

# **The effect of emotional stimulus properties on the semantic negative priming effect**

## *Abstract*

In the last few years preattentive processes of emotional evaluation have repeatedly been related to attentional processes. This approach is the matter this thesis is going into. The concept of “selection for action” investigates attentional selection on the level of response choice. This was considered to be especially suited for a combination with the concept of emotion as an “action disposition”, which stresses the immediate access of emotion to the response systems.

This has been realized using the semantic version of a negative identity priming task. Theoretically this paradigm combines excitatory and inhibitory processes of selective attention. The design is based on behavioral data as well as electrophysiological measures (event related potentials).

The data couldn't replicate the negative priming effect. The event related potentials give some hints, why this was the case. It seems, that the experimental manipulation did not influence response selection processes alone, but included other process levels as well (which may be identified as processes of stimulus evaluation). Furthermore there is evidence for effects of response selection, which rules out the conclusion, that the experimental manipulation failed completely.

The conclusions of this study have to be considered carefully, but nevertheless they are a clear hint for further research. Ambiguous results concerning the semantic negative priming effect might originate in this confounding of processes of response selection and stimulus evaluation. If this hypothesis turns out to be true, existing paradigms have to be reconsidered.