

Subliminal Affective Priming Effect on TV Lecture: Affective Conditioning or Affective Contrast Effect?

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The phenomenon of subliminal priming refers to that a previous stimulus of which people are unaware can influence people's subsequent lexical access or affective judgment via the spreading activation in their semantic networks. Subliminal priming effect cannot only be an important way to uncover the consciousness and unconsciousness processes, but also bear many empirical applications. Although past research revealed a lot of subliminal priming phenomena, there exist theoretical and technological disagreements still. One major debate is which effect on earth a subliminal affective prime will induce on the subsequent target: affective condition (the affective response to target is assimilated to that to probe) or affective contrast effect (the affective response to target is opposite to that to probe). In this study, participants were asked to watch a video tap embedded with subliminal

stimuli displaying a speech made by a stranger and then to make judgments to the speaker. The types of subliminal stimuli included word, animal picture, familiar face, and strange face, in each of which both affectively positive and negative items were included. The results showed that neither words nor animal pictures as subliminal stimuli had effect on the judgments to the speaker and the speech content. However, familiar faces induced affective contrast effect whereas strange faces affective conditioning effect on participants' judgments. These results imply that the type of affective priming effect is contingent on stimulus type.

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