



Newsletter

european society for cognitive psychology

28 oct '87

Dear Colleagues,

Having adjusted to yet another intake of 'freshers' (how come they get younger every year?) and finding the first batch of class exam scripts already on my desk, it seemed time to review the progress of our society over the last months and to discuss plans for the future.

This summer has been a busy, but a very successful one. Our first summer school on Cognitive Approaches to Memory took place in Bernried in June. For all of us who were fortunate enough to take part, it was a marvellous and stimulating experience. There was little evidence of either language or cultural barriers and very quickly the whole group gelled into an exciting and productive whole. In fact, I have it on good authority that it worked so well that whenever two or more of the 'in-group' get together and Bernried is even vaguely mentioned, we immediately become absolute bores!

Success of course does not come without hard work! On behalf of the Society I would like to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to: Gerhard Strube and Wolfgang Prinz for the wonderful job they made of choosing such an idyllic spot and for organising such a smooth running operation; to all the lecturers who not only gave first-rate lectures but who were also so friendly and approachable; to the hard working tutors who not only gained the respect of their groups but who also, by their presence over the whole two weeks, added an ongoing stability to the scene; to the nuns for their wonderful, yet unobtrusive care; to Michael Forster for donating the table tennis prizes as well as allowing us to sell all the Erlbaum books to the participants at half price (even although I managed to get all the proceeds stolen from me in Madrid); and finally of course, to the participants themselves. They turned out to be an extremely bright group of young researchers whose abilities augur well for the future of cognitive psychology in Europe. Discussions with them were always stimulating and it was also satisfying to see them interacting with each other and making plans for future collaboration. It made all the hard work worth while!

To prove that the enthusiasm and satisfaction with the summer school does not come solely from the organisers' side of the fence, three of the participants have added their own personal comments which you can read for yourselves further on in the Newsletter.

The success of the first summer school has strengthened our view that much of our effort in the future should be channelled into organising such events. Tentative steps have already been made in this direction: Lars-Göran Nilsson, ably supported by Vicky Bruce, has accepted the challenge of trying to organise the second summer school on Perception, probably in Sweden in 1989. Such an enterprise requires a lot of work - not least in trying to find the necessary financial support. We wish Lars-Göran success in his search - the question for us now remains, should we all be selling our VWs and saving up for Saabs and Volvos?

The second major event of the society over the summer was our second conference held in Madrid in September. Once again on your behalf, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Maria Victoria Sebastian and José Linaza for all the hard work that went into the organisation of such a successful conference.

As in our first meeting, the standard of the papers was generally of a high standard and the atmosphere was both friendly and stimulating. Many shared scientific interests were discovered and many new and old friendships were cemented at unlikely venues such as at Flamenco parties, in the Prado or in the swimming pool! Although the standard of singing did not match that of the summer school, the Israeli dances were fun and, we also managed to get ourselves an Honourary Member who, though no cognitive psychologist (thank heavens, said he), is an excellent musician!

Apart from the interesting scientific programme and the enjoyable festivities, one of the important events of the conference was the Business meeting. One issue that provoked much discussion was the question of future membership. Various proposals were discussed but no final decision was reached. Further on in the Newsletter, you will find more information about the proposed increase in membership as well as requests for your views if they should differ from those suggested.

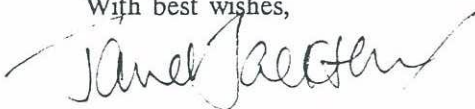
One decision that was taken was to proceed further with a European Journal of Cognitive Psychology - this will appear for the first time early in 1989, published by Lawrence Erlbaum and with Michael Eysenck as the first Editor. We wish Michael every success in this new and exciting venture and, of course, we must send him our best articles!! If you wish any further information about the journal, do not hesitate to get in touch with Michael. He would also be interested in having any suggestions for a name for the Journal.

We have also been fortunate in receiving two further "perks" for our members: Lawrence Erlbaum are willing to sell their Journals to our members at a 20% discount; John Wiley & Sons have also indicated that they are willing to sell us copies of their new Journal - Applied Cognitive Psychology - at a special reduced price: £18 or \$33 for the 1987 copies, and £20 or \$36 for the 1988 copies. Both Publishing Houses will be in touch with you personally sometime in the next few weeks.

We now have a bitnet number. It is "HGRRUG5::ESCOP". If you make use of this facility yourselves, would you please drop me a line? That way I can make a list of numbers for the Society and of course, will be able to save a lot of time, effort and money in the future!

Looking forward to hearing from you soon,

With best wishes,



Janet L. Jackson

Participants' views of the First ESCP Summer School.

Rudi Peeters,
Laboratory of Experimental Psychology,
University of Leuven,
Belgium.

Cognitive Approaches to Memory: First Summer School of ESCP.

