

Attention to Emotional Expressions.

By Lauren Coombes, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

14054809@brookes.ac.uk. Supervised by Dr Aspasia Paltoglou.

Previous research:

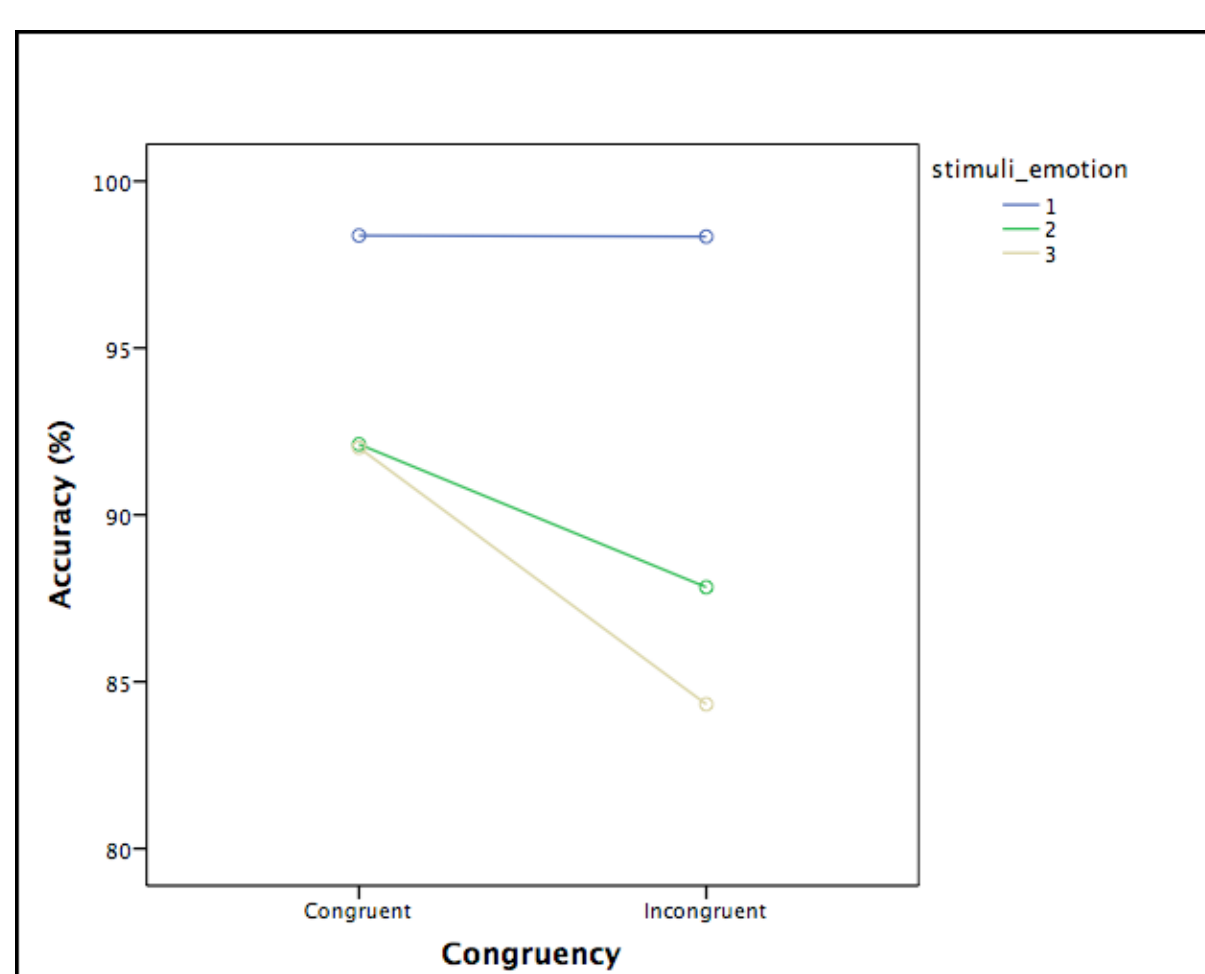
- The Affect Infusion Model (AIM, Forgas, 1995) suggests that mood affects judgements in complex situations.
- The Broaden-and-Build theory (Fredrickson, 1998) suggests a positive mood has a broadening effect on attention.
- Faces vs bodies – are faces a special class of stimuli? Ekman (1965) suggests yes; Aviezer, Trope and Todorov (2012) suggest bodies are more important.

