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FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE AS A MODERATOR VARIABLE ON THE EFFECT OF PHONOLOGICAL CUE IN CHINESE CHARACTER NAMING

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the influences of character frequency and phonological information provided by a part of this character were investigated by a naming task, and we discussed lexical process in Chinese character naming. Experiment 1 modified Seidenberg's Chinese experiment and showed that phonological cue did not affect the error rates or reaction times of adult subjects' high frequency character naming, but did only have an effect on low frequency character naming. Therefore, it seems that phonology intervened, if any, the processing of characters only when they are of low frequency. It could be conceptualized that at least under high frequency condition characters were recognized on visual basis without phonological mediation. Experiment 2 showed similar results in children. Phonological encoding does not exist even in children who are learning Chinese. These results could not be explained by the traditional viewpoint that phonological encoding is necessary for lexical access.

Keywords: naming task, chinese character, frequency effect