

INVOLVEMENT OF PERCEPTUAL AND ACTION IN CHINESE CONCEPTS UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract: The theory of Embodied Cognition postulates a tight link between concepts and the embodied experience in the real world. In recent years, numerous studies have examined how sensory and/or motor experiences are involved in understanding concepts across different languages. However, such studies have primarily concentrated on alphabetic languages, with little evidence of the logographic language Chinese. The present study examined how sensory and action experiences are involved in understanding Chinese concepts. 209 adults of Chinese natives were asked to rate the degree of involvement of the six perceptual modalities (auditory, gustatory, haptic, interoceptive, olfactory, and visual) and five action effectors (Foot/leg, Hand/arm, Head, Mouth/throat, and Torso) in understanding Chinese concepts. The present study has identified visual, auditory, and olfactory as dominant dimensions of Chinese concepts according to the rating scores. There are close relationships between perceptual modalities and action effectors. Rating scores of olfactory are lower compared to the visual scores, but the ratings of olfactory and visual are positively correlated. Head action is a key action effector, and it is positively correlated with auditory. The research findings indicate the utility of both perceptual and action strength in facilitating concept development in Chinese. The above results add evidence to the embodiment of language processing.

Keywords: Embodied Cognition; vocabulary rating; sensory; motor;