Rationale for research:

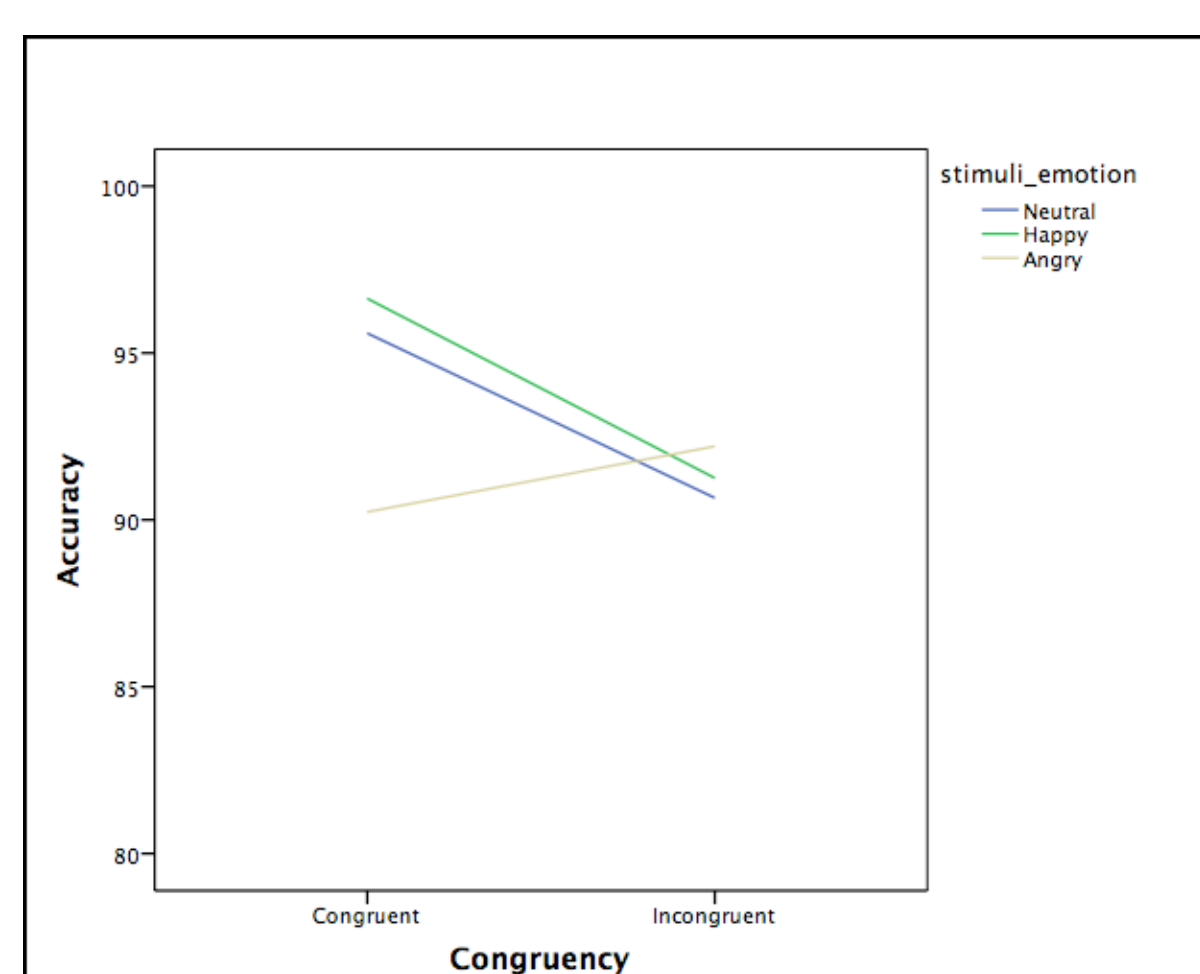
- Aimed to investigate AIM (Forgas, 1995) and Broaden-and-Build (Fredrickson, 1998).
- Little research has been conducted on the face and body as a whole, even though this is how we experience social interactions in everyday life.
- Furthermore, much of the previous research has not included a neutral condition, meaning that the effects of mood were not compared to a baseline. In addition, most research categorised participants as 'positive' or 'negative' and did not analyse specific moods.

