

Factors Affecting the Difficulty of Verbal Analogies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that affect the difficulty of verbal analogies. Previous researchers developed non-theoretical taxonomies with which they divided analogies into groups. This approach had two drawbacks: First, there was no theoretical rationale for these taxonomies, and second, it did not take into account the complexity of the analogies. This study was designed to overcome these drawbacks: we characterized each of 104 analogies using five attributes. We chose the attributes on the basis of theoretical considerations with the purpose of deriving hypotheses concerning the effect of each attribute on the difficulty of the items. Four of the five attributes we examined were found to affect the difficulty of the analogies; word difficulty, the existence of a negative component in the relation between the words, the order of the words and the degree to which the relation between the words is intentional.