

WHEN EMOTIONS CLASH FAST: PICTURE- PICTURE PRIMING TASK

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional conflict reflects difficulty shifting between opposing emotions. Affective priming offers a way to examine this process by showing how prior emotional stimuli affect responses. Findings indicate that negative emotions tend to dominate and linger—evidence of a negativity bias (Nadav et al., under review; Rozin & Royzman, 2001).

OBJECTIVE

We aimed to replicate previous findings (Nadav et al., under review) showing a negative bias and a congruency effect only for positive targets. The key modification—presenting both prime and target for 100 ms—was introduced to rule out alternative explanations related to processing time.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: 41 with normal/corrected vision; response keys counterbalanced.

Task Design: Within-subject (Fig. 1).

- Prime valence: positive, negative, neutral
- Target valence: positive or negative
- Conditions: congruent, incongruent, neutral

Stimuli:

Pictures from CAP-D (Moyal et al., 2018): fear, sadness, happiness, peacefulness, neutral.

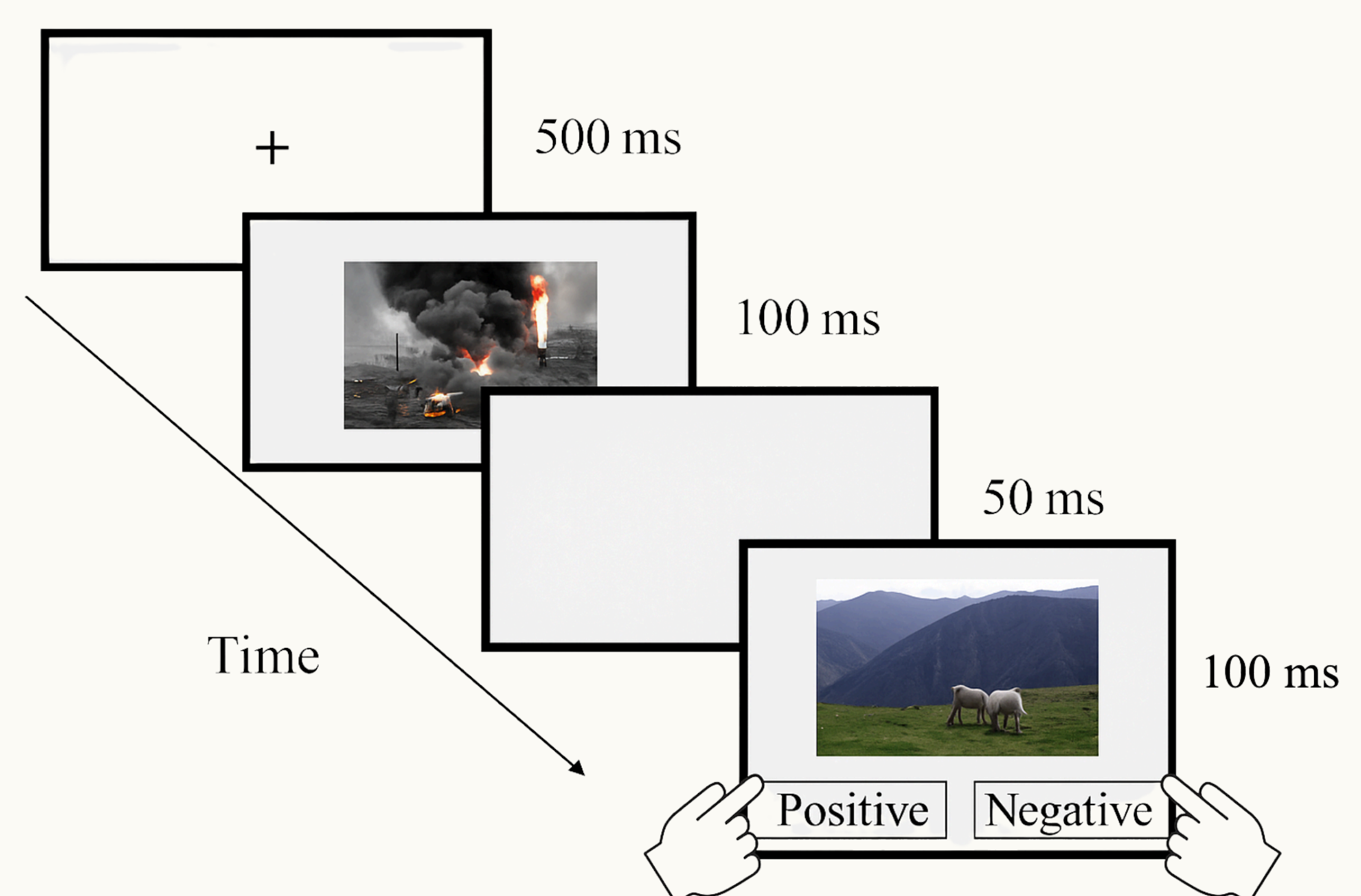


Figure 1. Experimental Trial.

RESULTS

Mean RT (Fig. 2):

- Target: $F(1, 40) = 4.914, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .109$
- Congruency: $F(2, 80) = 15.796, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .285$
- Target \times Congruency: $F(2, 80) = 8.933, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .182$

RT Variability (Fig. 3):

- Valence \times Congruency interaction: $F(2, 80) = 4.281, p = 0.017, \eta^2_p = 0.097$

CONCLUSION

Emotional conflict was observed even with brief (100 ms) exposure, as congruency effects appeared only for positive targets—replicating previous findings. By equalizing prime-target durations, the current study rules out processing-time explanations, strengthening evidence for a negativity bias.

References:

- Moyal, N., Henik, A., & Anholt, G. E. (2018). Categorized affective pictures database (CAP-D). *Journal of Cognition*, 1(1), Article 41.
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- Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(4), 296–320.

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