

The interplay of phonology and orthography in visual cognate word recognition: An ERP study

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This study examines the role of phonological and orthographic overlap in the recognition of cognate words by recording electrophysiological (ERPs) and behavioral data (reaction times –RTs and free recall). One hundred and ninety-two words were selected: 96 cognate words attending to their phonological and orthographic overlap vs. 96 noncognate words. Twenty-four proficient European Portuguese-English bilinguals performed a silent reading task with a masked priming paradigm. The results showed that phonology interacts with orthography during the first stages of visual cognate word recognition, supporting strong phonological proposals. Thus, the distinctive processing of cognate words seems to be due to their cross-linguistic similarity, which is consistent with a localist connectionist account on cognate representation and processing.

Keywords: cognate words, phonological and orthographic overlap, masked priming