



## Syntactic representations in bilinguals: Evidence from cross-linguistic priming

*Zuzanna Fleischer, Martin Pickering, Janet McLean (University of Edinburgh)*

We present a cross-linguistic priming study between Polish and English. The aim of the study was to investigate whether bilingual speakers have a common store for their languages in which lemmas, coming from different languages, are connected (Hartsuiker, Pickering & Veltkamp, 2004). Pairs of Polish-English bilinguals described picture cards in a dialogue game. One participant acted as a confederate and produced scripted sentences in Polish; the other naïve participant was instructed to produce a free description in English (Branigan, Pickering & Cleland, 2000). There were four prime conditions: active, passive, object-verb-subject (OVS) and baseline. The sentences in the confederate's description set were ordered in such a way that a prime sentence was always followed by a target description from the naïve participant's description set. The results indicated that naïve participants tended to use a passive structure in English after previously hearing the confederate use a Polish passive or OVS prime. This priming effect lends support to the shared-syntax account of syntactic representations in bilinguals. Our results can also be interpreted in relation to cross-linguistic priming occurring between structures with dissimilar word orders but with parallel patient focus (Heydel & Murray, 2000). Therefore, it is possible to view these findings as an indication of the conceptual structure being involved in priming across languages.

### References:

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