Collecting imageability ratings for Norwegian nouns, verbs and adjectives: a pilot study

Pernille Hansen, Elisabeth Holm, Marianne Lind, Hanne Gram Simonsen
Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, Norway

Aim:
- Collect imageability ratings for 295 nouns, 143 verbs and 62 adjectives extracted from psycholinguistic test material

Procedure
- Two web-based surveys: long version (500 words) and short version (250 words)
- Words were rated on a scale from 1 (no image) to 7 (clear image)
- Words could also be marked as "unknown" or "ambiguous"
- All the respondents were asked to evaluate the survey

Participants
- A total of 52 women and 28 men participated in the two surveys
- Unequal age distribution (more older men and more younger women)

Selected results
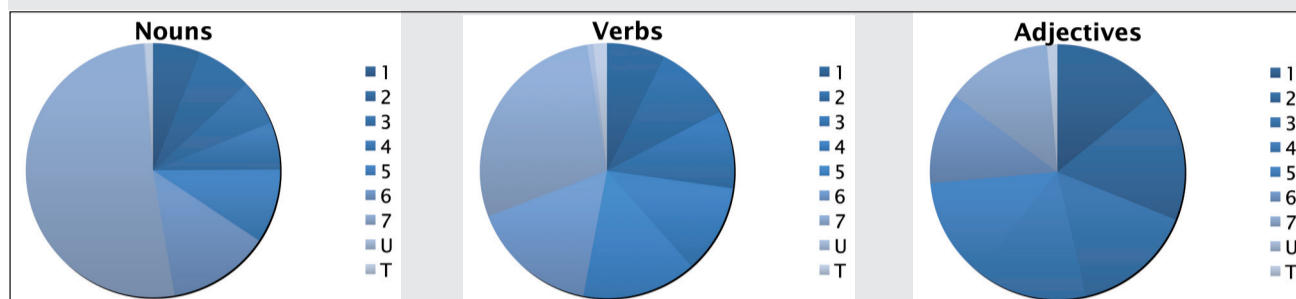
Differences between word classes
Nouns are generally rated as more imageable than verbs, and adjectives are the least imageable word class.

Words rated differently by men and women
Women tend to rate nouns as more imageable than men do (55 % vs 45 % of the nouns get top score).

Men tend to rate adjectives as more imageable than women do (24 % vs 17 % of the adjectives get top score).
- Top-five words rated higher by women: *en leder* ('a leader'), *en størrelse* ('a size'), *å rydde* ('to tidy up'), *trist* ('sad'), *liten* ('small')
- Top-five words rated higher by men: *en meisel* ('a chisel'), *tilstøtende* ('adjacent'), *å fyke* ('to drift'), *en sekvens* ('a sequence'), *å økse* ('to axe')

Methodological considerations

Selection of words
To ensure unambiguous interpretation of the words, verbs were presented with the infinitive marker and most nouns (except mass nouns) were presented with their indefinite article. Homonyms and some polysemous words were excluded.
- Ca 50 % of the informants marked at least one word as ambiguous
- 35 % of the words were judged as ambiguous by at least one informant
- 0,4 % of the words (2 words) were rated as ambiguous by more than ten informants

Size of survey
- Average rating time per word (based on the 250 words study) was 3.37 seconds
- Average self-estimated time spent on the survey: 36 minutes (500 words), 21 minutes (250 words)

Difference between the two tests
The two tests varied in length and type of randomization (fixed or individually generated). No clear effects from these two factors were found in the imageability ratings.
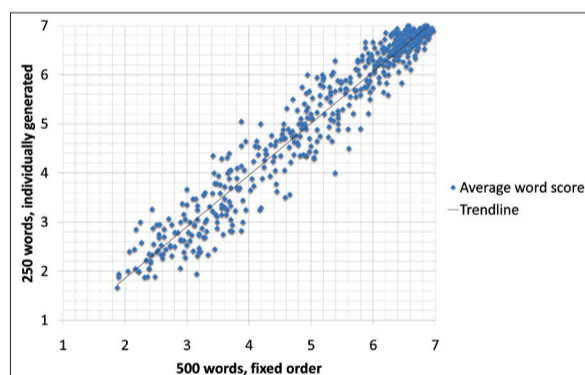

Individual variation
The variation between informants is large in both test groups. The variability may possibly be reduced through collapsing the extreme scores 1+2 and 6+7.

Implications for future study

A larger study (1500 words) will be conducted based on experiences from this pilot study.

Key implications from the pilot study
- Max 250 words should be rated by each informant
- Homonymy should be avoided, but a certain amount of polysemy is expected
- A representative and sufficiently large sample of informants is needed
- A web-based survey is feasible
- Individual randomization of words may not be necessary
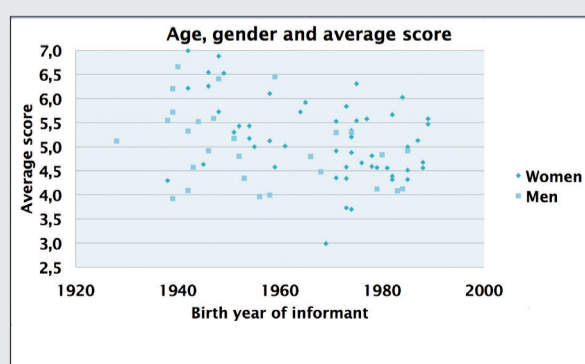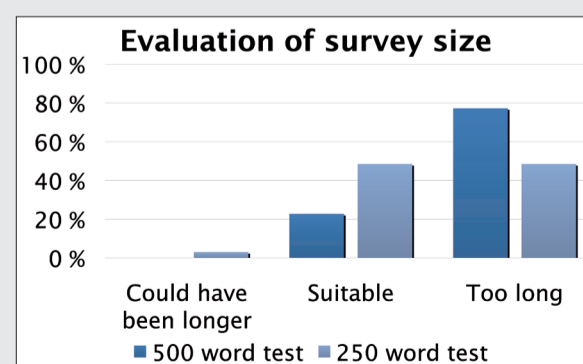
UiO : **Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies**
University of Oslo

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Contact

Marianne Lind: marianne.lind@iln.uio.no

Hanne Gram Simonsen: h.g.simonsen@iln.uio.no

Pernille Hansen (master student): perniha@ilos.uio.no

Elisabeth Holm (master student): elho@ilos.uio.no