Method:

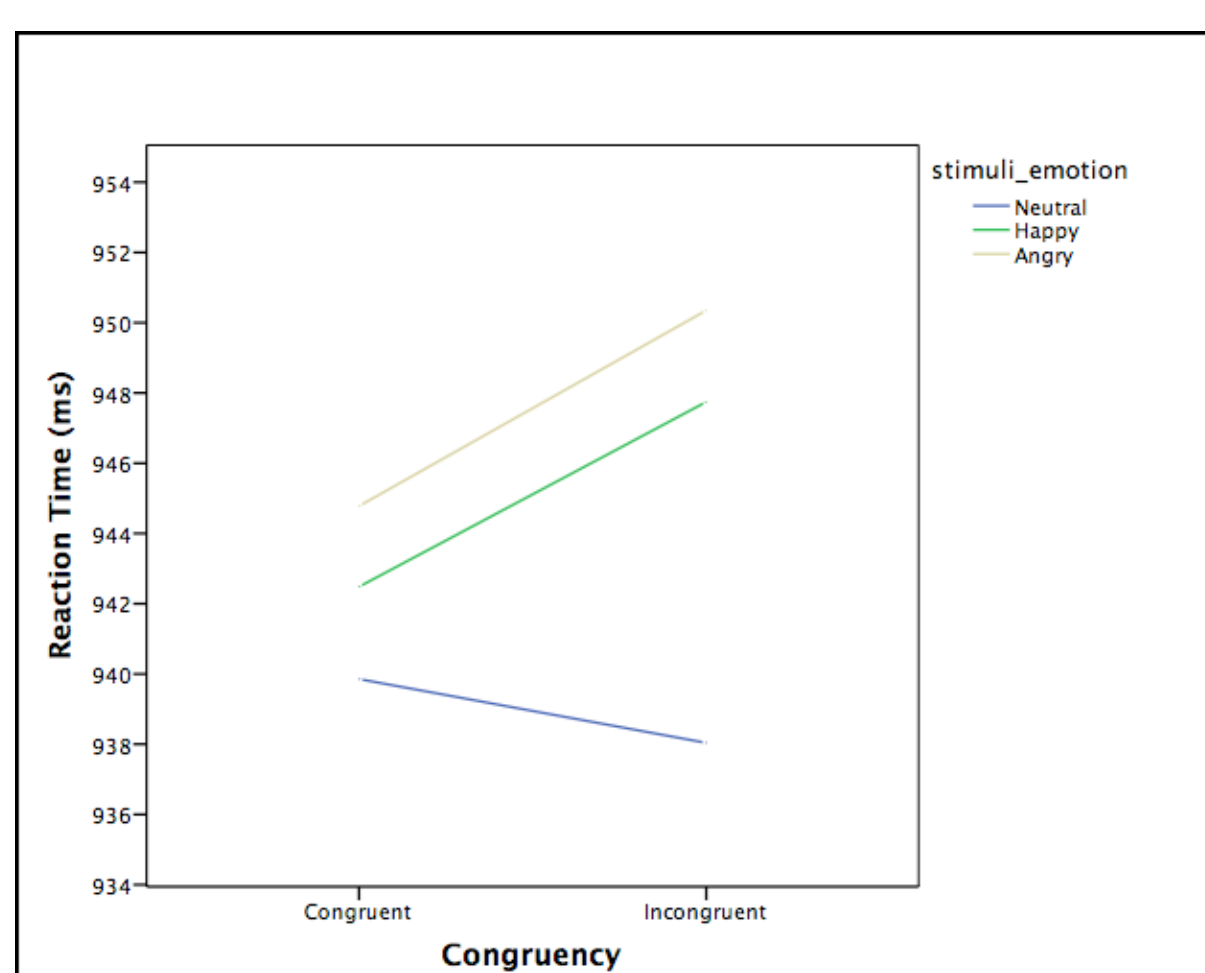
- Practice trial - allowed participants to get used to the stimuli.
- Mood induction, participants listened to happy, neutral, or angry music.
- Positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) to assess the mood of the participant as they entered the main task.
- Main task – participants were told to decide what emotion the face or the body of the stimuli was presenting as quickly as possible. Sometimes the emotion displayed by the face matched the body, sometimes it did not.
- Participants were debriefed so they understood the study.



