

Do Chinese Viewers Process Ads Differently?



The Research Team



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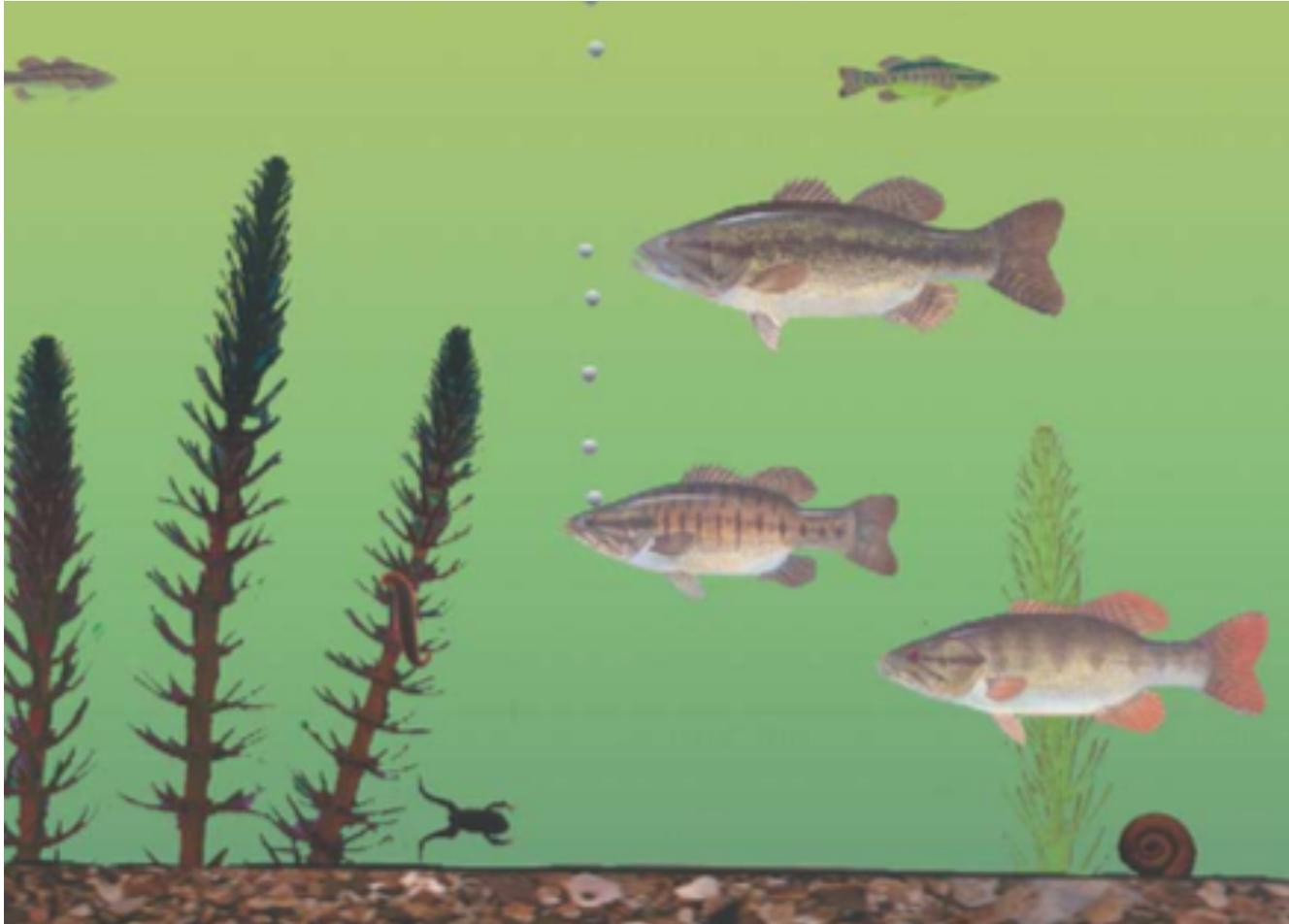


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Advertisers Localize Ads to Make Them More Culturally Relevant



Is Visual Attention a Cultural Universal?



What do you see when you look at this picture?

