Picture naming

Picture naming has become an important experimental paradigm in cognitive psychology. To name a picture can be considered an elementary process in the use of language. Thus, its chronometric analysis elucidates cognitive structures and processes that underlie speaking. Essentially, these analyses compare picture naming with reading, picture categorizing, and word categorizing. Furthermore, techniques of double stimulation such as the paradigms of priming and of Stroop-like interference are used. In this article, recent results obtained with these methods are reviewed and discussed with regard to five hypotheses about the cognitive structures that are involved in picture naming. Beside the older hypotheses of internal coding systems with only verbal or only pictorial format, the hypotheses of an internal dual code with a pictorial and a verbal component, of a common abstract code with logogen and pictogen subsystems, and the so-called lexical hypothesis are discussed. The latter postulates two main components: an abstract semantic memory which, nevertheless, also subserves picture processing, and a lexicon that carries out the huge amount of word processing without semantic interpretation that is necessary in hearing, reading, speaking and writing [1].

[1]
Glaser WR. Picture naming. Cognition. 1992 Mar;42(1-3):61-105. Review. PubMed PMID: 1582161.

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