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Bilingual Sentence Processing: An Examination of Context Effects and
Cross-Language Priming

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Abstract

Four experiments examined the effects of context in connected speech on cross-language priming in Spanish-English bilinguals. Participants in Experiment 1 listened to Spanish sentences and named Spanish and English targets, related or unrelated to a critical prime within the sentence. Experiment 2 was similar to Experiment 1, except that prior context was biased toward the critical prime. Experiments 3-4 were identical to Experiments 1-2, respectively, but with English sentences. Comparable cross-language priming was observed for Experiments 1-2 (L1-L2). Likewise, Experiments 3-4 (L2-L1) showed similar priming patterns. However, the priming effect was significantly higher for the L2-L1 language direction. Results are discussed in terms of language dominance mechanisms and the revised hierarchical model (Kroll & Stewart, 1994).

Key Words: Bilingualism, Bilingual Processing, Cross-language priming, Sentence Processing