Different attentional strategies:

- ▶ Westerners employ a *feature-driven analytic* processing, and tend to attend to the *focal features of objects*.
- ▶ Easterners prefer a *context-oriented holistic* processing, and tend to attend to *objects and their contexts*.

How Should You Design Your Ad for a Chinese Audience?





Our Experiment:

What Attracts the Attention of Chinese Viewers?

Methods: unbiased stimuli



Manipulations on emotional valence

a. 1.



2.



3.

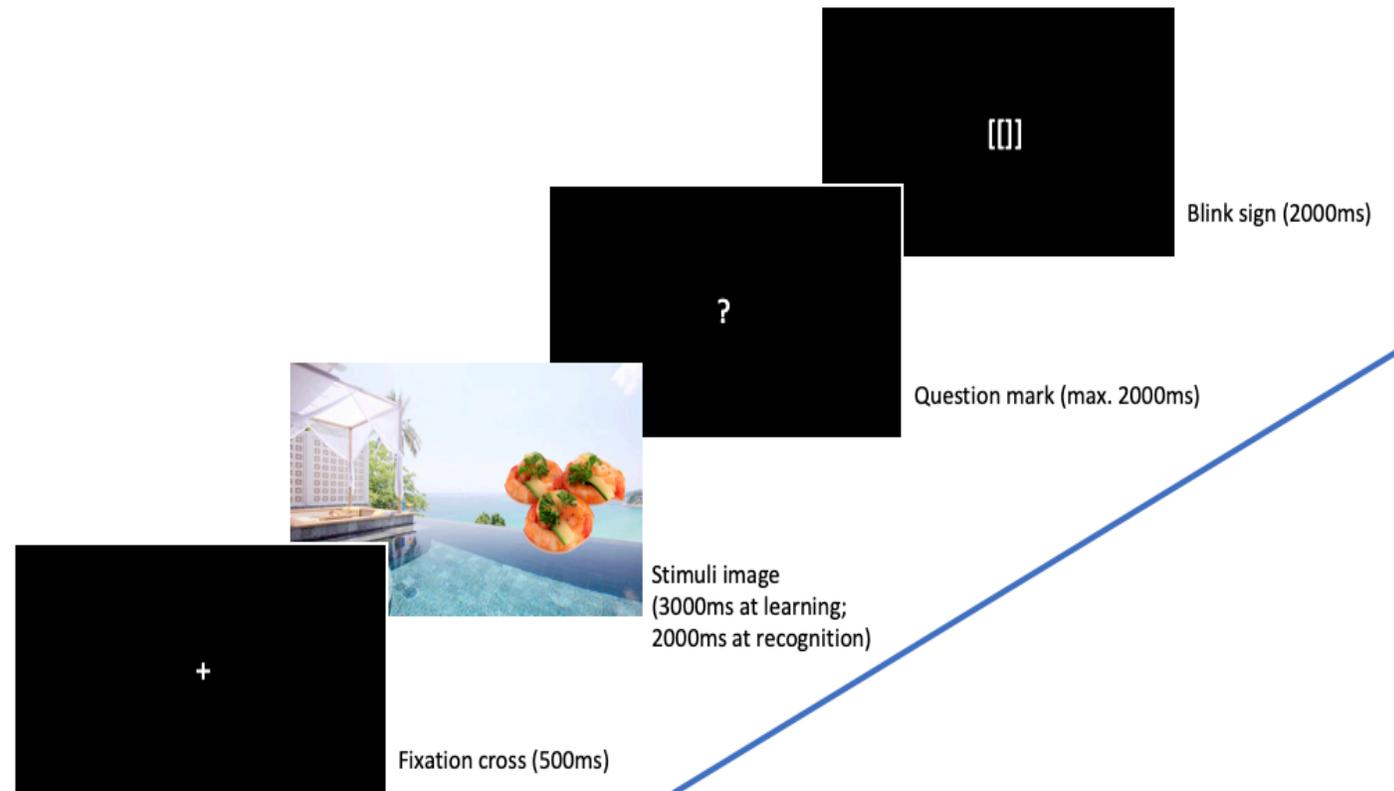


4.



