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Position and color priming in briefly presented search arrays

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Introduction

In efficient visual search, priming of pop-out (PoP; Majkovic & Nakayama, 1994, 1996) is usually reported as a speeded response when a target feature is repeated on consecutive trials.

Feature facilitation accounts: Sensitization to features via short-term memory. Priming at perceptual level.

Post-perceptual accounts: PoP affects response times, not accuracy, via response repetition benefits, decision bias or other "late" effects.

Questions:

1. Do color and/or position repetitions increase accuracy at brief exposure durations?

2. If so, is a category weighting account viable as a model for TVA when applied within a TVA-framework (Bundesen, 1990)?

The experiment

We tried to replicate perceptual priming effects in an accuracy based design (Yashar & Lamy, 2010) while generating to alphanumeric stimuli. Our design also has the advantage of multiple responses (15 consonants), which minimizes any effects of response repetition and visuomotor effects, leaving the results more readily interpreted as perceptual effects.

We presented subjects with a 3x3 consonant matrix where a target would always occupy one of the four corner positions. The displays where present for 10-180 msec.

The subjects’ task was to report the odd-one-out letter by pressing the appropriate key on a keyboard. The target identity was determined by color and varied randomly (Figure 1).

Methods

Participants were 8 students at the University of Iceland (3 male, aged 20-28). Each subject participated in at least one block of 144 trials. Trials following incorrect responses were excluded from analyses. All subjects were naive to the purpose of the experiment.

Results

A 2x2 within subjects analysis revealed significant main effects of position and color repetition (p <0.001 and 0.003, respectively). No interaction was found between the two (p=0.619).

Position priming effects ranged from 2.5-11.4 pp, between subjects.

Color priming effects ranged from 1.7-11.8 pp, between subjects.

All subjects showed the same pattern of lowest accuracy under the “no repetition”-condition and highest accuracy under the “both repeated” condition. These within-subject differences ranged from 10-23 pp.

References


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