

## The cognate advantage in picture-identification in bilingual children from elementary into middle school years

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Bilingual children show sensitivity to cognates from a young age in receptive (Pérez, Peña, & Bedore, 2010) and productive vocabulary tasks (Sheng et al., 2016). However, the effect of cognates on children's receptive vocabulary skills in particular shows considerable variation, and may be absent in some individuals (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012; Potapova, Blumenfeld, & Pruitt-Lord, 2016) and groups of children (e.g. Floccia et al., 2018). Two possible sources of variation in this effect are children's age and relative language exposure: the strength of the cognate advantage on picture-identification increases with age (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012) and decreases with increased exposure to a language (Robinson Anthony et al., 2020). Longitudinal analyses of the effect of cognates on receptive skill in both of bilingual children's languages are rare. In this study, we address this gap by viewing the effect of cognates on picture-identification (receptive) performance in French and English, cross-sectionally and longitudinally in children attending an international program at a state school in France, from 1st to 8th grade. We find that relative language exposure predicts the direction of the cognate advantage in these children; however, differently from findings for bilingual children's picture-naming (production), children with balanced exposure do not show a cognate advantage in either language. Furthermore, regardless of these children's relative exposure, growth in the cognate advantage over time was limited to English picture-identification. Another finding is that the onset and growth of the cognate advantage for these children was later than predicted, beginning after the start of elementary school and extending into middle school. We conclude that the absence of an effect in balanced exposure children may derive from the different skills involved in receptive and productive vocabulary tasks. With respect to developmental trajectory of the cognate advantage in these children, we consider differences in the nature and distribution of cognates across language pairs and the factors that support children's ability to use cognates in vocabulary tasks. Finally, we discuss possible implications for practices in the dual-language classroom.

### References

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