Methods: Eye Tracking, EEG, and Visual Recognition

Viewing phase: 120 composite image stimuli



Methods: Eye Tracking, EEG, and Visual Recognition

Recognition phase: backgrounds and objects presented separately

b. 1.



2.



Sample: Chinese versus Western (Australian) Students

General criteria:

* 18-30 years old, healthy.

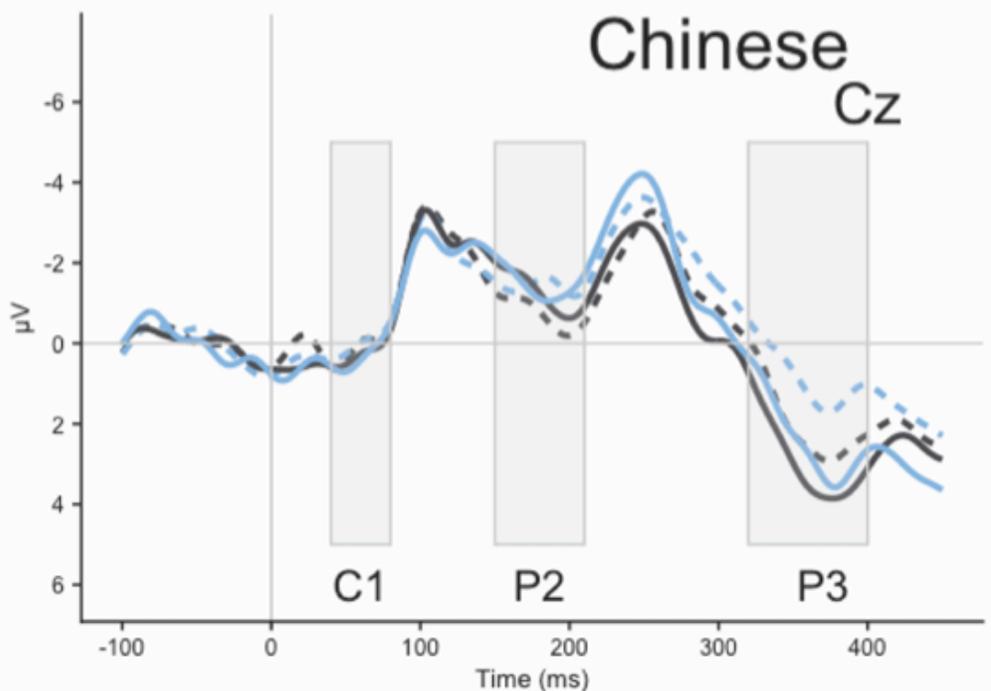
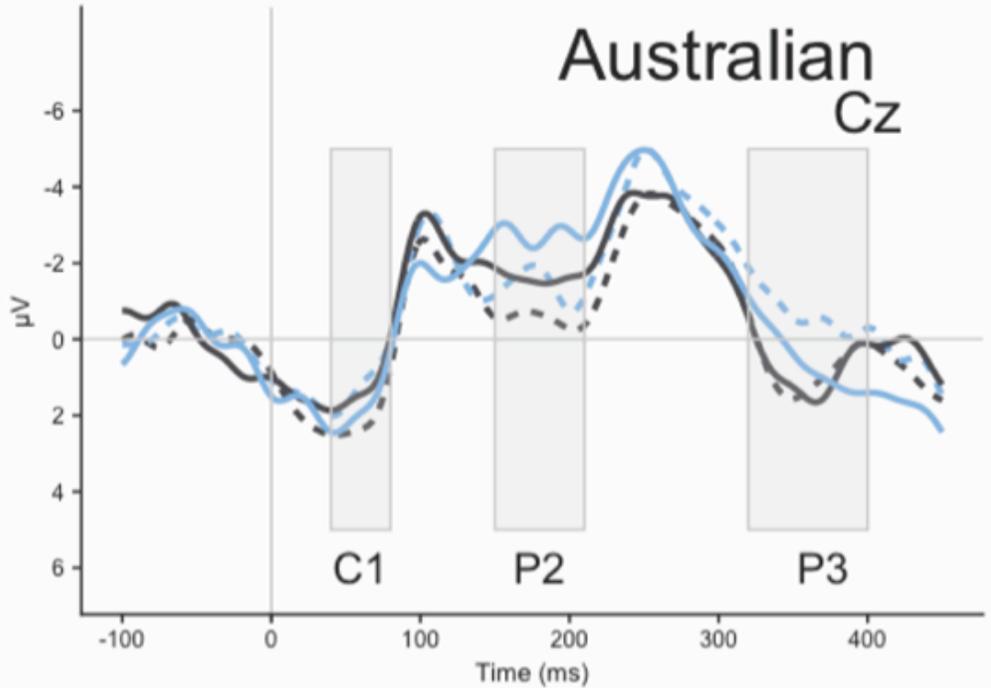
Cultural criteria:

