The Effects of Anthropomorphic Linguistic Framing on the

Online Sentence Processing of Texts about AI

by

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Abstract

During the AI boom of the early 2020s, it has become clear that people have strong tendency to anthropomorphize AI systems (i.e., to see them as intentional agents). This tendency is exacerbated by the agentive linguistic framing AI companies use when describing their technology (e.g., Google CEO Sundar Pichai claims that "Gemini can <u>understand</u>, <u>explain</u> and <u>generate</u> high-quality code"). This anthropomorphic language has real world consequences. It encourages unknowledgeable readers to see the AI as an agent—which can cause them to view the company as less responsible for the AI's behavior and to even be less outraged when an AI causes discrimination (Bigman et al., 2023). The current study investigates the effects of this agentive linguistic framing on the anthropomorphism of AI, using both an offline judgment task and online processing measures in an eye-tracking paradigm. The results show that agentive linguistic framing causes low AI-experience participants to assign greater responsibility to the AI and causes all participants to assign less responsibility to the company that made it.