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The return of dispositionalism: On the linguistic consequences of dispositional suppression☆

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Abstract

Yzerbyt, Corneille, Dumont, and Hahn (2001) showed that the correction of dispositional inferences does not only involve a close examination of situational constraints but also the suppression of those dispositional inferences. Building on the literature of mental control (Wegner, 1994; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000) and the Linguistic Category Model (Semin & Fiedler, 1988), we reasoned that participants induced to correct their dispositional attribution by being exposed to a forced speaker would subsequently use more abstract (i.e., dispositional) language to describe social behaviors than participants first confronted with a free speaker. We thus argue that dispositional suppression may result in a procedural rebound. As expected, participants selected more disposition-laden descriptors for pictorially presented behaviors after the suppression of dispositional thoughts (Experiment 1) or after having seen a forced rather than a free speaker (Experiment 2). These findings are discussed in the context of current theoretical accounts of the correspondence bias and suppressional rebound.

Keywords: Attribution; Disposition; Inference; Correspondence bias; Error; Suppression; Procedural; Rebound; Linguistic; Language

Introduction

Causal attribution is a crucial instrument in the toolbox of human cognition. It gives meaning to the actions of others and helps to regulate and predict the social environment. Unfortunately, these attribution processes are not immune to biases. Jones and Harris (1967) were the first to illustrate people's tendency to explain social behaviors in terms of personality traits even when situational factors provide a more accurate account of the behavior. This propensity has been labeled the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977), the overattribution bias (Quattrone, 1982), or the correspondence bias (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Considered as one of the most robust findings in social psychology, this bias is at the heart of a variety of stage models of attribution (Gilbert, 1989; Quattrone, 1982; Reeder, 1993; Trope, 1986).

According to Quattrone (1982), the correspondence bias can be seen as a special case of the anchoring-adjustment heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Upon seeing a given behavior, perceivers are assumed to start with a dispositional anchor and only later initiate situational adjustment. Because situational correction takes more effort than spontaneous dispositional inference, people generally end up with an insufficient correction of their correspondent inference. This idea has been a focus of much debate in the attribution literature (for a review, see Gilbert, 1998).

Recently, Yzerbyt, Corneille, Dumont and Hahn (2001) proposed that the correction of dispositional inferences does not merely involve the processing of

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situational information, but also entails the suppression of the unwanted dispositional inference. The latter process, the authors argued, should lead perceivers to exacerbate the role of dispositional factors in subsequent judgments. This prediction is consistent with the observation that attempts at suppressing unwanted thoughts often result in a heightened accessibility of the suppressed construct commonly know as the *rebound effect* (Wegner, 1994). Indeed, participants instructed not to think of white bears, paradoxically end up thinking more of white bears than before (see Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). Applying this logic to the anchoring-adjustment heuristic used in attribution, Yzerbyt et al. (2001) thus predicted a dispositional rebound after correction of an initial dispositional inference.

Adapting the attitude attribution scenario first used by Jones and Harris (1967), Yzerbyt et al. (2001) showed participants a video of either a *free* or a *forced* speaker. Because exposure to a forced speaker was expected to elicit both situational correction and dispositional suppression, a dispositional rebound in subsequent judgments should emerge in the latter condition. To test this hypothesis, Yzerbyt et al. (2001, Experiment 1) showed all their participants a second video of a *free* speaker. As predicted, compared to participants first shown a free speaker, those initially confronted with a forced speaker made stronger dispositional judgments when they evaluated the second speaker. Two follow-up studies supported the mediating role of suppression in the production of this effect (Yzerbyt et al., 2001).

In the present paper, we sought to demonstrate the strength and pervasiveness of post-suppressional dispositional rebound by relying on an entirely different paradigm to trace the emergence of this rebound. Moreover, we will argue that dispositional suppression might result in a *procedural rebound*. This rebound differs from the commonly studied conceptual rebound, since it involves the suppression of process (e.g., making dispositional judgments) and not the suppression of a particular content (e.g., a white bear). Specifically, we propose that dispositional rebound may have a direct influence on the language that perceivers use to describe subsequently presented behaviors.