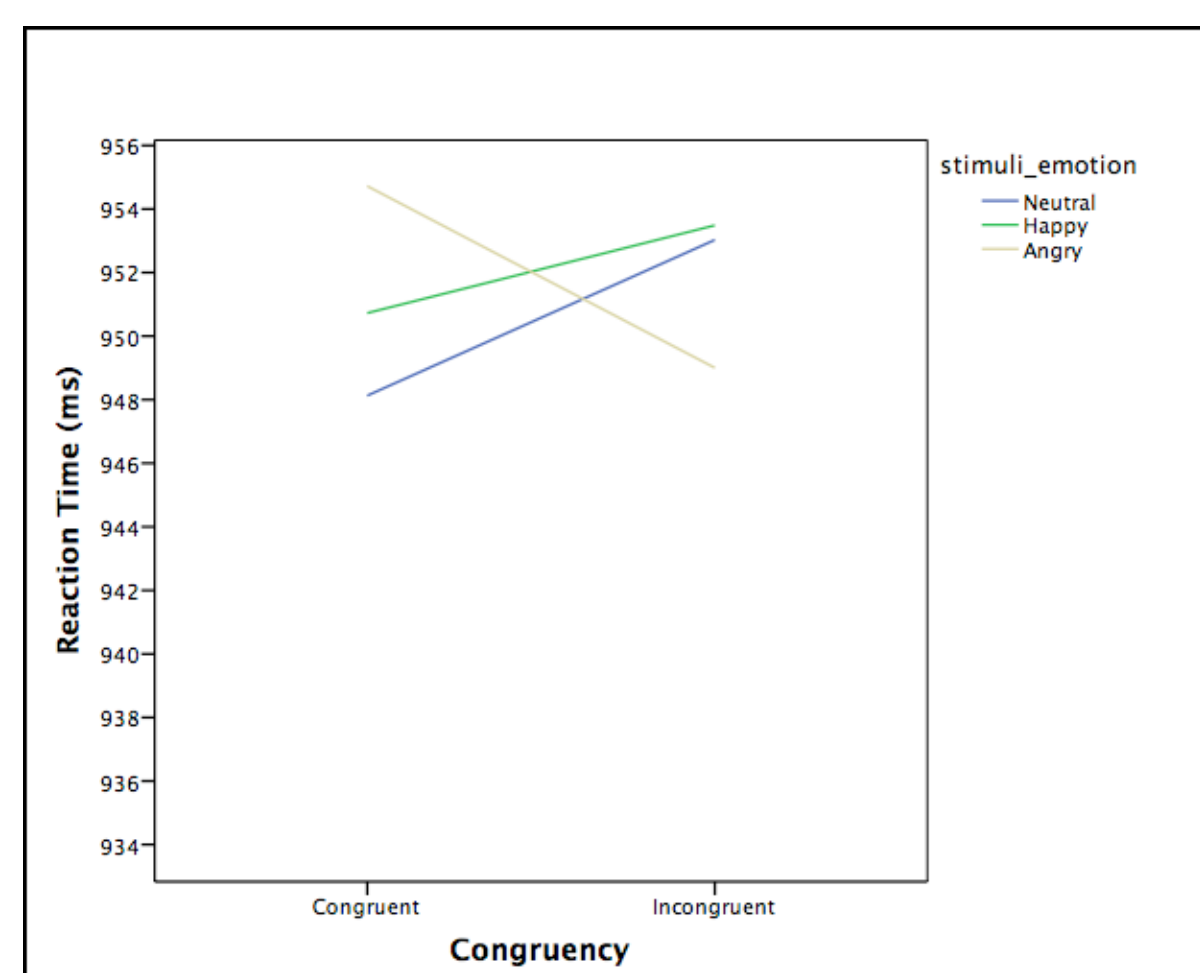
Graph 1 shows accuracy scores for incongruent and congruent emotions and when the focus of attention was the face.



Graph 2 shows accuracy scores for incongruent and congruent emotions and when the focus of attention was the body.



Graph 3 shows reaction times for incongruent and congruent emotions and when the focus of attention was the face.



Graph 4 shows accuracy scores for incongruent and congruent emotions and when the focus of attention was the body.

Findings/Conclusions:

- No support for AIM or Broaden-and-Build was found. The mood induction did not produce a significant main effect, meaning that future research should adopt other mood induction procedures.
- Valence of stimuli affects attention. The lack of congruency effect when attending to an angry face, but presence of a congruency effect when attending to a happy face suggests the positive stimuli had a broadening effect on attention.
- There was a ceiling effect for neutral stimuli, future research is required with different stimuli to ascertain the effect of neutral stimuli.
- No preferential processing in the face or the body was noted, meaning that both are important when making social judgements.

References

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- Aviezer, H., Trope, Y., & Todorov, A. (2012). Body cues, not facial expressions, discriminate between intense positive and negative emotions. *Science*, 338(6111), 1225-1229.
- Ekman, P. (1965). Differential communication of affect by head and body cues. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 2(5), 726-735.