Chinese: international students in Australia, living in a western country for no more than 18 months.

Australian: local recruitment, living in an eastern culture for no more than 18 months, both parents from a western cultural background.



Key findings



Key Finding: Cultural Differences in EEG During Early Viewing

Results consistent with general findings in attention:

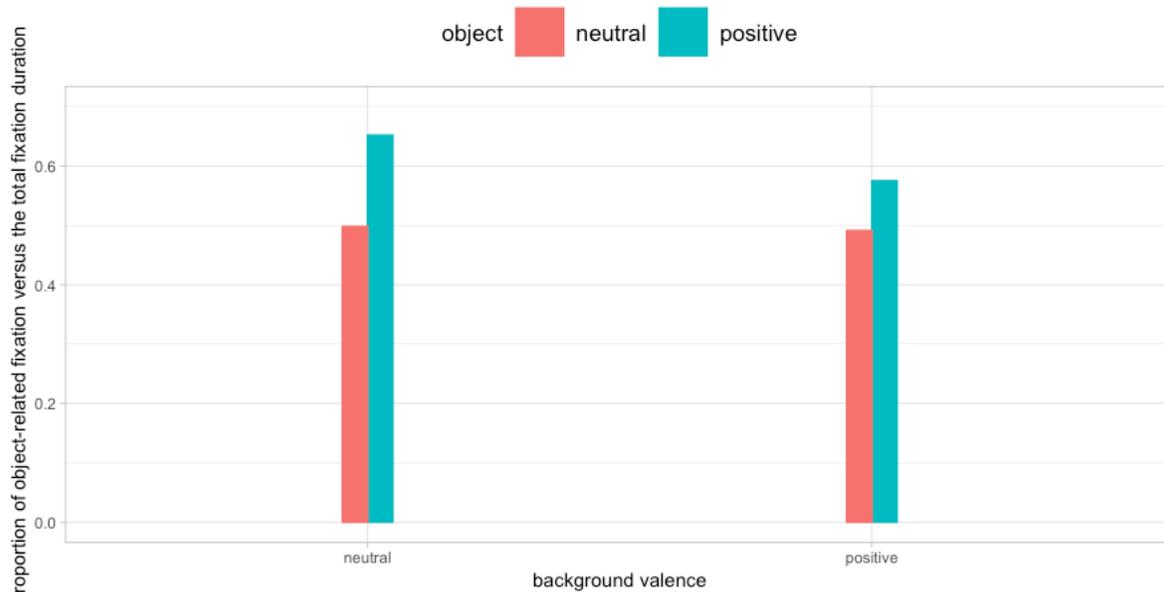
- Images with different characteristics induce different levels of brain activities