From June 21 to July 4, 1987, the first summer school of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology took place at Bernried, in Bavaria. The general theme of the summer school was "Cognitive approaches to memory", which encompassed a vast variety of topics to be covered by the specific lectures and presentations. Forty-one participants, representing about seventeen countries, met at the Summer School; all of them were young scientists involved in doctoral or immediate post-doctoral research in human memory or related fields. Gerhard Strube (Max Planck Institute for Psychological Research, Munich) took care of the organisation of the summer school, and he did so, as all of the participants will agree, in a most splendid way. The convent of "Kloster Bernried", with Lake Starnberg within walking distance and a park all around, provided us with ample opportunities for formal as well as informal meetings and discussions in a very beautiful setting, surrounded by very typical Bavarian landscapes and seemingly far away from one's crowded everyday life. Moreover, the Volkswagen Foundation sponsored the summer school, refunding most of the travel and accommodation costs for each of the participants.

In order to let me give you some idea of the consistently high quality of the scientific programme, let me now turn to the lectures themselves. During the morning and afternoon lectures, many of the most important authors in the field of cognitive psychology presented their current research and theoretical ideas. Geoffrey Hinton (University of Toronto, Canada) provided us with an excellent introduction to the notions of parallel distributed processing (also commonly known as the "PDP approach") in the context of learning and memory. Endel Tulving (University of Toronto, Canada) talked about episodic and semantic memory, and by doing so he told us a great deal about the more or less related research on recognition failure of recallable words and pathological dissociations between episodic and semantic memory as can be seen in some cases of (source) amnesia. Alan Baddeley (MRC, Applied Psychology Unit, Cambridge, U.K.) summarised his views and investigations about working memory, while Gregory Jones (University of Bristol, U.K.) considered the schema and fragment theories of human memory, predictability versus imaginability as determinants of better recall of concrete versus abstract words, dyslexia and the good old "tip-of-the-tongue" phenomenon. Walter Kintsch (University of Colorado, U.S.A.) discussed recent developments of his ideas on memory for prose, while Weinert and Schneider (both of the Max Planck Institute for Psychological Research, Munich, FRG) focused on developmental aspects of memory and metamemory, respectively. As the final lecturers, Gerhard Strube and Willem Albert Wagenaar (University of Leiden, The Netherlands) covered the topic of autobiographical or personal memory. As can be seen from this enumeration, the range of these lectures demonstrated the complexity and diversity of topics allowed for by the general theme.

The scientific programme did not exclusively consist of the forementioned lectures. Some guest speakers were invited for additional evening lectures. These included Donald Broadbent (University of Oxford, U.K.), who talked about the dissociation of implicit and explicit memory, Jean-Francois Le Ny (Université Paris-Sud) and Friedhart Klix (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, GDR), both presenting some of their own research on memory for prose materials.

Of course, a lot of time was spent in discussing the theories and research introduced by the lecturers. Not only was there plenty of time for doing so immediately after each lecture, but time for discussion was also scheduled during the tutorial group meetings. All of the participants were assigned to one of five tutorial groups, in which they were encouraged to elaborate once again on the material. As tutors the following people were invited: Gery d'Ydewalle (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium), Graham Hitch (University of Manchester, U.K.), Daniel Holender (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium), Janet Jackson (University of Groningen, The Netherlands), Asher Koriat (University of Haifa, Israel), Jeroen Raaijmakers, (TNO Institute for Perception, Soesterberg, The Netherlands), and Karl Wender (University of Trier, FRG). Their efforts were considerably appreciated by the members of their groups which was apparent from the gifts they were offered during the final evening session. Besides all of this, we were offered many other opportunities for spontaneously initiating discussion during the numerous coffee breaks, the optional individual study

periods, and the evening sessions, most of which took place in the wine cellar, a most curious place where we were provided with wine, beer, cheese and food for thought. Most of the lecturers spent the evenings there too, joining the participants in scientific as well as non-scientific talks and folk songs! During the second week, when the weather had become progressively finer, the individual study time was transformed into walking, swimming and table tennis activities, showing the friendly relationships that evolved almost immediately between the participants, in spite of their different personal and even cultural backgrounds.

The discovery of mutually shared interests among the participants led to the formation of a contact group of students who were eager to know more about the parallel distributed processing models. Alain Content of the Université Libre de Bruxelles is the person to be contacted for those who wish more information about this group.

Happily the programme also included some non-scientific events such as an excursion to Ludwig II's Neuschwanstein castle, a boat trip on Lake Starnberg and a trip to an open-air museum of typical Bavarian farms. The nuns were unbeatable at preparing delicious meals and at waking us up very early in the morning with their convent bell serenades! They were honoured, along with Gerhard Strube and Janet Jackson, by all of the participants for giving us such a wonderful time.

