Abstract

An experimental study was conducted with a sample of 143 Psychology students. The main aim was to examine the effects of the affective valence on the recognition of pictures with a short interval of retention. With this aim 90 pictures of IAPS (International Affective Picture System) representative of the regions corresponding to a level of neutral arousal and high and low valence in the two-dimensional affective space were used. Results did not show influence of the affective valence on the recognition memory when measures of accuracy (A’) and response bias (B’D) were examined. Nevertheless, it was found that, when response times were analyzed, faster decisions of correct recognition took place for pleasant pictures that for unpleasant ones and also for old pictures that for new ones. Moreover, in participants with rapid responses a significant interaction between the valence of the pictures and their status was found. This interaction was not observed in participants with slow responses. These results suggest that the effects of valence on the recognition memory can occur when it is assumed that familiarity is acting mainly, in line with the results found in recent works in which both behavioral (Clark-Foos and Marsh, 2008 ) as neural correlates (Mickley and Kensinger, 2008) data were analyzed.