AND,

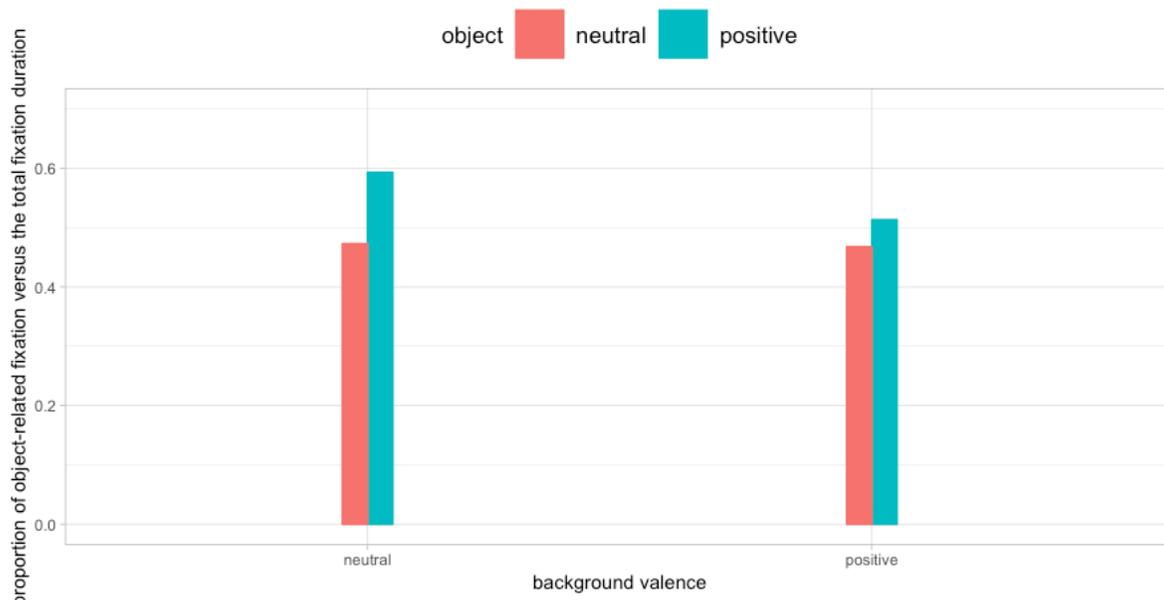
There are significant cultural differences even at very early stages of processing.



Fixation Duration Modelled by Image Type and Valence



Fixation Number Modelled by Image Type and Valence



Key finding: No Cultural Difference in Attention (Measured by Eye- Tracking) to Emotion

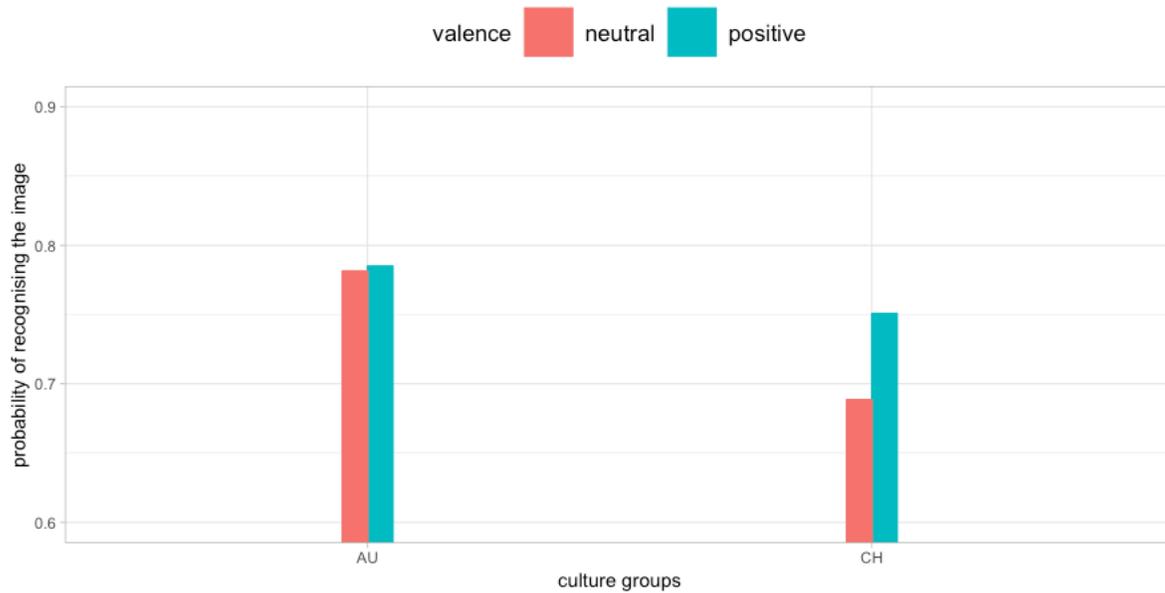
Results consistent with general findings in attention:

