Does familiarity drive the self-prioritization effects in attentional processing? Evidence from the Attentional Blink Task.

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Abstract

Previous research with suggests that individuals show prioritized processing for self-referenced stimuli, from self-faces, self-names to momentarily associated arbitrary geometrical shapes. We asked our participants to perform an attentional blink task with self-associated arbitrary geometrical shapes and self-names where these stimuli were either presented as T1(Exp 1A & 2A) or T2 (Exp 1B & 2B). Given that the self-referential shapes would engage more resources a larger attentional blink was expected in Exp1A & 2A, and was found for self-names(2A) as compared to self shapes (1A); however no difference between shapes & names was found when these were presented as the T2 (Exp 1B & 2B. We conclude that the higher familiarity of self-names drove the larger attentional blink observed with these stimuli and manifested in a bias relative to the control stimuli which were friend and stranger referenced stimuli.

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