



Máster Universitario en
Neurociencia Cognitiva
y del Comportamiento

Talk by Dr. Inmaculada Fajardo "How adults with and without deafness process idioms"

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How adults with and without deafness process idioms: Direct retrieval or compositional analysis?

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Little is known about how individuals with deafness process some kinds of figurative language like idioms whose meaning could be directly retrieved from memory when they are very familiar (as opposed to the compositional analysis of each individual idiom word). Direct retrieval could benefit readers who rely more in direct lexical access like people with prelingual deafness (Belanguer & Rayner, 2015). This proposal describes an ongoing study in which 24 adults with and without prelingual deafness read familiar and literally plausible idioms (break the ice) embedded in literal vs. figurative context. Idiom's congruency was also manipulated by including a non-related word at the end of the idiom (target word: ice/pulp). Participants eye movements on the target and post-target regions were monitored. Results showed a main effect of group for the target and posttarget areas with hearing participants showing shorter fixation times than participants with deafness. We also observed a facilitative idiomacity effect for both groups in the post-target area which was fixated shorter when it was preceded by idiomatic than by literal contexts. The incongruency effect in the target region (higher fixation times in the incongruent words) was significant for both groups in the literal context condition



but not in the idiom condition. Altogether, these results suggest that both groups relied more on direct retrieval of idioms than on the compositional analysis. Nonetheless, when the context induces a literal interpretation, participants were able to change to an idiom compositional analysis (word by word) as shown by slower reading times.