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Activation and Rejection of Irrelevant Meaning in Simile Sentences

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Abstract: This paper discusses the processing of topic meaning in metaphor comprehension, which consists not only of the acceptance of metaphor-relevant meaning but also the rejection of metaphor-irrelevant meaning. Our study examined the rejection process of topic word (e.g., “lawyer”) that include an irrelevant meaning (e.g., “helps people”) in metaphor comprehension (e.g., “a lawyer is like a shark”) using a priming paradigm and meaningfulness decision task: an experimental study reveals that the metaphor-irrelevant meaning is activated prior to the rejection process of the irrelevant meaning in metaphor comprehension. Our results suggest that the processing of metaphor-irrelevant meaning is composed of two different stages.