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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 44(44)

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Publication Date

2022

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Second language vocabulary learning: When do pictures speak louder than words?

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Abstract

Second language vocabulary learning research has so far been predominantly focused on concrete nouns. However, recent work suggests that different word classes lead to differences in grounding, processing and learning of words (Markostamou, 2017; Martin & Tokowicz, 2019). To contribute to the basic understanding of the learning mechanisms, this study investigates how different learning methods influence learning of different types of words (nouns, verbs and prepositions) through either text-based or picture-based learning methods in adult population (N=160). Selected words vary in their translational ambiguity to additionally explore the modality effects in words with different levels of cross-linguistic (dis)similarity (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010). Production and recognition tasks are introduced after both learning sessions and again after a one-week delay to obtain comprehensive data about the learning curve across conditions. The results will contribute to understanding how words are represented and conceptualised and how they interact with different modalities during the initial learning phases.

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