Abstract

Experimental methods in language comprehension research can be divided into two groups. Off-line memory methods assess the resulting mental representation. They are not suitable to investigate the processes, which continuously operate on the different levels of linguistic structure during comprehension. On-line chronometric methods allow the investigation of component processes of reading as they work. Since comprehension processes are presently emphasized, chronometric methods are predominant in psycholinguistic research. In this paper we review several experimental paradigms used in psycholinguistic research. We discuss the theoretical assumptions, general procedure, advantages, and potential confoundings of each one. The review of research paradigms suggests there is no single perfect method. Multiple methods should be used to assess theoretical predictions.

Keywords

Language, psycholinguistics, written language, research methods, experimental methods