POSTER ABSTRACT

Valence-Based Facilitation Effects for Emotional Processing on a Lateralized STROOP Task

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A lateralized emotional STROOP task was used to assess the right hemisphere and the valence-based theories of emotional processing. The valence-based theory posits that the right hemisphere (RH) is specialized to process negative emotional stimuli, and the left hemisphere (LH) is specialized to process positive emotional stimuli. The right hemisphere theory posits that the RH is specialized to process all emotions, regardless of valence. Thirty-five undergraduate participants (27 females, 8 males) reported the color ink of positive, negative, and neutral words presented vertically in either the left or right visual field (LVF, RVF). Half of the words were experimenter-generated and half were participant-generated. The results indicated that, relative to the neutral condition, participants were significantly faster at color-naming positive words presented to the RVF, and significantly faster at color-naming negative words presented to the LVF, consistent with the valence-based theory of emotional processing. This pattern of results was found regardless of the source of the stimuli (experimenter- vs. participant-generated).