

Science News

Right-Handed and Left-Handed People Do Not See the Same Bright Side of Things

ScienceDaily (Jan. 28, 2010) — Despite the common association of "right" with life, correctness, positiveness and good things, and "left" with death, clumsiness, negativity and bad things, recent research shows that most left-handed people hold the opposite association. Thus, left-handers become an interesting case in which conceptual associations as a result of a sensory-motor experience, and conceptual associations that rely on linguistic and cultural norms, are contradictory.

See Also:

Mind & Brain

- Educational Psychology
- Perception
- Neuroscience
- Spirituality
- Relationships
- Anger Management

Reference

- Attribution theory
- Self image
- Left-handed
- Anchoring bias in decision-making

These are the conclusions derived from various studies compiled by professor Julio Santiago de Torres, from the Department of Experimental Psychology and Behavioural Physiology at the University of Granada, who has conducted a bibliographic review on the subject, published in *Ciencia Cognitiva: Revista Electrónica de Divulgación*.

One of the latest works on this subject was undertaken by researcher Daniel Casasanto (Stanford University), who found out that left-handers tend to associate the left with nice and good things and the right with ugly and bad things, which goes against the enormous power of cultural context in which they live and the language they use.

Good things and bad things

In one of his experiments, Casasanto presented participants a diagram that depicts a character who was planning a trip to the zoo, and who loves zebras and thinks they are good, but dislikes pandas and thinks they are bad. The participant had to draw a zebra in the box that best represented good things and a panda in the box that best represented bad things.

Most of right-handed people located good things in the box on the right while left-handers placed them in the box on the left. Interestingly, only 14% of participants thought that his election had to do with what his dominant hand was.

Then, to see whether the left or right location could affect rating dimensions on abstract personality, he asked another group of participants to rate pairs of objects depicted in another drawing, indicating which of the two seemed more intelligent, more honest, more attractive and happier. And in a final experiment, participants were asked to assess which candidate would they chose for a job, or what product would they buy in a store.

In all tasks, right-handers tended to evaluate the object on the right better, while left-handers favoured the one on the left. Therefore, UGR professor says, "these results demonstrate that perceptuomotor experiences, in this case the greater ease and fluidity of interaction with one or another side of space, are sufficient to generate stable associations between specific dimensions, such as space, and concepts of a high degree of abstraction, such as kindness, intelligence or honesty."

These data provide one of the first clear demonstrations that sensory-motor experience can exert a powerful influence on the conceptualization of even our most abstract ideas.

A wrong world

As professor Santiago explains, "a left-handed person has often the feeling of having been born in a wrong world. From scissors to computer keyboards designs, everything is projected for right-handers. The fact that left-handed people are able to adapt quite well to these manual controls that are contrary to their nature, indicates a first interesting fact that it is often overlooked: undoubtedly, there is a difference in motor ability between the dominant and the non-dominant hand, but it is far from being a great difference."

In fact, the researcher points out, "speed and accuracy differences between the right and the left hand that are usually found, do not go beyond 10%. In addition, the left hand can be trained to high levels of implementation, as in the case of



Left-handed people tend to associate the left with nice and good things and the right with ugly and bad things. (Credit: iStockphoto/Carmen Martínez Banús)

Ads by Google

50 Hotels in Granada

Compare hotels and save up to 75%! Save time, book at Booking.com www.booking.com/Hotels-Granada

University of Virginia

Sensory and Systems Neuroscience, Learning and Memory; PhD Program www.virginia.edu/psychobiology/

Rewiring Neuroscience

Illustrated on-line book about eye brain, memory -- and the neuron. nine-radical.blogspot.com

Scientific Brain Games

Improve memory and attention with scientific brain games. Free Trial www.lumosity.com

Related Stories



Vast Right Arm Conspiracy? Study Suggests Handedness May Affect Body Perception (Nov. 5, 2009) —

There are areas in the brain devoted to our arms, legs, and various parts of our bodies. The way these areas are distributed throughout the brain are known as "body maps" and there are some ... > [read more](#)

Films Of Mitchell And Kenyon Illuminate Lefties' Decline In Victorian England (Sep. 18, 2007) —

By mining evidence from the classic films made by Mitchell and Kenyon, researchers have confirmed that the left-handed minority suffered something of a setback in Victorian England, at the beginning ... > [read more](#)

Mixed-Handed Children More Likely to Have Mental Health, Language and Scholastic Problems, Study Finds (Jan. 27, 2010) —

