Retrieving semantic information from faces and voices.

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Abstract: Semantic information is more likely to be retrieved from recognized faces than from recognized voices. Earlier studies which investigated the recall of biographical information following person recognition used famous people's voices and faces. The present study was designed with the aim of controlling more strictly the exposure frequency to both domains of stimuli (voices and faces). Participants had first to associate semantic information (i.e., occupation) with unknown faces or voices. As stimulus distinctiveness could improve semantic information retrieval, participants were presented with typical versus distinctive stimuli from either domain. When later cued by the targets faces or voices, participants provided significantly more semantic information from faces than from voices. Moreover, distinctive stimuli yield to a significantly better recall of occupations than typical stimuli. No significant interaction appeared between Domain of stimuli and Distinctiveness. These results and their implications for current Interactive Activation and Competition person recognition models are discussed.