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Does Positional Level Structural Priming Depend on the Verb?

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Abstract

Structural priming is a heavily studied and multi-faceted phenomenon. Essentially, when other factors are equal, syntax shows a tendency to repeat across utterances with potential gains in fluency (Pickering & Ferreira, 2008). Lexical repetition, particularly repetition of the verb between utterances enhances structural priming significantly (Mahowald et al., 2016), but this lexical-boost is not as long-lasting (Hartsuiker et al., 2008). Previous research on structural priming has heavily leaned on measures of syntactic choice, but a few studies have also measured initiation time (Smith & Wheeldon, 2001). The current study looks to differentiate effects of lexical and structural repetition benefits in initiation latency as a measure of potential fluency increases in sentence production. Results suggest that benefits in fluency are dependent on lexical and structural repetition.