Introduction

Generic statements, such as “Bees have stripes”, are supposed to transmit essentialist beliefs about categories.

But is it generics or features that matter?

Hypotheses:
1. Teleological properties, what something is for, matter more than other feature types.
2. Generic vs. specific form of statement doesn’t matter.

Approach:
1. Get features that people view as falling into types.
2. Use these in generic and specific statements.
3. Change features in transformation cases to determine if that affects categorization.

Experiment 1

Properties that people place into different categories

Experiment 2

Generic/specific statement → Categorize features

Experiment 2 (cont’d)

Teleology isn’t merely more diagnostic

Experiment 3

Teleology, not generics, matter more in induction

Conclusion

Teleological properties matter more than generics and other feature types. This may be because purposes are treated as essences. Teleological essentialism captures this.