Must analysis of meaning follow analysis of form? A time course analysis

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Abstract: Many models of word recognition assume that processing proceeds sequentially from analysis of form to analysis of meaning. In the context of morphological processing, some interpret the apparent absence of differences in recognition latencies to targets (RAT) in form and semantically similar (ratty-RAT) and in form similar and semantically dissimilar (ratify-RAT) prime contexts as consistent with this claim. We examined the time course over which degree of semantic similarity between morphologically related pairs influences recognition in the forward masked priming variant of the lexical decision paradigm. Across a range of SOAs., latencies were significantly faster after semantically similar than dissimilar primes, Results limit the scope of form-then-semantics models of recognition and demonstrate that semantic context influences even the very early stages of recognition.