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The effect of aesthetic appeal on words' memorability

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Abstract

Positive emotional responses triggered by pleasant experiences can aid memorization ability in humans. However, little is known about the effect of aesthetically pleasing experiences on linguistic memory. To experimentally investigate whether aesthetic appeal promotes word memorability, study participants rated a set of artificial words on their aesthetic appeal and were asked to actively memorize them. In line with the predictions, higher-rated words were significantly likelier to be recollected and, interestingly, tended to contain similar patterns of phonemes. This suggests that phonemes contain an inherent aesthetic value and that linguistic memorization is aided by the presence of such aesthetically appealing sound patterns. This encourages further exploration of the effect of aesthetic perception on linguistic processing and allows for more objective approaches to assessing languages' general appeal. Additionally, the results might have implications for the marketing industry where they allow for more efficient marketing strategies directly affecting their audience's memory.