

Position-specific productivity in compound word processing

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Models of compound processing differ in their assumptions concerning the role of the constituents in word recognition. Especially in languages with productive compounding, decomposition could facilitate the reading of new combinations. In German, some stems enter into compounds more often in first position (e.g., *Sandhügel*, *Sandburg*, *Sandkasten*) and only seldom in the second position (e.g., *Dünensand*), while it is vice versa for other stems. We termed this characteristic *position-specific productivity (PSP)* and examined its effect on compound processing.

We identified stems occurring more often in first position (PSP1) and stems occurring more often in second position (PSP2). We selected compounds in which those stems either appeared congruent with PSP (e.g., PSP1-position1: *Sandhügel*; PSP2-position2: *Notizheft*) or incongruent (e.g., PSP1-position 2: *Dünensand*; PSP2-position1: *Heftklammer*). Thirty participants conducted a masked priming LDT on these compounds, primed by either one of their constituents. Results indicate an effect of PSP congruency, but no effect of prime constituent: compounds with stems in their more productive position were identified faster, but PSP congruent constituent were not more efficient primes. We conclude that the reading system is sensitive to productivity of compound constituents, and this seems to be a morpho-semantic effect.

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