The First ESCP Summer School was a very successful enterprise, the organising committee did its utmost and all of those who participated in the Summer School are already looking forward to the next such event, to be held somewhere in 1989, on a general theme yet to be decided.

Lili Service,
Dept. of Psychology,
University of Helsinki,
Finland.

ESCaPing the isolation at home - My own personal experience of the Summer School on Cognitive Approaches to Memory.

Sitting at Helsinki airport on the morning of June 21st, I was mainly concerned with a problem of facial recognition memory. The other Finn to take part in the ESCP summer school on memory was listed as coming from the same psychology department as myself. I actually remembered once being briefly introduced to him. It would be highly embarrassing to be faced with him and show no sign of recognition. Once in Bernried it would probably sound somewhat strange that the two participants from a country with half a dozen cognitive psychologists only knew each other by name. It does not occur to scientists from bigger countries that you can be too few to have meetings and yet be scattered in different departments or (as in our case) physically and administratively separate divisions of departments. Anyway, I need not have worried at the airport, we were not on the same plane!

One of my objectives in applying for a place on the course had been to meet others working on problems concerning working memory or language processing. Ironically, one of the first people I spoke to turned out to be Pertti Saariluoma, the other Finn. Talking to him soon convinced me that we had a lot more in common than I had previously thought. Another acquaintance I made on arrival was my room-mate, who turned out to be interested in the working memory of old people and, as I later found out, was in fact going to spend the following academic year in the very same psychology department where I hope to get a post-doctorate place, a year or two from now. The first week of the summer school was then spent meeting so many people with interests similar to mine, or at least relevant to the topics I taught at home, that it overwhelmed me for a while. I was also very lucky in being placed in a tutorial group not only with one but with two tutors interested in working memory (as well as being inspiring and supportive on the whole).

Another objective of mine was to get intellectual inspiration listening to some of the top theoreticians in cognitive memory research. It was nice to at least start filling embarrassing gaps in my knowledge of current cognitive psychology, i.e. the parallel distributed approach to associative memory, especially as my former teacher/mentor Pekka Lehtio has done some work in that field. I also enjoyed listening to my favourite memory theoretician A.B. (without mentioning any names) and

hearing several lecturers describe their views on semantic memory, a topic I spent a few years of my life wondering about. The lectures on metamemory and autobiographical memory were not directly related to my own work. I found them, however, useful in providing new items to the standard menu I serve undergraduate students on introductory courses in cognitive psychology.

Afraid to bore you with my enthusiasm, I am trying to think of a sober ending to my descriptions by saying that on the plane back my baggage contained not only a number of new contacts and several brewing ideas, but also a thrilling feeling of having been invited to take part in, as opposed to passively watching, the to me exciting adventure of cognitive psychology. If that did not sound sufficiently down to earth, I am afraid you will have to wait for me to sober up from the experience. I trust lots of Finns will in future years be given a chance to enjoy the same experience.

Carmelo Vazquez,
Universidad Complutense,
Madrid, Spain.

Perhaps the most dramatic problem for European scientists is their mutual isolation. Paradoxically, we avidly look to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean while ignoring what our neighbours (even from our own countries) do.

The 1987 Summer School has been the first opportunity for many young European cognitive psychologists to meet each other. To attend this meeting was a privilege. It was a great academic experience to enjoy the presence of people like Baddeley, Tulving, Hitch, Kintsch, etc.. It was exciting to have the opportunity of being in their company, to discuss with them our own research and, after a delicious meal, to drink a beer and sing together songs from our "Summer School's International Hit Parade".

In Rudi's letter you will have already heard about the academic schedule of our meeting. Thus, I am just going to briefly mention a few personal impressions. From my point of view, the programme was very stimulating, particularly the fact that a rather broad view of current ways of research on memory was presented. Indeed it was refreshing to be able to learn more about certain areas of research which I, given the degree of specialisation one gets, was not very familiar with. As a matter of fact, I believe that some of the views presented at the summer school (especially Baddeley's model) will influence my future research on cognitive processes in psychopathological disorders.

Perhaps the most important conclusion I drew from this outstanding (and, by the way, extenuating) meeting is that, from now on, I shall have to look more carefully at European journals to read important pieces of research. I hope that activities like the summer school will favour the strengthening of a working network of European (cognitive) psychologists. This will be the best way for we Europeans to enhance our contribution to the growth of cognitive psychology.

Informal Workshop on Working Memory.

Graham Hitch and Janet Jackson are considering organising an informal workshop on working memory similar to those held in the Lake District in England. Although no particular date has as yet been set, we are anticipating a meeting lasting in the region of four days - a Friday to a Monday - probably to be held in the Netherlands. It is not expected that any financial support will be offered - participants being expected to find their own finances. Anyone who is interested in the idea is asked to get in touch with either of the proposed organisers.

Membership of the Society.

