PS2001: Dissertation & project preview

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Don’t read this
Or this
Stop it!
Stroop (1935)
Project areas

1. Children’s visual word recognition
2. Rdg txt on mob fones
3. Effect of word learning age on reading
4. Other stuff!
My ‘little’ brother (age 4)
Word spelling

The effect of word ‘phonology’ is often investigated with children

Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard but sounds like bird.
And dead: it’s said like bed, not bead;
For goodness sake, don’t call it deed.
(from Stone, Vanhoy &Orden, 1997, p337)
Children’s reading & visual cues

- Less research visual cues but beginning readers have been shown to make use of:
  - Distinctive visual information (Ehri & Wilce, 1985) $XGS\text{T vs. TRDL}$
  - Fragmentary visual features (Seymour & Elder, 1986) $Yellow$
  - Ascending and descending letters (Johnson et al., 1991) $\text{typist vs. ensure}$
Flashcards: whole word

green
Flashcards: internal features
Flashcards: external features

mouth
Flashcards: results

- Performance was better to external features than internal ones
- External features gained in importance with age
break
break
Results: Experiment 2

- Priming words with their external features decreased reaction time compared to priming with internal features.
Overall conclusions

- Children use visual cues to identify words
- Children learn that visual information is a useful aid to recognition at an early age
- External features of words constitute a more salient visual cue to recognition than internal features
Potential research questions:

- Investigate the initial development of children’s featural analysis of words.
  - Are there any changes in the importance of the location of these features?
  - Are there any changes in the use of these features with age?

Can You Read This?

Claim: University researchers demonstrate the order of letters within words is unimportant to reading comprehension.

Status: Undetermined.

Example: [Collected on the Internet, 2003]

According to researchers at Cambridge university, it doesn't matter what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letters are at the right place. The rest can be in total jumble and you can still read it without a problem. This is because we do not read every letter by itself but the word as a whole.

According to a research at an English university, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter is at the right place. The rest can be a total jumble and you can still read it without a problem. This is because we do not read every letter by itself but the word as a whole.

Origins: This little bit of intriguing linguistic trivia stormed through inboxes in September 2003. That the order of letters within words is relatively unimportant to reading comprehension as long as the first and last letters are in their proper places seems to be self-evident, as demonstrated by the ability of nearly everyone who came across this item to understand what it said (although this is a very general application — results may vary when different types of words and contexts are used), but was there really a university study to this effect?

Some additional resources for pursuing the origins of this item:

- The Languagehat web site appears to have been the one to popularize it.
- Uncle Jazzbeau's Gallimaufry, the science section of Slashdot, and Matt Davis from the Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit of the University of Cambridge all have insight and ongoing discussion into the matter.
Rdg txt on mob fones

- 1st written language: 4000-3000 BC
- 1st alphabetic system: 1000 BC
- Printing press: 1476 AD
- SMS language is relatively new: 1992 AD
- Different ‘types’ of abbreviation (all different to the standard version of the word)
  - pls vs. nite vs. bro vs. goin vs. l8r
- We’ve all read SMS messages but there’s little research on how we do so
What we know so far...

- Normal sentence reading: people can read SMS sentences but it takes them longer.
- There might be differences in how we read different types of SMS abbreviations.
- SMS words are subject to ‘automatic’ processing.
McWilliam et al. (2009)
Potential research questions:

• What processes are involved in reading SMS words and do these fit with what we know so far?
  ◦ Does it matter whether the SMS abbreviation is for a rare/common word?
  ◦ Does it matter how many letters have been deleted/changed in the abbreviation?
  ◦ Does the type of abbreviation (e.g. phonological or orthographical) make any difference?
  ◦ Do effects occur/vary in different languages?
Key papers:


Word learning age and reading

- Readers are quicker and more accurate at recognising words that were learned at an early age than those learned later (aka. ‘Age of acquisition’ or AoA effect).
- Researchers have tried to incorporate this finding into models of word reading.
- Eye tracking studies suggest the effect lies in word meaning, rather than word orthography.
Potential research questions

- We will carry out research using homophones (different meanings learned at different ages, but orthography only learned once)
- Do Age of acquisition effects come from the activation of word meaning?
- Do age of acquisition effects come from the activation of the word form (before meaning is activated)
Key papers:


Previous topics:

Narcissism and intelligence  The carrot compared to the stick in sporting performance
Attractiveness and first impression formation  Comparison of cheating behaviour in men & women  JEALOUSY
Religiosity, Locus of control & confidence  Pre-competitive anxiety in sports  Controlling weight vs. controlling lifestyle  COMPARING FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION WITH SOCIAL NETWORKING  Motivation, personality and participation in exercise