Our paradigm builds upon the *Linguistic Category Model* proposed by Semin and Fiedler (1988, 1992). The LCM distinguishes four levels of language abstraction: *Descriptive Action Verbs* (DAV) are descriptions of an action with reference to a specific object and situation; they are context dependent (e.g., 'John kisses Angela'). *Interpretative Action Verbs* (IAV) are interpretations of an action. IAV refers to a specific object and situation but goes beyond a mere description (e.g., 'John is comforting Angela'). *State Verbs* (SV) refer to a mental or emotional state, with reference to a specific object but not to a specific situation. They are independent of context (e.g., 'John loves Angela'). *Adjectives* (ADJ) are highly abstract person dispositions. ADJ makes no reference to specific objects, situations, or context (e.g., 'John is romantic'). The LCM can be used as a methodological tool to discriminate between abstract and concrete language. But the model is also an eminent instrument to measure dispositional inferences. In fact, the LCM offers a nice dimension ranging from situational to dispositional information. By definition, adjectives are the most dispositionally laden, but they do not posses the 'dispositional monopoly.' Indeed, SV contain more information on the protagonist than IAV and DAV. In turn, IAV contain more dispositional information than DAV (see Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989, Experiment 3; and Semin & Fiedler, 1992).

In addition, the use of a different paradigm in the suppression as compared to the rebound phase, allows us to rule out a possible alternative explanation of the Yzerbyt et al. (2001) studies. The heightened dispositional judgment was explained as post-suppressional rebound (Wegner, 1994), but it could also have been a perceptual contrast effect. Participants first shown a forced speaker might have felt the urge to differentiate between both speakers. This reaction would have participants attribute more weight to dispositional factors while judging the second speaker. Yzerbyt et al. (2001) provide a series of arguments that seriously question the viability of this interpretation. Still, we thought that it was important to examine the emergence of post-suppressional rebound in an experimental paradigm that proves entirely immune to this alternative explanation.

In the present studies, we made use of the fixed format LCM technique originally developed by Maass and colleagues (for a review, see Maass, 1999). In Experiment 1, participants were asked to suppress dispositional judgments while watching a forced speaker. Next, they were shown a series of pictures illustrating various behaviors. Four verbal descriptions, corresponding to the four levels of language abstraction, accompanied each picture. Participants' task was to select the best descriptor for each behavior. We hypothesized that participants initially suppressing dispositional thoughts would use more abstract (i.e., dispositional) descriptors than subjects from a control group. In Experiment 2, participants were shown a video of either a free or a forced speaker and were given no suppression instruction. Participants confronted with a forced speaker are believed to spontaneously induce situational correction. Because we claim that situational correction also entails dispositional suppression, participants shown a constrained speaker should use more abstract language in subsequent judgments.

Experiment 1

Method

Participants

Forty-six undergraduates of the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve participated in the study in exchange for experimental credits.

Materials and procedure

Upon entering the laboratory in small groups (2–3 people), participants in the experimental condition were invited to take place in front of a large television screen. A male experimenter explained that they would take part in a study on perception and impression formation. They were informed that they would watch a video extract recorded during another experiment, and that they had to answer a series of questions afterwards. Participants were told that the people who took part in a previous experiment had been asked to prepare a short speech and to read it aloud in front of a video camera. In fact, this video extract was based on extensive pretesting. We selected a speech topic that proved highly counter-attitudinal for our participants. The topic concerned the possible adoption of an admission criterion for students from the 2nd year to enter the 3rd year of university. Only students who obtained an average of 70% in their course grades would be admitted to the 3rd year. Three pre-tested arguments in favor of this policy were selected for inclusion in the speech, which comprised a total of approximately 350 words. A male student, unknown to the participants, was asked to read the speech aloud in front of a video camera. The videotape lasted about 3 min and showed the speaker sitting at a table while reading the speech. Participants were led to believe that the speaker had been obliged to defend the selection procedure. After that, the experimenter explained that the participants should avoid making judgments:

> During the presentation of the video you will probably have the tendency to form an impression of the student. However, you should try to avoid this tendency. Because the student has been asked to defend this selection procedure, his speech doesn't (necessarily) reflect his beliefs. During the entire presentation you thus should try suppress the idea that this person expresses a personal opinion. However, every time you do fall back on this tendency and make this kind of judgments during the presentation, please indicate it with a mark on the piece of paper in front of you.

Before the videotape started, the experimenter checked that participants correctly understood all the information they had received.

