

THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (proposed)

1. Why is this new journal needed?

There are a number of reasons why this is a propitious time to start 'The European Journal of Cognitive Psychology'. The single most obvious factor is the recent setting up of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology. The enthusiasm with which this new Society has been greeted indicates that there is considerable interest in establishing better communication among European cognitive psychologists. However, it is not clear that any of the existing journals is precisely appropriate to the task of combining with the European Society for Cognitive Psychology in furthering European cognitive psychology. This conclusion is supported by the fact that 'Psychological Research' was the only journal really interested in publishing the proceedings of the inaugural meeting of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology held in Nijmegen.

The setting up of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology is relevant not only because it illustrates the interest in cognitive psychology on a Europe-wide basis. In addition, its meetings (assuming that Nijmegen is representative) will produce much high-level material that would be ideal for the proposed journal. This is an important consideration in view of the difficulties currently experienced by some journals in obtaining sufficient contributions of merit.

The European Society for Cognitive Psychology could thus provide very useful assistance to the proposed journal. The benefits might very well be reciprocal, in that the proposed journal could provide a focus for the activities of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology. The sense of belonging to an interesting and worthwhile organization might be difficult to achieve on the basis of large-scale biennial meetings, but could be enhanced by regular publication of a journal closely linked to the European Society for Cognitive Psychology.

The number of European psychologists carrying out research within the field of cognitive psychology has increased substantially in recent years. Some indication of the volume of research in cognitive psychology can be obtained by considering submissions to 'The British Journal of Psychology'. Despite the fact that it is a general journal publishing articles in most areas of psychology, it received almost 100 manuscripts (almost 75 per cent of the total) in the area of cognitive psychology last year. It seems inevitable that a new journal catering for this market will appear soon, and it is most appropriate that such a journal should have a close association with the European Society for Cognitive Psychology.

None of the current journals can be regarded as a satisfactory European journal of cognitive psychology. Why is this so? Several journals (e.g., 'The British Journal of Psychology'; 'Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology'; and 'Psychological Research') are associated too closely with one particular European country, and are thus perceived as being too exclusive. Some journals (e.g., 'Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology'; 'Acta Psychologica'; and 'Cognition') tend to ignore the growth of applied cognitive psychology, and may be in danger of becoming too esoteric and narrow. 'Cognition' suffers from the additional disadvantage that a substantial majority of its editorial board and of its contributors are North American, and so it tends to lack any real European perspective. While it might be possible to change one of the existing journals to make it more in line with what is required of a European journal of cognitive psychology, change is usually slow, and it often takes a long time before the changed character of a journal is generally recognized. It seems preferable to launch a new journal that is unencumbered by the detritus of the past,

and which can accurately depict current European cognitive psychology

2. The proposed new journal

It would be premature to specify at this preliminary stage the detailed characteristics of the proposed journal. However, probable features of the journal are as follows:

(i) The editor would be Michael W. Eysenck, and the editorial board would contain representatives from all of the European countries where there is a strong interest in cognitive psychology.

(ii) Close links would be forged with the European Society for Cognitive Psychology. This could be achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, some (or all) of the members of the executive committee could be members of the editorial board. Secondly, the journal could be sponsored by the European Society for Cognitive Psychology. Thirdly, the proposed journal could publish the proceedings of at least the main talks at the large biennial conferences of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology. Fourthly, members of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology might be offered a reduced subscription for the proposed journal.

(iii) It would be most important for the proposed journal to provide reasonably comprehensive coverage of cognitive psychology within Europe. One way of facilitating this would be from time to time to devote an entire issue (of half an issue) to research developments within a particular European country. A distinguished cognitive psychologist from that country could act as guest editor.

(iv) Most journals consist largely (or exclusively) of shortish reports of experimental studies. The proposed journal should encourage substantial theoretical contributions accompanied by peer commentaries (along the lines of 'The Behavioral and Brain Sciences'). The intention would be to produce a distinctive blend of research findings and theoretical contributions that was somewhat more palatable and informative than simply carrying research reports. In addition, there should be extended reviews of major books (e.g., Johnson-Laird's 'Mental Models').

(v) An increasing proportion of research in cognitive psychology is of an applied nature. This change has had a relatively minor impact on some journals, but should be reflected in the proposed journal. Applied research having theoretical implications for 'mainstream' cognitive psychology would seem of great relevance to the proposed journal.

(vi) The publishers for the proposed journal would preferably be Erlbaum U.K. Erlbaum U.K. has rapidly established itself as the leading European publisher in the area of cognitive psychology, and it would thus be the most obvious publisher for the new journal.

(vii) The proposed journal might usefully model itself on 'The European Journal of Social Psychology' in some ways. That journal was founded and is sponsored by the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology. Its European feel is enhanced by having French and German summaries of all articles.

3. Conclusions

The forward planning involved in starting a new journal means that 1988 is

probably the earliest date that the proposed European Journal of Cognitive Psychology could begin publication. The current demand for such a journal will almost certainly increase as the European Society for Cognitive Psychology increases in membership and the scope of its operations, and now is thus the ideal time to be planning to meet that demand.

Please note that this is basically a discussion document. If there are suggestions for ways in which the proposed journal could be improved, then such suggestions will readily be taken on board.

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