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Effect of word length on updating working memory contents

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Abstract

Though working memory deals with different types of contents, the vast majority of studies on working memory updating have been conducted on non-sense syllables and numbers. The present study aims to understand the updating process of words, particularly, whether word length increases the response latencies for updating. The study hypothesized updating of longer words to be more time consuming than shorter words. A modified version of the working memory updating paradigm proposed by Artuso & Palladino (2011) is used for the study. A within-subject experimental design was employed. Repeated measures ANOVA of response latencies across conditions of 3, 4 and 5 letter word updating, found no significant differences in reaction times on the basis of word length. The involvement of chunking and other long term memory processes can be cited as the reason for this.