

EYE-TRACKING INVESTIGATIONS OF LEXICAL AMBIGUITY

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ABSTRACT

The visual world paradigm was used to investigate the time course of ambiguity resolution. Typically, the visual stimuli consisted of one picture that was semantically related to the dominant meaning of an ambiguous word, one subordinate-related picture, and two unrelated pictures. The auditory stimuli contained an ambiguous word in an initially neutral or prior biasing context. Fixation probabilities revealed that the dominant meaning was activated more strongly and rapidly with a neutral context, but reordered access occurred with a prior biasing context. The pattern of results was affected by individual differences in awareness and strategy use, the type of visual stimulus (pictures or words), the type of instructions (passive viewing or active fixation), and the number of related targets (two or one per trial).