When the idea of forming some sort of grouping of European cognitive psychologists was first mooted, there was no money and no infrastructure available. The goals, however, were fairly clear: it was hoped to bring together active European researchers working in the area of cognitive psychology so that they could interact with each other, learn more about the work carried out by colleagues in neighbouring European countries and would perhaps lead to more collaboration in the future; it was also hoped that by getting together we could strengthen the role of cognitive psychology in Europe as a whole, lessen the feelings of isolation mentioned by a number of researchers and to lend support and hopefully stimulate those who worked in geographical areas where cognitive psychology was not yet very well developed.

With such aims, it was obvious that we would eventually wish to have a fairly large, active and representative membership. The problem was how best to achieve this. After much debate, it was decided that the best way of fulfilling our aims would be as follows: to start on a small scale; to try first of all to attract a small number of active researchers from as many European countries as possible; with their help, carry out the first stage of planned growth; during this period attempt to build up the basis of a strong infrastructure.

The general feeling we picked up in Madrid is that, up to now, this policy has been reasonably effective. Our members come from many different European countries including those of the Eastern block (a bank account will be opened shortly in the GDR thus alleviating currency problems); our members are all extremely active and enthusiastic; several very stimulating meetings and workshops have already taken place and many more are planned. Although our coffers are bare, we have managed up until now to finance ourselves by receiving various grants and subsidies. Our success in getting such money must bear some relevance to the light in which our society is seen by funding bodies.

Of course there are also many anomalies in the system in operation at the moment - in some countries where cognitive psychology is strong, many highly eligible researchers have not as yet been able to join, while in other countries some as yet very inexperienced researchers are already members! This is the situation which our society will now have to tackle.

After listening to the various views expressed in Madrid, we would like to propose the following scheme - (it is of course somewhat idealised. It is well known that academic systems vary considerably between various European countries. This will obviously have to be taken into account.)

- there will be two types of member, associate and full members.
- a membership committee will be formed to consider all applications.
- although we still wish to encourage good geographical representation, in increasing the membership more emphasis will now be placed on selecting suitably qualified members.
- associate members should be either actively involved in or have recently completed their PhD.
- associate members should be encouraged to participate in all aspects of the society, but will have no voting rights.
- associate members who wish to present a paper at a general conference of the society should be sponsored by a full member.
- the membership fee for associate members has not yet been discussed, but though including the annual fee for our society journal, should obviously be less than full membership.
- full members will have had their PhD for a number of years and will be expected to have a reasonable number of recent publications.
- although applications for new membership should, in principle, be seconded by existing members - this should not be seen as debarring someone with the suitable qualifications who does not know a member of the society. Such people should be encouraged to apply directly to the membership committee.
- membership fees should be in the region of 25 pounds sterling. This fee will include the annual subscription for the new journal of the society. Since the journal will not appear until 1989, the fee for 1988 will have to be suitably adjusted.

These then are the proposals that arose from the Madrid meeting. I would like you to think about them carefully and let me know if you have any problems, criticisms or suggestions. Please try to let me have your views by November 20th. We will be having an Executive meeting towards the end of November and, in the light of your views, will have to make final decisions at that time - otherwise we are going to come into real problems with money - we need your subscription fees!! If you are in broad agreement, it is not necessary to get in touch. (If you are hooked up to bitnet please use it - it should speed up correspondence.)

International Conference on Thinking

University of Aberdeen,
Scotland,
August 16th - 18th, 1988.

This conference is being sponsored jointly by the Cognitive Psychology section of the British Psychological Society and the ESCP.

Papers and symposia are invited for this international conference on empirical and theoretical research on adult thinking. It is planned to publish edited papers from the conference.

Suitable topics include reasoning, representation, analogy in thinking, expert problem solving, creative processes, game-playing, emotion and thinking, pathologies of thinking, cross-cultural studies of thinking, decision making, neuropsychology of thinking, computer models of thought, undirected thought and individual differences.

Individual papers.

Proposals should consist of an abstract (100-150 words) and an extended summary (1000 words), together with the titles of each contribution and the name(s) and affiliation(s) (complete with postal address) of each participant. Proposals should be submitted in duplicate.

Symposia.

Abstracts and summaries of individual papers should be submitted as above, in addition to a general summary of the symposium.

Proposals should be submitted by April 1st, 1988, to:

Dr.K.J.Gilhooly,
ICT'88
Department of Psychology,
University of Aberdeen,
Aberdeen, AB9 2UB,
Scotland,U.K.

Advance Announcement.

As a result of the success of the workshop on Imagery and Cognition held in Paris in September, 1986, it is proposed to organise a second workshop in Padova, Italy towards the end of September, 1988. Further information will appear in the next Newsletter. In the meantime, if you are interested in this event, pencil the dates 21-23 September in your diary or contact Cesare Cornoldi for more information (address in blue book).