



Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



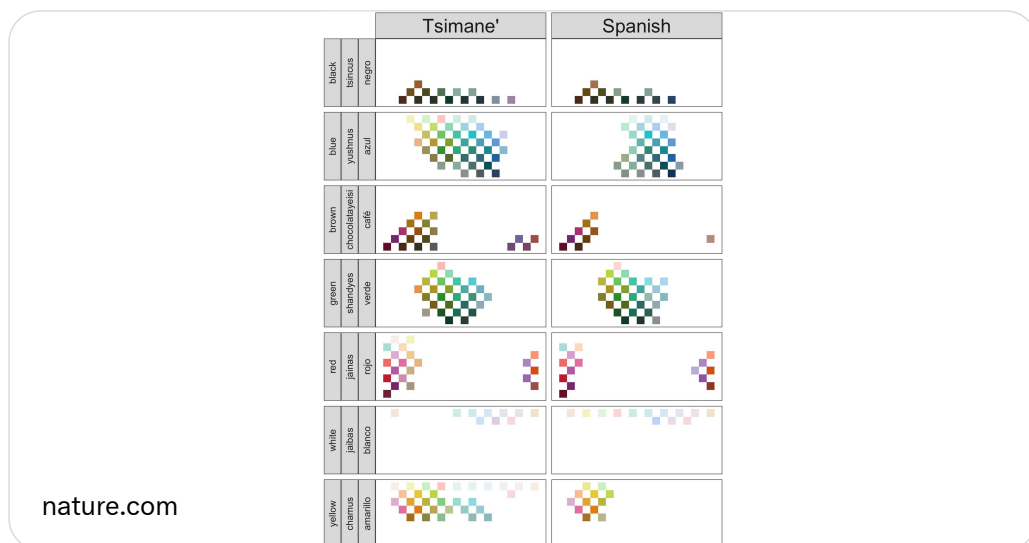
What makes a word easy to access?

Evidence from monolinguals suggests that word frequency or age of acquisition drive lexical access ease.


But what if you are bilingual?


 [nature.com/articles/s4159...](https://www.nature.com/articles/s4159...)

 Below



 5

 42

 168



Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



For bilinguals, it has been suggested that access to a word depends on your overall proficiency in that language first: the more proficient you are in a language as a whole, the easier access is to all words in that language (e.g. Gollan et al, 2008)

 2



 5





Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



Separating the roles of proficiency and frequency has been hard to study given that translations of words tend to have similar frequencies in similar cultures (i.e., we talk about similar things).

Looking at speakers of culturally different languages can provide answers.



Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



Tsimane' speakers (from Bolivian Amazon) don't talk much about color. When they move to Spanish-speaking towns, they encounter color words more frequently in Spanish.

So we can ask whether they will have easier access to color words in Spanish (L2) or Tsimane' (proficient L1)?

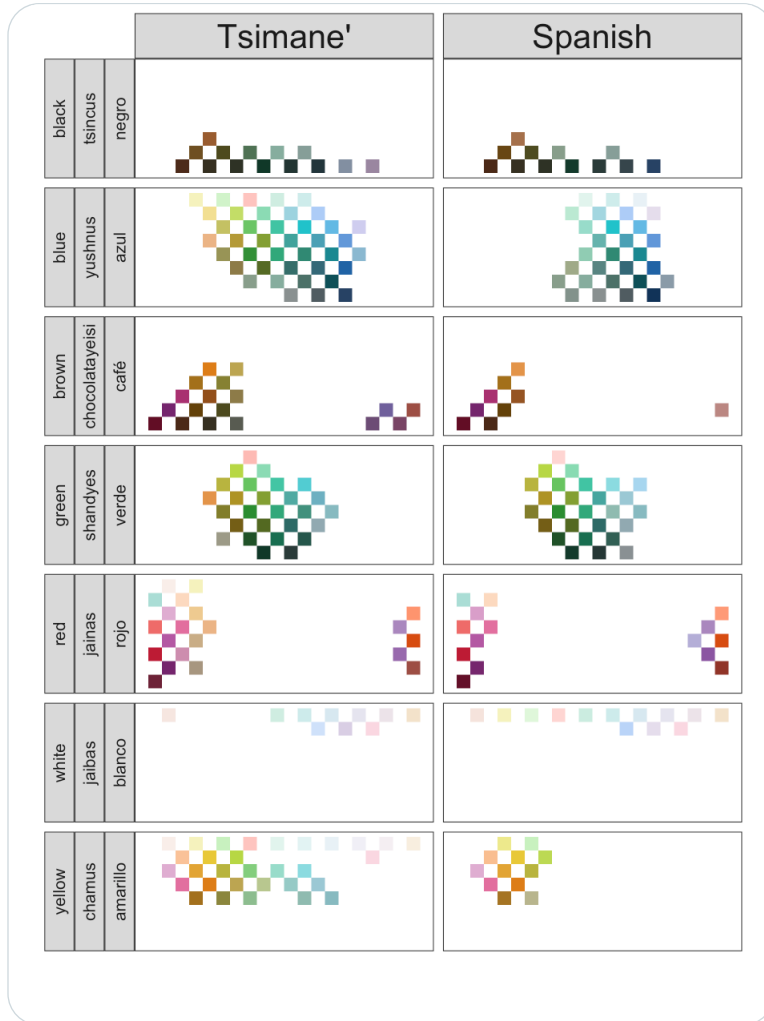




Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



First, we made sure there are no differences at the conceptual level, via a Munsell chip labeling task. We observed that Tsimane'-Spanish bilinguals pick similar chips for equivalent terms in Tsimane' and Spanish.

