

Rasha Abdel Rahman, HU Berlin

Semantic knowledge shapes the perception and identification of faces and objects

Accessing semantic information is an elementary component of the processes involved in the identification and naming of common objects and familiar persons. However, little is known about the influence of different amounts of stored knowledge on these operations. I will present data from behavioral and electrophysiological studies examining how semantic knowledge affects the perception, identification and naming of faces and objects. Across various experiments and tasks, semantic knowledge affected early perceptual processes, as indicated by a modulation of the P100 amplitude, and later aspects of semantic processing, as indicated by a modulation of the N400 amplitude. These findings suggest that semantic background information facilitates the perceptual processing of faces and objects and enhances identification.