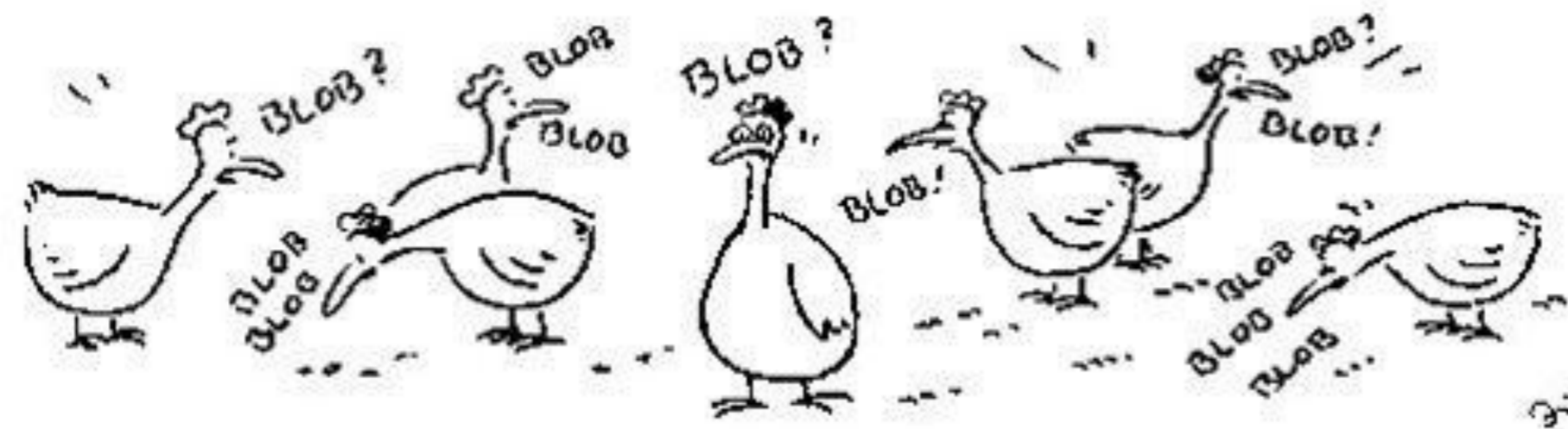


Connecting through emotional stories

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Introduction

Stories are crucial tool for knowledge communication and emotion sharing. Through the personal stories we share our experiences and memories, communicate our intentions, achievements and failures, but also make commitments, develop trust or even act. By listening to the stories we are mentalizing and empathizing all the time, trying to relate ourselves to the actors of the story and a narrator, and drawing a lesson from it.

Emotional Stories & Conversion

Telling and listening to the personal stories is common and essential in religion. Conversion stories are for the most part highly emotional and persuasive, and very explicit about emotions. Converts are articulating their emotions even if the story they are telling is based on a script prescribing how we should feel about events in the story (e.g. death of a close relative, achievements in a school etc.).

Questions

- What is the role of explicitly stated emotions in the story in creating prosocial feelings and behavior?
- Do explicitly stated emotions make the story more vivid and emotional, and do they afterwards enhance empathy and boost prosocial feelings and behavior towards narrator and/or other listeners?
- Do they make a group of listeners more cohesive?



Dependent variables & control variables

- Public goods economic game measuring prosociality towards group.
- Situational empathy (e.g. IRI questionnaire, QMEE questionnaire) and likability questionnaires measuring prosocial tendencies towards narrator and listeners (Nomura, Akai 2012; Davis 1983; Mehrabian, Epstein 1972).
- Pictorial measures of self-categorization measuring prosociality towards narrator and the group (Tropp, Wright 2001; Aron, Aron, Smollan 1992).
- Prosocial tendencies measures and Global prosocial behavior measure (Carlo, Randall 2002).

Procedure

- Validating stories.
 - Rating emotionality of emotional and non-emotional story with sample of 20 participants.
- Testing stories.
 - Participants in a group of 3 listen to the emotional or non-emotional story read by a confederate.
 - Participants (+ confederate) play public goods economic game, fill in questionnaires, validate story.

Hypotheses

Listening to PERSONAL EMOTIONAL STORY will increase PROSOCIAL FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR towards the narrator, other listeners and the group.

Designing stories

- Personal emotional story - made up story in a form of a personal episodic memory with explicitly stated emotions of actor. These emotions are negative or positive congruent to the script of depicted event.
- Personal non-emotional story - made up story in a form of a personal episodic memory without explicitly stated emotions. These are replaced by factual neutral information.

Stories are based on the basic story with balanced number of words and sentence length. Emotionality of story does not refer to a severity or triviality of the story, but just to the explicitness of actor's emotions.



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