Once the videotape stopped, participants were asked to answer a short questionnaire about the video excerpt. After they had completed the questions, the experimenter asked them whether they would agree to complete another task. All participants agreed and were given the LCM-booklets. Participants in the control condition completed the LCM task without watching any videotape. The task was presented as an independent study to achieve norm-values for the development of a new test. The written instructions explained that participants would see 12 scenes, each of them accompanied by four different verbal descriptions. Participants were asked to select the best descriptor for each scene.

We constructed 12 single-frame pictures which displayed behaviors varying in (1) valence, either positive or negative, and (2) interpersonality, either interpersonal (e.g., X hits Y) or individual (e.g., X cleans up). We had no specific a priori hypotheses concerning the dimensions of valence and interpersonality but inclusion of these factors allowed to cover a wider range of behaviors and secure a higher level of ecological validity. Each picture was associated with four different response alternatives, corresponding to the four levels of linguistic abstraction. For instance, a picture displayed a woman shouting at a man and the response alternatives were "Christine shouts at her husband" (DAV), "Christine insults her husband" (IAV), "Christine is mad at her husband" (SV), and "Christine is hot-tempered" (ADJ). All other items are shown in the appendix. The pictures were presented in a random order in a booklet. The four response alternatives appeared underneath each picture in a random order. We used three different booklets to control for order, but because no differences emerged between booklets, order will not be mentioned further. Each response was scored by assigning a value from 1 (DAV) to 4 (ADJ). We calculated an average language abstraction score for each category of behaviors (interpersonal—positive; interpersonal—negative; individual—positive; individual—negative). We also computed the proportion of descriptors for each of the four linguistic categories.

After participants finished the LCM-task, they were thanked, fully debriefed, and dismissed.

The experiment relied on a 2 (suppression: suppression vs. control) $\times$ 2 (valence of scene: positive vs. negative) $\times$ 2 (interpersonality of scene: interpersonal vs. individual) mixed-design with suppression as a between-participants factor and valence and interpersonality as within-participant factors.

Results

During debriefing, five participants orally indicated that they had continued to suppress their judgments while completing the LCM task. A post hoc analysis indicated that these participants indeed selected more DAV than the other participants. We removed these subjects from the data prior to analyses. However, inclusion of these subjects in the analyses did not alter the pattern of findings.

Language abstraction

We analyzed the language abstraction scores with a 2 (suppression) × 2 (valence of scene) × 2 (interpersonality of scene) mixed ANOVA, with valence and interpersonality as repeated measures. As predicted we found a significant main effect of suppression, $F(1,39) = 5.75$, $p < .03$. Participants who suppressed dispositional judgments used more abstract language ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.41$) than participants in the control condition ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 0.59$). We also found a main effect of interpersonality, $F(1,39) = 11.43$, $p < .005$, interpersonal behaviors were described more abstractly ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.51$) than individual behaviors ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.70$). The effect of valence was not significant, $F(1,39) = 1.57$. Importantly, none of the interactions came out significant (F's < 1).

To further investigate the data we looked at participants' selection of descriptors for each one of the two extreme linguistic categories as a function of experimental condition (see Fig. 1). Indeed, ADJ and DAV can be seen as the pure versions of the trait versus non-trait descriptors. Specifically, we compared the number of selected ADJ to the number of DAV by means of a 2 (suppression) × 2 (type of descriptor) mixed-design ANOVA, with the last factor varying within participant. Because DAV and ADJ comprise only two of the four categories, their selection can be seen as largely unconstrained. Still, to address this issue, we treated our dependent measures as proportions and performed an arcsine transformation before conducting the analysis. For the sake of simplicity, the means reported below are in the original metric.

The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of type of descriptor, $F(1,39) = 5.44$, $p < .03$, such that participants globally selected more DAV than ADJ.

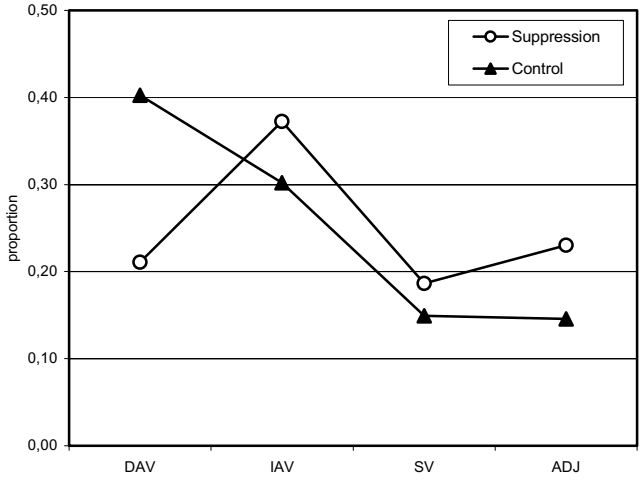

Fig. 1. Proportion of chosen linguistic descriptors in Experiment 1. The linguistic categories range from Descriptive Action Verbs (concrete), over Interpretative Action Verbs, and State Verbs, to Adjectives (abstract).

