

Abstract

When deciding whether to approach a stranger, we rely on different sources of information to infer the possible outcomes. It has been proposed that episodic memory plays a role in this decision process if we have prior knowledge of the target stranger. A more direct test of this claim was conducted in two experiments. Participants first formed warm or cold impressions of a list of strangers using information provided aurally by a male or female. They were then asked to decide whether they would approach some of the studied strangers for help in an imaginary situation. Afterwards, in a surprising memory test, their subjective quality of memory for the strangers was assessed using the Remember/Know paradigm, together with the detailedness of memory (having full or partial source memory) assessed using the source memory paradigm. The main result was that people who tended to report a sense of recollection (with a “Remember” response) were more able to avoid cold strangers only when the study list is long (Experiment 1) but not short (Experiment 2). Contrary to previous findings, no reliable associations between objectively measured source memory and adaptive social decision making were observed. These results suggest that the ability to form and recall previous episodes vividly is important in adaptive social decision making when there is no motivation to remember a lot of strangers.

Keywords: episodic memory, approach/avoidance, social impression

撮要

當決定是否接近一個陌生人時，我們依賴不同來源的信息以推算可能的結果。前人指出，如果我們對該陌生人有事前的了解，情節記憶就會在決策過程發揮一定作用——本文以兩個實驗測試這個說法。實驗參加者首先利用男性或女性以聲音提供的信息建構對一連串陌生人溫暖或冷漠的印象。此後，他們需要決定在一個虛構的場景是否向部分陌生人尋求協助。隨後，參加者將會接受突擊記憶測試，使用記得 / 知道範式以評估他們對陌生人記憶的主觀質量，以及使用來源記憶範式以評估該記憶的細緻度（擁有詳盡或局部來源記憶）。結果發現，傾向有回憶感（有較多「記得」回應）的人更能夠避開冷漠的陌生人，但這僅當需要學習的對象很多（實驗一）而非很少（實驗二）。與前人的發現相反，研究沒有觀察到客觀測量的來源記憶和適應性社會決策之間的可靠關聯。這些結果表明，當沒有動機記住大量的陌生人時，適應性社會決策關乎形成和清晰地回憶過往情節的能力。

關鍵字：情節記憶、趨避決策、社交印象