Children who are mixed-handed, or ambidextrous, are more likely to have mental health, language and scholastic problems in childhood than right- or left-handed children, according to a new study. The ... > [read more](#)

Are You Right Eyed Or Left Eyed? (Mar. 26, 2007) —

A person has two hands, two legs, two eyes, two cerebral hemispheres. But it is only at first sight that a human being is a symmetric creature. Firstly, we have a leading hand, the right one with the ... > [read more](#)

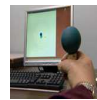
Genetics Has A Role In Determining Sexual Orientation In Men, Further Evidence (Nov. 8, 2007) —

Is sexual orientation something people are born with -- like the color of their skin and eyes -- or a matter of choice? Scientists have now uncovered new evidence which shows genetics has a role to ... > [read more](#)

Just In:

Why Molecules Favor Complex Geometric Patterns

Science Video News



New Hope For Stroke Survivors

Using a technology called haptics, mechanical engineers can design physical therapies that reestablish motor pathways broken down by strokes. A. ... > [full story](#)

Ergonomists Design More Customizable Office Chair

Psychiatrists Can Predict Onset of Alzheimer's with New EEG Test

Cardiothoracic Surgeons Find Wider Use for Heart Device

[more science videos](#)



Breaking News

... from NewsDaily.com

"Cane Toads" a cautionary tale of ecological hubris

Experts unveil dino, oldest known ancestor of birds

Plant flavanoid may help prevent leukemia

NASA sets shuttle launch with future in doubt

Skin cells transformed directly to nerve in study

[more science news](#)

In Other News ...

Congress probes

Toyota recalls

North Korea fires

more artillery

towards South

Gunmen holed-up in

building in southern

Afghanistan

Reclusive author

J.D. Salinger dies at

91

Senate backs

Bermanke for second

term at Fed

Woman denies

charges in

Afghanistan shooting

trial

Karzai government

invites Taliban to

peace meeting

Pentagon to detail new "don't ask, don't tell" steps

[more top news](#)

REUTERS

BRING YOUR FAMILY TOGETHER FOR A NIGHT OF FUN.



Get started!

AT FAMILYGAMENIGHT.COM



© 2009 Hasbro

right and left with the symbolic systems of the world cultures "is deep, and reaches almost every aspect of life. Thus, right and left are respectively associated with aristocratic and common people, male and female, sacred and profane, good and bad. Eventually, these partnerships control aspects of life as varied as the position in which dead are buried, distribution of space in homes and churches, positions in which men and women sit at the table or in the temple and the hand chosen for saluting, swearing, eating or bathing."

Moreover, Santiago points out, "even vocabulary is also full of similar facts such as, for example, the word "sinistro," which derives from sinister, "izquierda" in Latin.

Email or share this story: [| More](#)

Story Source:

Adapted from materials provided by [University of Granada](#), via [EurekAlert!](#), a service of AAAS.

Need to cite this story in your essay, paper, or report? Use one of the following formats:

- ☒ APA University of Granada (2010, January 28). Right-handed and left-handed people do not see the same bright side of things. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100128101901.htm>
- ☐ MLA

Note: If no author is given, the source is cited instead.

Behavioral software

Software and instrumentation for the study of behavior
www.noldus.com/

Vuelos desde Granada

Ofertas Vuelos regulares y Low Cost
¡Ahorra tiempo y dinero con logi!
www.logitravel.com

Vuelos Granada desde 20€

Promociones de temporada. Aprovecha
Precios Increíbles, Compruébalo!
Vuelos-Granada.Bookmarks.Excite.es

Oposiciones Granada

Centro Especializado Oposiciones en
Granada. Formación a Medida. +Info
www.MasterD.es/OposicionesGranada

Number of stories in archives: 80,701

Get the latest science news with our free email newsletters, updated daily and weekly. Or view hourly updated newsfeeds in your RSS reader:

[Email Newsletters](#)

[RSS Newsfeeds](#)

Feedback

... we want to hear from you!

Tell us what you think of the new ScienceDaily -- we welcome both positive and negative comments. Have any problems using the site? Questions?

Your Name:

Your Email:

Comments:

Click button to submit feedback:

Find with keyword(s):

Enter a keyword or phrase to search ScienceDaily's archives for related news topics, the latest news stories, reference articles, science videos, images, and books.

[About This Site](#) | [Editorial Staff](#) | [Awards & Reviews](#) | [Contribute News](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright © 1995-2009 ScienceDaily LLC — All rights reserved — Contact: editor@sciencedaily.com
Part of the iVillage Your Total Health Network