A main effect of suppression, $F(1,39) = 4.33$, $p < .05$, indicated that control participants selected more descriptors in these two categories than suppression participants. More importantly, these two main effects were qualified by a significant suppression by type of descriptor interaction, $F(1,39) = 6.91$, $p < .02$. As predicted, control participants preferred DAV more often ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 3.08$) than their suppression counterparts ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 2.18$), $F(1,39) = 6.98$, $p < .02$. In contrast, suppression participants selected more ADJ ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.25$) than control participants ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.80$), $F(1,39) = 3.81$, $p < .06$.

In order to further ascertain the validity of our conclusions, we also examined the above differences by means of logistic regressions. Replicating the above pattern, these analyses indicated that suppression participants selected proportionally less DAV to describe the pictorially presented behaviors (21%) than control participants (40%), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 19.54$, $p < .0001$. Conversely, suppression participants preferred proportionally more adjectives to describe the behaviors (23%) than control participants (15%), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 5.68$, $p < .02$.

Discussion

Participants exposed to a constrained speaker were asked to suppress dispositional judgments. Next, they were shown pictorially presented behaviors, and had to choose the best description among four sentences. As predicted participants initially suppressing dispositional inferences suffered from a post-suppressional rebound. Suppressors used more abstract language to describe the images than control participants did.

This finding is of particular interest for two reasons. First, we successfully replicated the findings of Yzerbyt et al. (2001) with a novel paradigm. In line with these authors' claims, the present data allow us to rule out the perceptual contrast alternative as an explanation of post-suppression dispositional rebound. Second, the strength of the current findings lies in the specific way dispositional suppression rebounded. Whereas the existing research on mental control is concerned with the suppression and subsequent rebound of particular concepts (Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000), our participants clearly did not manifest a rebound at a semantic level but rather at the process level. As far as we can see, our participants were asked to suppress a process (making dispositional inferences) and this resulted in a procedural rebound. This is an important finding as it could shed a new light on the issue of mental control.

In the second experiment we wanted to go one step further and show the emergence of dispositional rebound in the absence of any explicit instruction to suppress. Closely modeled after the attitude attribution paradigm (Jones & Harris, 1967), our study presented

participants with an allegedly free or forced speaker. Exposure to a forced speaker is believed to evoke situational correction. Consistent with Yzerbyt et al. (2001), we argued that this correction should elicit the spontaneous suppression of dispositional judgments (see also Macrae, Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1998, for evidence on self-generated suppression processes). Replicating the procedural rebound found in Experiment 1, we predicted that participants exposed to a constrained speaker would use more abstract language to describe subsequent behaviors than participants confronted with a free speaker.

Experiment 2

Method

Participants

Sixty-six undergraduates of the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve participated in the study in exchange for experimental credits.

Materials and procedure

The video excerpt and LCM items in this study were identical to the ones used in Experiment 1. The procedure was also similar except that participants in the second study were never explicitly asked to suppress dispositional thoughts. Also, control participants were shown the same video as experimental participants. To make this possible, they were told that the focus of the experiment was to investigate the role of non-verbal behavior in communication and were shown the tape without any sound. Once the videotape stopped, control participants were asked to answer a series of filler questions.

Experimental participants learned that they would watch a video extract recorded during another experiment. We used the same cover story as in Experiment 1: participants were told that a student had been asked to prepare a short speech on a new selection procedure. Depending on the condition, participants were led to believe that the speaker had either been free or forced to choose a particular stance regarding this issue. Right before the videotape started, the experimenter checked that all participants correctly understood the information they had received.

