ABSTRACT

Participants give higher judgments of learning (JOLs) to items presented in large font and to physically large items than to those in small font or physically small items (Price, McElroy, Martin, 2015; Rhodes & Castel, 2008). One explanation is that larger fonts and sizes are more fluent (i.e., easier to process) than smaller items (Alter, 2013; Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009).

The present study examined whether the impact of font size would be observed in participants' JOLs for nonsense consonant trigram pairs (e.g., DWM - KRB) if these trigrams were presented in small (18 pt.) and large (48 pt.) font sizes. In a second condition we examined whether physical size effects would extend to trigrams if they were surrounded by small and large circles, which participants were told reflected physically small and physically large items, respectively. We reasoned that if one font size or physical circle size was more memorable than the other then these differences should be reflected in participants' JOLs, recognition test performance, and the accuracy of participants' source judgments regarding the font size or circle size in which the trigrams were presented.

We examined these possibilities by asking participants to study 32 trigram pairs in each of two study-test trials. Participants studied each trigram pair for 5 seconds, then provided an immediate JOL. After the study phase, participants completed a recognition test and source monitoring test. A different set of 32 trigram pairs was used for Block 2.

HYPOTHESES

- Participants will give higher JOLs to large than to small font items.
- Participants should provide higher JOLs to large circles than to small circles.
- Recognition performance should not differ as a function of font size.

METHOD

Participants

N = 76 University of Alabama in Huntsville students
M age = 20.02, *SD* = 3.52

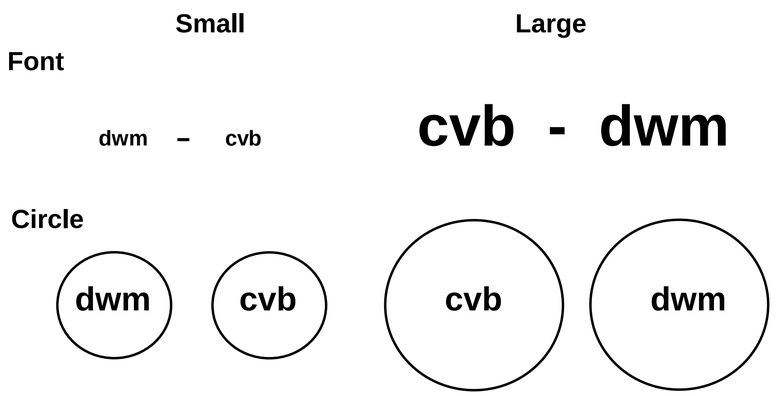
Design

2 (Block) x 2 (Condition: Circles, Fonts) x 2 (Font Size: Small, Large)

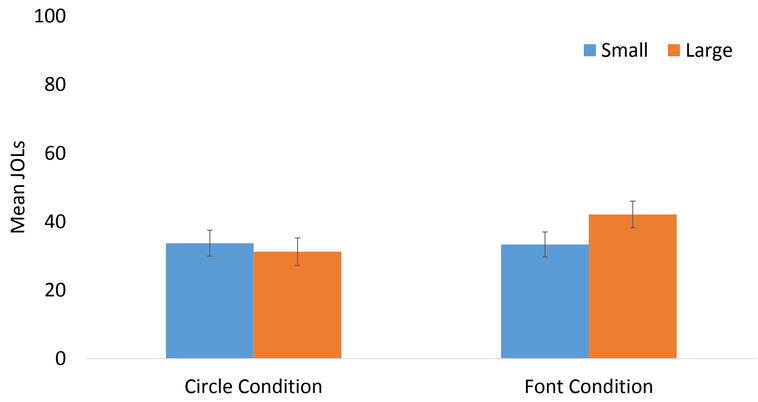
Materials

64 trigrams, 32 per trial 1/2 in each size

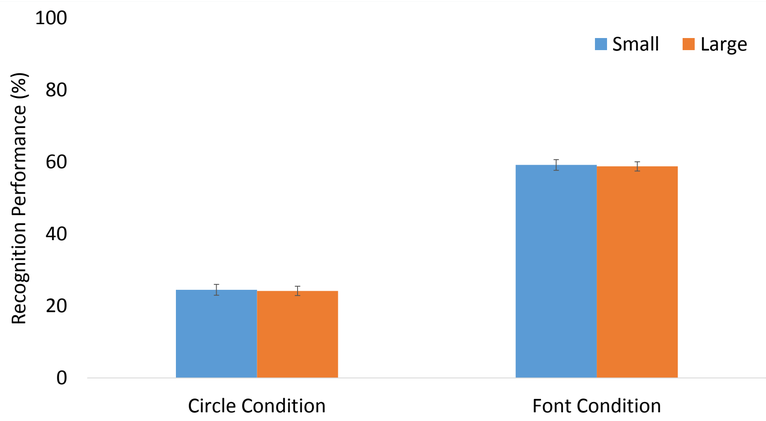
SAMPLE STIMULI



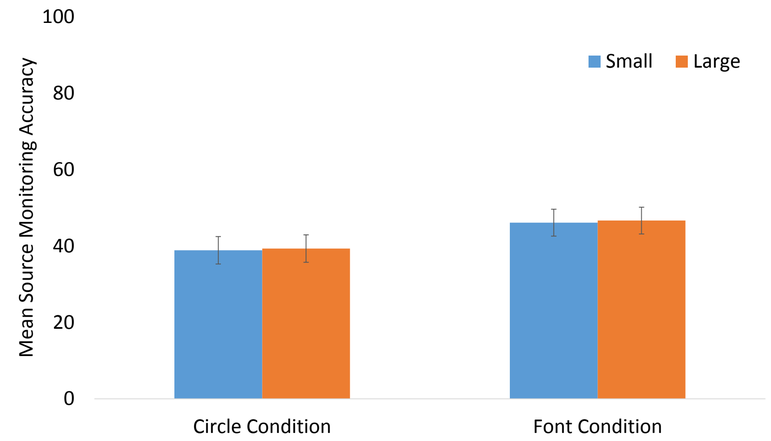
JUDGMENTS OF LEARNING



RECOGNITION PERFORMANCE



SOURCE MONITORING JUDGMENTS



DISCUSSION

- Participants gave higher JOLs for consonant pairs in small circles and in large font than to those in large circles or small font.
- Recognition performance did not differ as a function of size, but was higher for those in the font than in the circle condition.
- Better source accuracy was achieved in the font condition.

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