

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

Autobiographical memories and assessment of the phenomenological characteristics

Andrew E. P. Mitchell

Source

Andrew E. P. Mitchell. (2016). *Phenomenological Characteristics of Autobiographical Memories: Responsiveness to an Induced Negative Mood State in Those With and Without a Previous History of Depression*. *ACP*, vol. 12 (2), 105-114. doi:10.5709/acp-0190-8.

The term “autobiographical memory refers to an individual’s record of experiences from their personal life in the form of an internal life story” [1] p106 [2], and phenomenological characteristics are conscious experiences that bring back memories to life, and those “that are most frequently investigated in literature are vividness, sensory details, and valence.” [1] p106

Assessing phenomenological characteristics

The source article utilised a modified version of the Autobiographical Memory Test (AMT) [3] to assess autobiographical memories for the most frequently investigated phenomenological characteristics.

In administering the modified Autobiographical Memory Test, participants were asked “to report the first specific personal memory triggered by each stimulus word and write down as much detail as necessary. Following the four cue words, the participants [are] given a scoring sheet to rate each phenomenological characteristic” [1] p109.

The autobiographical memories were assessed for their phenomenological characteristic “on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much), with 4 as a neutral rating. Items included typicality, rumination, valence, importance of others, expectancy, desirability, and personal importance of the event” [1] p108

The researcher used the modified Autobiographical Memory Test pre and post-mood induction procedure to assess the phenomenological characteristics. Similarly, in another study, memories were investigated, but rather than phenomenological characteristics, the researcher assessed reduced specificity in cued memories, which is explained further in a related definition [4].

References

1. [a](#), [b](#), [c](#), [d](#) Andrew E. P. Mitchell. (2016). *Phenomenological Characteristics of Autobiographical Memories: Responsiveness to an Induced Negative Mood State in Those With and Without a Previous History of Depression*. *ACP*, vol. 12 (2), 105-114. doi:10.5709/acp-0190-8.

2. [^] J. Mark G. Williams, Thorsten Barnhofer, Catherine Crane, Dirk Herman, et al. (2007). Autobiographical memory specificity and emotional disorder.. *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 133 (1), 122-148. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.122.
3. [^] J. Mark Williams, Keith Broadbent. (1986). Autobiographical memory in suicide attempters.. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. 95 (2), 144-149. doi:10.1037/0021-843x.95.2.144.
4. [^] Andrew E. P. Mitchell. (2023). Overgeneral memories and assessment of reduced specificity in autobiographical memories. doi:10.32388/WX0ICQ.