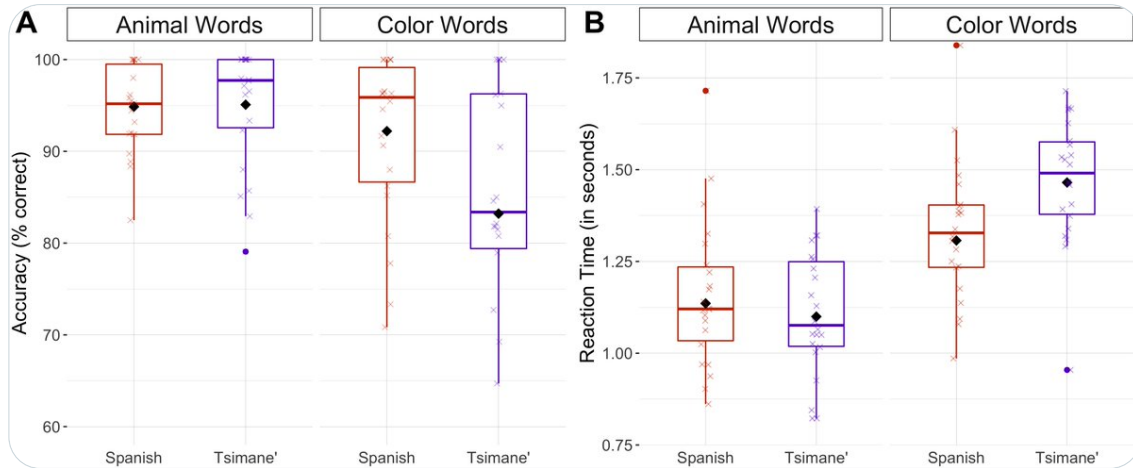




Saima Malik-Moraleda
@saima_mm

Follow ...

Next, participants named colors and animals as fast as possible, switching between Tsimane' and Spanish. While participants were equally good at naming animals in Tsimane' and Spanish, they were more accurate (A) and faster (B) in naming colors in Spanish.



7:07 AM · Oct 20, 2022

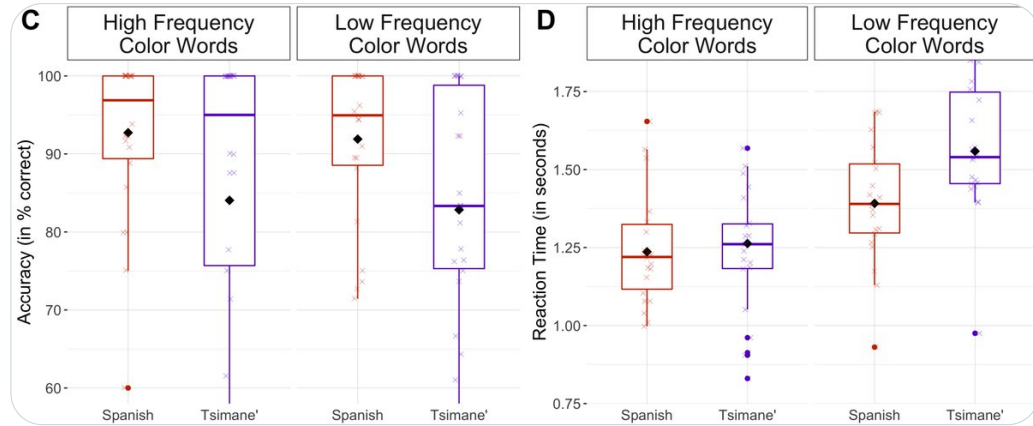




Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



Tsimane' speakers are most consistent in using three terms (jäinas ~red, tsincus~black, jaibas~white). For these high frequency color terms, Tsimane' speakers are equally fast in Spanish and Tsimane'; for the other terms, they are faster in Spanish than Tsimane'.



1



5



Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



Taken together, these results suggest that, just like in monolingual speakers, what matters most is how frequently we encounter words, regardless whether these are in the language we might consider ourselves to be more or less proficient in.



1



11



Saima Malik-Moraleda @saima_mm · Oct 20, 2022



In some sense this is unsurprising to L2 speakers who work in e.g., English: it is easier to talk about work concepts in English than in your L1. For instance, I would struggle to put together a presentation on fMRI in both my native Kashmiri and Spanish.

Thanks for reading!



2



17

