

The Audio-Visual and Syntactic Priming Effect on Specific Language Impairment and Gender in Modern Standard Arabic

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Abstract : This study aims at exploring if priming is affected by gender in Modern Standard Arabic and if it is restricted solely to subjects with no specific language impairment (SLI). The sample in this study consists of 74 subjects, between the ages of 11;1 and 11;10, distributed into (a) 2 SLI experimental groups of 38 subjects divided into two gender groups of 18 females and 20 males and (b) 2 non-SLI control groups of 36 subjects divided into two gender groups of 17 females and 19 males. Employing a mixed research design, the researcher conducted this study within the framework of the relevance theory (RT) whose main assumption is that human beings are endowed with a biological ability to magnify the relevance of the incoming stimuli. Each of the four groups was given two different priming stimuli: audio-visual priming (T1) and syntactic priming (T2). The results showed that the priming effect was sheer distinct among SLI participants especially when retrieving typical responses (TR) in T1 and T2 with slight superiority of males over females. The results also revealed that non-SLI females showed stronger original response (OR) priming in T1 than males and that non-SLI males in T2 excelled in OR priming than females. Furthermore, the results suggested that the audio-visual priming has a stronger effect on SLI females than non-SLI females and that syntactic priming seems to have the same effect on the two groups (non-SLI and SLI females). The conclusion is that the priming effect varies according to gender and is not confined merely to non-SLI subjects.

Keywords : specific language impairment, relevance theory, audio-visual priming, syntactic priming, modern standard Arabic

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