Does grammatical gender affect perception? A statistical modelling approach towards settling a psycholinguistic issue
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The grammatical notion of gender has attracted substantial attention from scholars. The debate over whether grammatical gender can be viewed as an epiphenomenon that developed partly as a result of a pervasive human tendency to categorise, or the category has a real cognitive status, suggesting a connection between grammatical gender categories and natural gender, has divided scholars for centuries.

In order to shed light on any possible cognitive underpinnings of gender-related constructs and thus further our understanding of how native speakers of languages, both gendered and non-gendered, interpret experiences and how these interpretations interact with cognition, a three-phase experiment was designed and implemented. Native speakers of five different languages were involved, with the languages representing three divergent language families: Indo-European (Germanic and Romance), Uralic-Altaic (Finno-Ugric) and Afro-Asiatic (Semitic). Comparisons of the possible effects of a grammatical category, such as gender, in these five languages were instrumental in unveiling how linguistic categories may affect cognitive categories.

The formal analysis of the data used techniques based on random effects models, in particular logistic regression. The goal of the model was to assess the propensity, if any, of a set of neutral stimuli, both as text and as image, to generate, through adjectives, responses systematically favouring a perception at least suggestive of an association with a particular sex.

WHEN: Wednesday 1st May 2013, 11:00am – 12:00pm
WHERE: CSIRO EcoSciences Precinct, 41 Boggo Rd, Dutton Park
Whitsunday Room, Level 4, Block A

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RSVP by Friday 26th April is essential – email: r.landor@griffith.edu.au