
Camille CORNU1, Lynne DUNCAN2, Swendoline MAHE1, Séverine CASALIS1
1 SCALab UMR CNRS 8193, Université de Lille, France
2 Language and Learning Lab, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK

At school:
L2 learning mostly via written modality.

Thursday Friday Saturday

Tuesday Monday Sunday

Modality effect in L2: Written words better recognized than spoken ones?

Same letters but, some different phonemes

Modality effect: specific to L2 learning or general to schooling - also present in L1?

Transfer between modalities:
Better recognition of words in one modality if they have already been recognized in the other?

If this transfer exists, it could be a help for students.

Importance of L2 learning

What about dyslexic students, who have difficulties processing written information?

OBJECTIVES

Objective A: To highlight a modality effect in L2 word recognition and a possible transfer from one modality to the other.

Objective B: To determine if these modality effects and transfer could also appear in L1.

Both include a comparison of dyslexic and control performance

Issues and perspectives beyond the academic world.

Recognition of words in one modality was found to help their recognition in the other modality for English as an L2 in both control and dyslexic students. If confirmed with a larger sample, this implies that it could be beneficial to student learning if English teachers in France adapt their pedagogical strategies, mainly by presenting a new word in both modalities, in order to help their students to strongly associate oral and written form of this word.

Moreover, dyslexic students recognise L1 spoken words better than written ones due to their reading difficulties, which prevent them from learning the written forms of rare words via reading. But, they recognise better written words than spoken ones in L2, suggesting that, even for those who have reading difficulties, spoken words are more difficult to process in a foreign language.

Take Home Message

In English as an L2, French students show a modality effect (written words more accurately recognised than spoken ones), which doesn't exist in their native language. Only dyslexic students show a modality effect in their L1, with spoken words better recognized than written ones, due to their reading difficulties).

This probably means that English teachers have to change their pedagogical strategies in order to improve their student’s proficiency in L2, by helping them to associate oral and written form of words in English.