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Conceptual Gender vs. Grammatical Gender: Exploring Implicit and Explicit Object Categorization in Turkish and French Speakers

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Abstract

Grammatical gender (GG) affects object categorization (e.g., Samuel et al., 2019). This study is among the first to examine the extent of this effect using both implicit and explicit tasks. Speakers of French (GG language) and Turkish (genderless) completed an Implicit Association Test (IAT) about classifying faces based on their gender (female/male) and objects conceptually associated with a specific gender (e.g., necktie) based on a criterion unrelated to gender (tool/clothing item). Participants also completed an explicit task of attributing gender to those objects and a survey assessing sexist attitudes. Turkish speakers were only affected by conceptual gender (CG) whereas French speakers showed the effect of CG in their explicit gender attributions and of both GG and CG in their IAT responses. These effects were stronger for participants who were high in their sexist attitudes. Thus, GG implicitly interferes with object categorization, and individual differences in attitudes may modulate this effect.