

An Embodied Cognition Approach to Studying Emotional Words: The Impact of Positive Facial Experiences on Semantic Properties Judgment

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Abstract: Embodied cognition is a theory that emphasizes the importance of sensorimotor experiences for cognition. Therefore, the present study focused on how the facial expression manipulation influences the property judgments toward Chinese emotional words. 41 college students were divided into “biting the pen with smile” group and control group to rate the same 26 Chinese emotional words chosen from a Chinese Emotions Corpora (Cho, Chen, and Cheng, 2013). After having the instructed expression, subjects evaluated several semantic dimensions of emotional words immediately. The findings show that the “biting the pen with smile” group has higher rating values for dimension ‘valence’, ‘frequency’ and ‘continuance’ for the ‘disgust’ words, and the dimension ‘valence’ for the ‘angry’ words. The study found that positive facial expression indeed influenced the semantic properties of negative words, not the positive emotional words. The results are useful for investigating how word meaning is built in children and clinical applications.