- Positive objects attract more and longer fixations.
- Especially so when the background is neutral

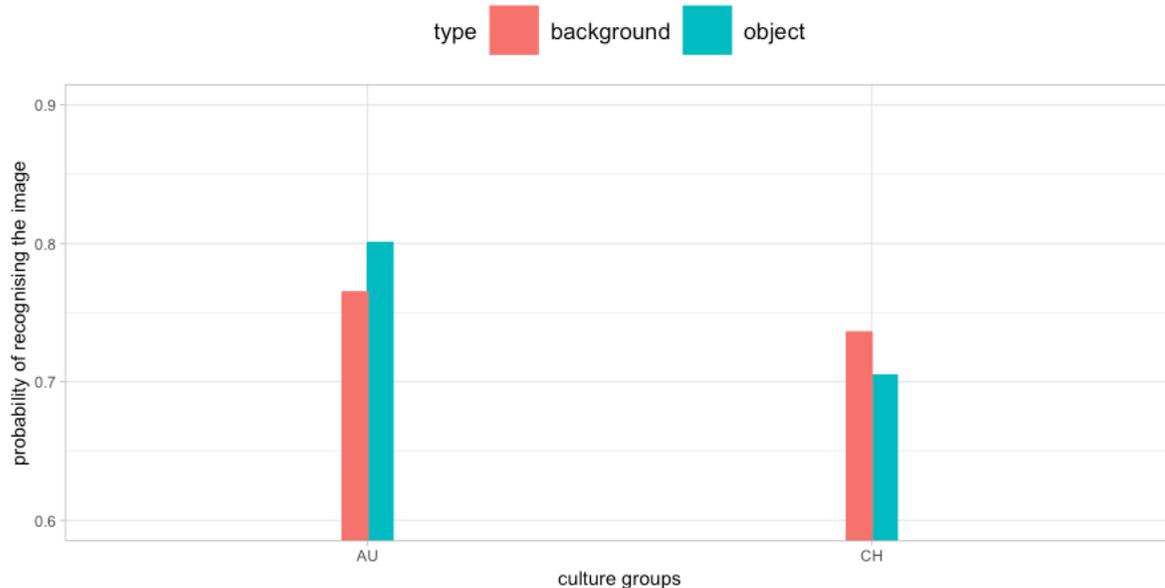
AND,

There are no cultural differences in this pattern.

