

## **The cognitive costs and benefits of encoding and interpreting colour adjectives**

Euro-XPrag Collaborative Research Project

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The work proposed in this project consists of a series of experiments investigating whether and when people might use colour adjectives redundantly. For example, when somebody asks 'Could you pass me the red coat?' in a context where there is only one coat. Our hypothesis is that, because colour is so visually salient, it might be that at least in certain contexts, it is cognitively cheaper to encode a colour adjective than to determine whether its use is informative or redundant in the given context.

In order to investigate this question, we proposed to carry out various production experiments where participants have to make simple requests for an object and we manipulate different conditions that should have an effect on whether participants chose to use colour adjectives informatively or redundantly. Also, we proposed to run an eye-tracking experiment investigating the interpretation of colour adjectives, in particular whether participants might take longer to identify an object when it has been described with a redundant colour adjective (as in the above example).

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The purpose of my visit to Groningen was to complete our eye-tracking study on the comprehension of colour adjectives in English and Spanish. In particular, we were looking to run the last condition of the experiment with native speakers of Spanish. Fortunately, we were able to recruit 23 participants, which was enough to complete the study. We also decided to run one more task investigating the production of redundant colour adjectives in Spanish.

Overall, it was a very productive trip and we are now in a position to write up two papers, one on the use of colour adjectives in requests and another on the comprehension of this type of adjectives in English and Spanish. We plan to do this in the next few months.

Thanks for your support.

