

New Research From Psychological Science

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[Opportunity Cost Neglect Attenuates the Effect of Choices on Preferences](#)

Adam Eric Greenberg and Stephen A. Spiller

When someone makes a decision, the cost of not choosing the second-best alternative is called the opportunity cost. In some cases, such as in “whether-or-not” decisions (e.g., to go to a movie or not), opportunity costs may not be apparent, whereas in others, such as “which-one” decisions (e.g., whether to go to a movie or go to a play), they are made explicit. To understand how opportunity costs influence people’s preferences, the researchers had participants make decisions in which the opportunity costs were apparent or not. They found that when opportunity costs were explicit, people’s preferences shifted in favor of the chosen option, but this effect was attenuated when opportunity costs were implicit.

[What Comes After /f/? Prediction in Speech Derives From Data-Explanatory Processes](#)

Bob McMurray and Allard Jongman

Speech perception is difficult because of the differences found in speaker characteristics. Although people have little problem overcoming this difficulty, how they do so remains unknown. Participants heard fricatives (i.e., a speech sound produced by forcing air through a narrow channel, such as when placing the lower lip against the top of one’s teeth) presented alone (no-expectancy condition) or preceded by a picture of a static person and an orthographic representation of the fricative (face+letter condition). They then predicted the upcoming vowel. Vowels were more accurately predicted by participants in the face+letter condition than by participants in the no-expectancy condition. This suggests that listeners create context-based expectations for sound that are then compared with what is actually heard. This comparison helps people predict what is likely to come next.