Emotion Words Affect Detection of Emotion Change
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Introduction
• Previous research demonstrates that emotion words affect perceptual judgments of emotion (Fugate et al., 2008; Lindquist et al. 2006).
• It is unknown whether emotion words play a role at earlier stages of cognitive processing, however, such as the detection of visual changes.
• In this study, we primed participants with control and emotion words, then exposed them to rapid sequences of emotional faces that incrementally changed from one emotion to another.
• Participants indicated the point at which they detected a change in the face’s emotional content.
• N = 15 undergraduates at UMassD participated for research credit.

Hypothesis
• We predicted that when participants were primed with an emotion (compared to a control) word they should perceive a face as representative of that emotion for longer (later image).

Stimuli
• 14 rapid sequences of faces that incrementally change from displaying one emotional extreme to another (e.g. scowling-relaxing, scowling-frowning, smiling-relaxing, disgusted-smiling, frightened-frowning).

Procedure
• Participants were shown the sequences in random order but each appeared twice; once primed with a corresponding emotion word, once with a control.
• Participants were instructed to press an assigned computer key as soon as they noticed the face change in emotion.

Results
• For most of the sequences, participants stopped the movie at an earlier time when primed with the congruent emotion word compared to the control word.

Analyses
• We used rmANOVAs comparing when (at what image) participants stopped the sequences when the trial was primed with a congruent emotion word compared to a control word. Significant interactions were followed up with dependent t-tests for each image of the sequence between word conditions.
• We analyzed all six emotion words (with their control) separately.

Conclusions
• Contrary to our hypothesis, we found that emotion words actually tend to increase one’s sensitivity to facial changes.
• Although opposite in direction to our prediction, our results still show what emotion words affect basic detection of emotion change.

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