After seeing the videotape, participants were asked to answer a few filler questions about the speakers' personality. Next, they estimated the true attitude of the speaker towards the adoption of the policy on a scale ranging from 1 (totally against) to 9 (totally in favor), and their level of confidence regarding this judgment, from 1 (not at all confident) to 9 (totally confident). Participants were also asked to recall the 3 arguments of the speech, and to answer some filler questions regarding the speaker and the context of the video. Then, participants indicated the extent to which they thought the given arguments were persuasive, and that the speaker himself was persuasive. Finally, we checked whether participants thought that the speaker was free to choose a particular stance on the topic, on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all free) to 9 (totally free). Once all participants had completed the questions, the experimenter asked them whether they would agree to complete another task and distributed the LCM-booklets. After completing the LCM task, participants were thanked, debriefed, and dismissed.

The experiment thus relied on a 3 (freedom of speaker: forced vs. free vs. control) $\times$ 2 (valence of scene: positive vs. negative) $\times$ 2 (interpersonality of scene: interpersonal vs. individual) mixed-design with freedom of speaker as a between-participants factor and valence and interpersonality as within-participants factors.

Results

General impression of the speaker

The perceived freedom of choice was examined with a one-way ANOVA, using freedom of speaker (free vs. forced) as between-subjects factor. Indicating the success of our manipulation, the perceived freedom of choice was significantly different in the two experimental conditions, $F(1,44) = 10.17$, $p < .003$. Participants confronted with a free speaker rated the speaker as being more free ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 2.62$) than participants confronted with a forced speaker did ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 2.44$). There was no significant difference in the persuasiveness of the arguments nor in the persuasiveness of the speaker (both F's < 1.00).

Perceived attitude of the speaker

Participants' ratings of the speakers' attitude were examined by means of a one-way ANOVA, with freedom of speaker (free vs. forced) as between-subjects variable. The effect of freedom was highly significant, $F(1,44) = 11.53$, $p < .002$. Not surprisingly, participants confronted with a free speaker rated the speakers' true attitude more in favor of the policy ($M = 7.10$, $SD = 1.90$) than participants confronted with a forced speaker ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.65$).

Because we wanted to ascertain whether our data replicated the correspondence bias, we conducted a post-test in which we asked 20 participants to imagine what an average student would think about this topic. The data revealed that the average student was perceived to strongly disapprove such a policy ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 0.67$). This estimate proved to be significantly different from both other conditions (both t's > 8.00, $p < .001$), indicating that we replicated the bias.

We also found a significant effect of freedom of speaker on the confidence ratings, $F(1,44) = 4.93$,

$p < .04$. Participants shown a free speaker were more confident about their attitude rating ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 2.15$) than participants shown a forced speaker ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.77$).

Language abstraction

We conducted a 3 (freedom of speaker) × 2 (valence) × 2 (interpersonality) ANOVA on the language abstraction scores. A significant main effect of freedom emerged, $F(2, 63) = 3.69$, $p < .04$. In line with our predictions, participants confronted with a forced speaker used significantly more abstract descriptions ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.44$), than participants confronted with a free speaker ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.43$), $t(45) = 2.78$, $p < .005$; or than control participants ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.43$), $t(44) = 1.82$, $p < .04$. The latter two conditions did not significantly differ from each other, $t(40) < 1$, *ns*.

As in Experiment 1 we found a main effect of interpersonality of scenes, $F(1, 63) = 13.03$, $p < .001$. Behaviors conducted individually were described in more concrete terms ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 0.56$) than interpersonal behaviors ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 0.41$). We also obtained a main effect of valence, $F(1, 63) = 6.24$, $p < .02$, indicating that positive behaviors were described more abstractly ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.53$) than negative behaviors ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.52$). None of the interactions came out significant.

Again, we looked at participants' selection of descriptors for each one of the two extreme linguistic categories as a function of experimental condition (see Fig. 2). To this end, we compared the number of selected ADJ and DAV by means of a 3 (freedom of speaker) × 2 (type of descriptor) mixed-design ANOVA. We treated our dependent measures as proportions and performed an arcsine transformation before running the analysis. However, the reported means are in the original metric.

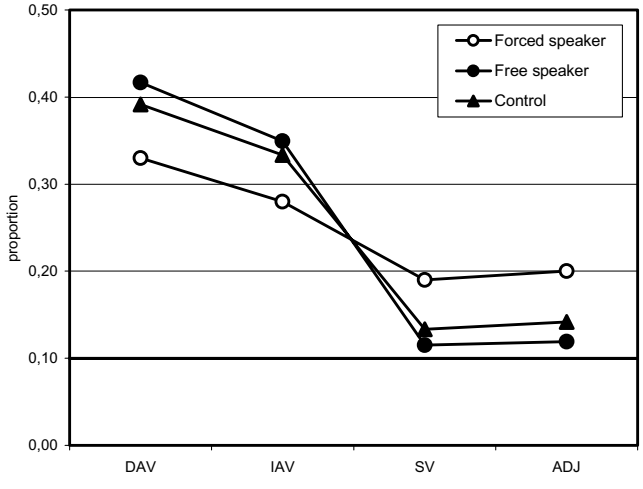

Fig. 2. Proportion of chosen linguistic descriptors in Experiment 2.