Recognition Modelled by Object Valence and Group

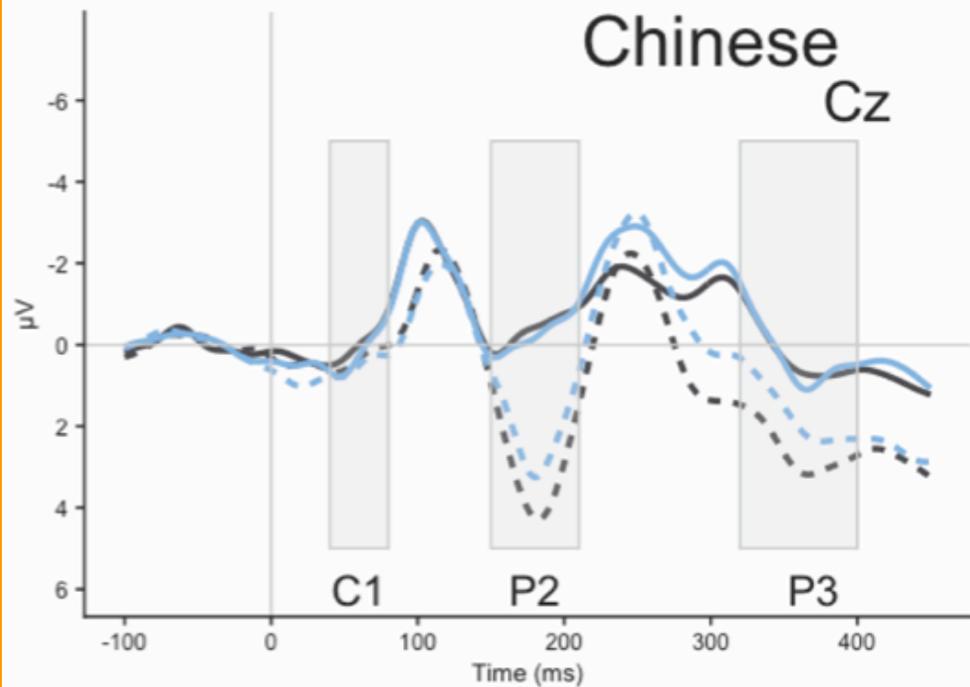
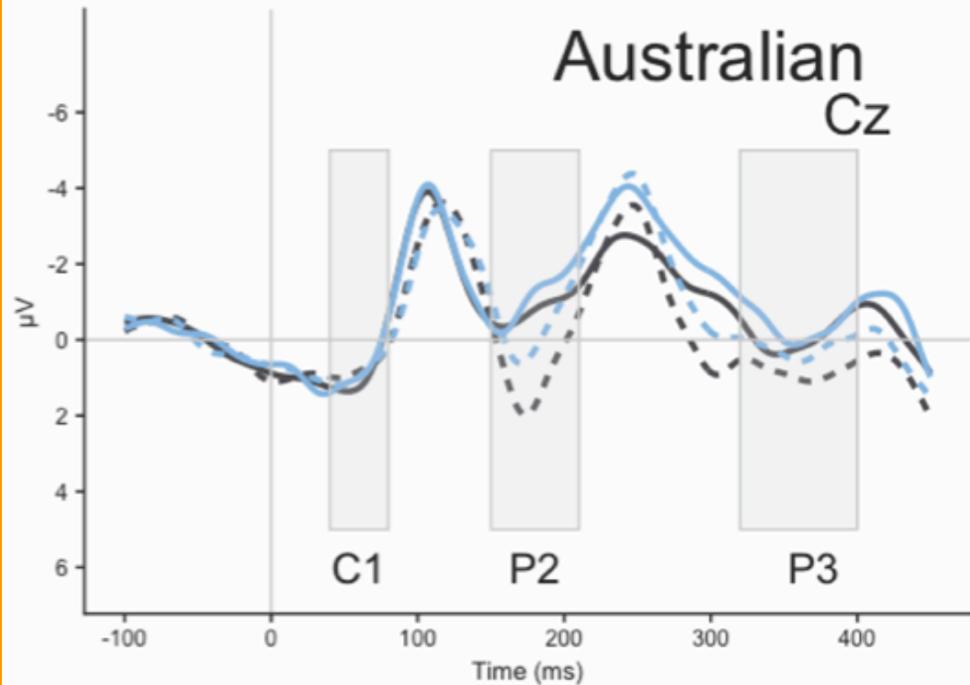


Recognition Modelled by Image Type and Group



Key finding: Cultural Differences in Attention Had Consequences for Memory, Measured by Recognition

- Overall, Australians performed better than Chinese, because they paid attention mainly to the foreground objects, which meant they had fewer things to remember later.
- Australians recognized objects better than backgrounds.
 - But if the object was positive and therefore attracted attention across cultures, Chinese were more likely to recognize it.
- Chinese recognized backgrounds better than objects, because they paid more attention to the context.



Additional Finding: Differences in EEG During Recognition Processing

- Object and background images induced different levels of brain activities as compared to background
 - ESPECIALLY so, in the Chinese participants
- isolated objects without context might be ‘deviant’ to Chinese participants.

Stimuli Conditions

- old background
- new background
- - - new object
- - - old object

Findings



Implications

Chinese viewers have a 'holistic' tendency

- Preference for 'gist' processing
- Less sensitive to local information (foreground objects)
- Weaker memory for individual elements (foreground branding)
- A 'deviant' perception for isolated objects out of context

- **More real estate for branding:**
Distinctive branding assets and potential category entry points can be advertised in the context/background as well as in the foreground of ads
- **Use the context:**
Advertisers should show information about the brand in the background context of the ad, to create a strong overall gist.
- **Repeat information, or add to it:**
Advertisers could repeat the same messages in both locations, or if they are fortunate enough to have multiple unique and famous assets, they could show two or more at the same time.

Questions?

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