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Effects of culture relatedness on bilingual emotional responses to words: Insights from word norms and event-related potentials (ERPs)

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Abstract

This study introduces culture relatedness of words as a novel variable and explores its impact on emotional responses of English-Mandarin bilinguals living in the UK, where their second language (L2) is dominant. First, we conducted a norming study to identify emotive words related to participants' native (e.g., bamboo) and residential (e.g., scones) cultures. We then used event-related potentials (ERPs) to examine whether culture relatedness affects emotional responses to words presented in L1 and L2. We were particularly interested in investigating whether the well-established emotional distance from L2 may be due to cultural distance, and whether concepts related to one's native culture in L2 may enhance affective responses. Initial evidence from ongoing data analyses seems to suggest an interaction of culture relatedness and emotional valance on affective responses. This research offers new insights into the interplay of language, culture, and emotion in bilingual contexts, examining how cultural salience modulates emotional responses.