The ANOVA revealed the presence of a very significant main effect of type of descriptor, $F(1, 63) = 46.64$, $p < .0001$, participants globally selected more DAV than ADJ. The interaction of suppression by type of descriptor was also marginally significant, $F(2, 63) = 2.50$, $p < .09$. More important, an a priori contrast comparing the forced speaker condition to the two other conditions came out significant, $F(1, 63) = 4.56$, $p < .04$. Not surprisingly, the free speaker and control participants did not differ from each other, $F(1, 63) < 1$, *ns*. But as predicted, free speaker and control participants tended to prefer DAV more often ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 2.35$, and $M = 4.70$, $SD = 2.08$, respectively) than forced speaker participants ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.93$), $F(1, 63) = 2.72$, $p < .10$. In contrast, forced speaker participants selected significantly more ADJ ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.61$) than free speaker and control participants ($M = 1.43$, $SD = 1.16$, and $M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.22$), $F(1, 63) = 5.88$, $p < .02$.

We double-checked the above results by means of logistic regressions. Looking at DAV first, the analysis showed that freedom of speaker was a marginally significant predictor, $\chi^2(2) = 4.72$, $p < .10$. Using the same a priori contrasts as above, we found that forced speaker participants selected proportionally less DAV to describe the pictorially presented behaviors (33%) than free speaker (42%) or control participants (39%), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 4.35$, $p < .04$. The two latter conditions did not differ from each other, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.32$, *ns*. As for the proportion of ADJ, here again freedom of speaker turned out to be a significant predictor, $\chi^2(2) = 7.38$, $p < .03$. Forced speaker participants preferred proportionally more adjectives to describe the behaviors (20%) than free speaker (12%) or control participants (14%), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.83$, $p < .002$. The difference between the free and control condition was not significant, Wald $\chi^2(1) = 0.56$, *ns*.

Discussion

In Experiment 2 we provided evidence for the spontaneous occurrence of post-suppression dispositional rebound. Clearly, participants confronted with a forced speaker corrected their correspondent inference to a certain extent. Although their situational correction was indeed substantial, it was far from sufficient to avoid the correspondence bias. As predicted, the correction process these participants spontaneously initiated during the presentation of the video excerpt recoiled in the second task. Compared to participants confronted with a free speaker but also control participants, those confronted with a constrained speaker described the images in the LCM task in more abstract terms. In particular, they used more adjectives and less descriptive action verbs in their descriptions of the pictures thereby opting for a clearly marked dispositional way to appraise the stimulus behaviors.

General discussion

Building upon recent work on mental control (Wegner, 1994; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000) and the Linguistic Category Model (Semin & Fiedler, 1988), we reasoned that post-suppression dispositional rebound (Yzerbyt et al., 2001) could emerge under the form of a linguistic rebound. As predicted, compared to control group, participants who were explicitly instructed to suppress dispositional thoughts during an initial video presentation later used more abstract language to describe pictorially presented behaviors (Experiment 1). Moreover, participants initially confronted with a forced speaker also used more disposition-laden descriptors to describe subsequent behaviors than participants shown a free speaker or control participants (Experiment 2). The latter pattern emerged despite the fact that forced speaker participants never received explicit instructions to avoid making dispositional attributions.

Our findings indicate that people who engage in the correction of an early dispositional judgment fall prey to a dispositional rebound in the subsequent processing of social information. They concur with the idea that the correction stage of attribution entails some form of dispositional suppression (Yzerbyt et al., 2001). The strength of these results lies in the choice of the dependent measure. Language is eminently important in social activities and intrudes daily interpersonal behavior. From this perspective, the reported findings present a substantial ecological value. Moreover, LCM has proven to be a good implicit measure of cognitive process guiding our social live (von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & Vargas, 1995). As such, this dependent measure allows one to essentially rule out any impact of strategic processes in the production of participants' rebound answers. In fact, considering that our participants were not asked to make yet another dispositional judgment after their initial confrontation with a first speaker but, instead, were confronted with an entirely different task allows one to counter a perceptual contrast effect as a possible alternative hypothesis for dispositional rebound. A final aspect that contributes to minimizing the interference of strategic or pragmatic concerns in the emergence of post-suppressional rebound resides in the fact that participants in the second study were never *explicitly* asked to suppress dispositional thoughts (Förster & Liberman, 2001).

One may wonder whether suppressers end up making more or stronger dispositional inferences? The current analyses provide evidence for both possibilities. Considering that the LCM can be treated both categorically and continuously, we have two sets of evidence. One seems compatible with the notion that suppressors are *more* likely to make dispositional inferences; the other one appears more in line with the idea that suppressors make *stronger* dispositional inferences. Thus, at present, it is unclear whether dispositional rebound works at only one, or both levels. Future research should help resolving this.

We already mentioned the interest of the current findings for the research on mental control. Importantly our participants did not suppress a specific construct. Instead they were induced to suppress process, either explicitly or spontaneously. This process suppression rebounded, resulting in subsequent judgments in which the role of dispositional factors was emphasized. Thus, when social perceivers try to avoid making dispositional inferences, they may ironically end up relying more on dispositional factors. When this mechanism would operate for other processes as well, we might eventually attenuate the correspondence bias. That is, suppressing situational inferences might lead to enhanced situational thinking. Naturally, the idea that such a thing as a procedural rebound operates awaits replication in future research. In any event, we think that the explanation of process suppression and rebound certainly makes a parsimonious explanation of the present findings.

Our findings are compatible with the idea that lay observers have a chronic propensity to make dispositional inferences whenever they come to appraise human behavior. Although there are important factors that may moderate people's tendency to make correspondent inferences (Corneille, Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Walther, 1999; Gilbert, 1998; see also Leyens, Yzerbyt, & Schadron, 1994), the pervasiveness of this judgmental mode has long been noticed by social psychologists and has been identified as dispositionalism (Ross & Nibett, 1991). Exciting as the current findings may be, they should not be taken as indication that the human cognitive machinery is such that perceivers are forced to live with post-suppressional dispositional rebound. Some people may find it easier than others to contemplate the impact of situational factors on behaviors (Dweck, Hong, & Chiu, 1993; Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002). And indeed, the impact of cultural preferences in social inference should not be underestimated (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994; Norenzayan, Choi, & Nisbett, 2002). Moreover, a number of reasons lead us to suspect that situational rebound may also occasionally be encountered depending on the nature of the observed behaviors (Krull, 1993; Webster, 1993). Clearly, future research should allow us to appreciate the moderating role of individual differences, culture and context in the effects reported here.

Appendix

The different descriptions per linguistic category used in both studies (translated from the French materials used in the studies).

		DAV	IAV	SV	ADJ
Interpersonal positive behavior	1	Matthew gives the man a hand	Matthew greets the man	Matthew gets along well with the man	Matthew is nice
	2	Philippe offers the girl a seat	Philippe treats the girl kindly	Philippe likes the girl	Philippe is courteous
	3	Valerie holds the child in her arms	Valerie comforts the child	Valerie cares for the child	Valerie is caring
Interpersonal negative behavior	1	Christine shouts at her husband	Christine insults her husband	Christine is mad at her husband	Christine is hot-tempered
	2	Fred pushes the woman	Fred bumps against the woman	Fred ignores the woman	Fred is rude
	3	Tom gives the man a punch	Tom assaults the man	Tom is angry with the man	Tom is violent
Individual positive behavior	1	Marie picks up a paper in the park	Marie cleans up the park	Marie likes the park	Marie is a nature lover
	2	Nathalie puts bottles in a container	Nathalie recycles glass	Nathalie respects the recycling policy	Nathalie is scrupulous
	3	Stephanie pulls out her sweater	Stephanie undresses herself	Stephanie seduces	Stephanie is sensual
Individual negative behavior	1	Marc kicks the dog	Marc assaults the dog	Marc hates the dog	Marc is a dog hater
	2	Oliver picks in his nose	Oliver misbehaves	Oliver doesn't care about conventions	Oliver lacks education
	3	Ann throws a can on the ground	Ann litters the street	Ann neglects the neighborhood	Ann is unconstrained

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