

The Second Biennial International Conference on the Science of Language and the Brain (SOLAB)

9–10 October 2025 - Virtual



Intro to Applications of Eye-tracking in Language Studies

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Workshop Content

Fundamentals

1. Why measuring gaze behavior?
2. How does vision work?
3. How does an eye tracker work?
4. Choose your eye tracker
5. How do eye trackers compare?
6. When is an eye tracker «good» for us?

Data collection and analysis

1. Eye Tracker Calibration
2. Practical Advice for Data Collection
3. Types of Software
4. Basic Metrics
5. Define Areas of Interest (AOIs)
6. Eye Tracking Metrics
7. Data Visualization
8. Pupillometry

Applications in Language studies

1. Reading
2. Reading models
3. Key variables in reading
4. Practical guidelines for a reading experiment
5. What is the visual world paradigm?
6. Spoken word recognition
7. Other studies
8. What do we measure?
9. The preferential looking paradigm
10. Practical guidelines



Fundamentals



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Why measuring gaze behavior?

Fundamentals

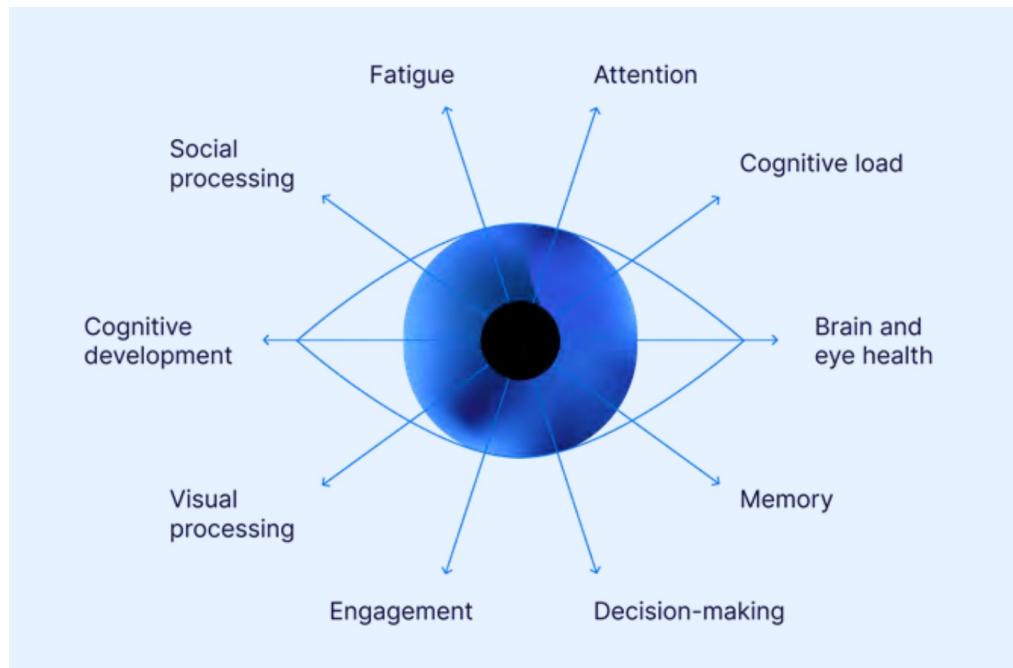
Data

Applications

Eye-mind link hypothesis

The eyes look where the mind is engaged

Look = processing
Greater processing → longer look



Eye tracking
↓
Language:
Visual
(reading)
Auditory
(spoken language)
Multimodal
(audio-visual inputs)



Tobii, «The fundamentals of eye tracking»

Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025

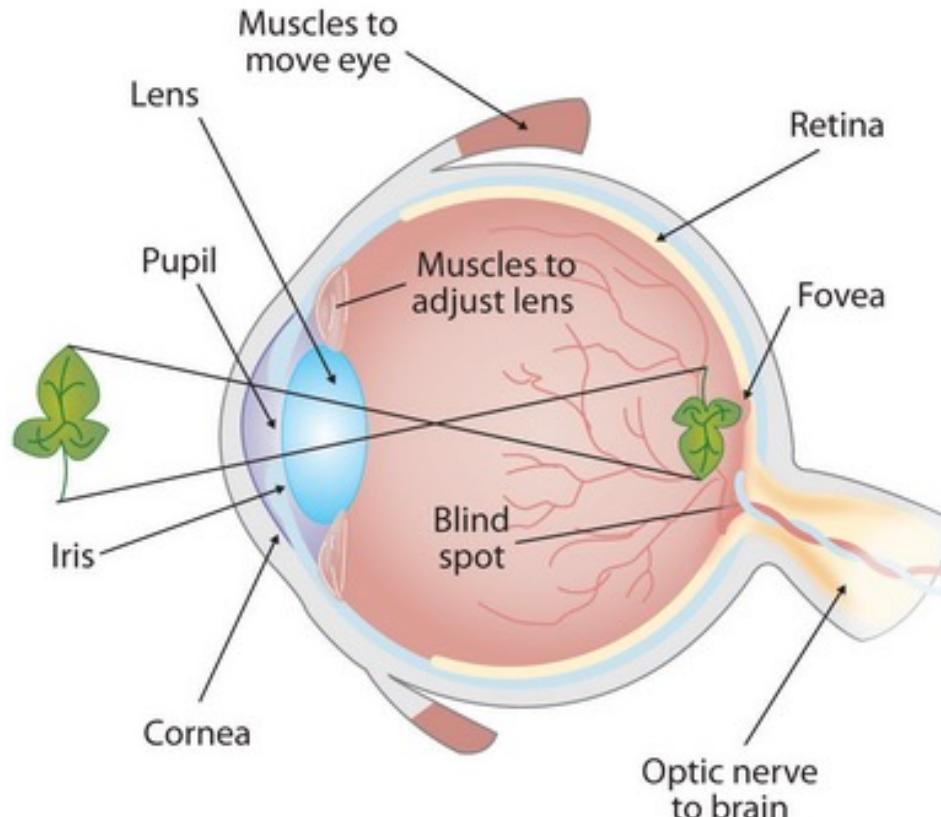


How does vision work?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications



Fovea

area of highest visual acuity

Fixations

brief stop of the eye to process information

Saccades

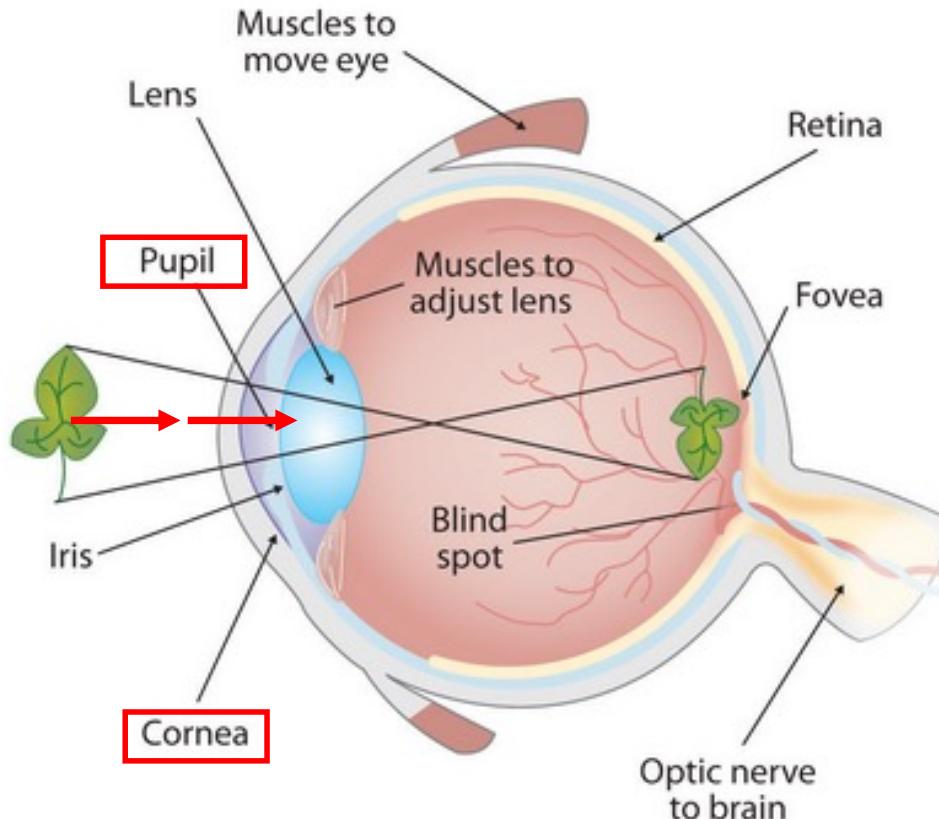
rapid movements that shifts the point of fixation

How does vision work?

Fundamentals

Data

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Fovea

area of highest visual acuity

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brief stop of the eye to process information

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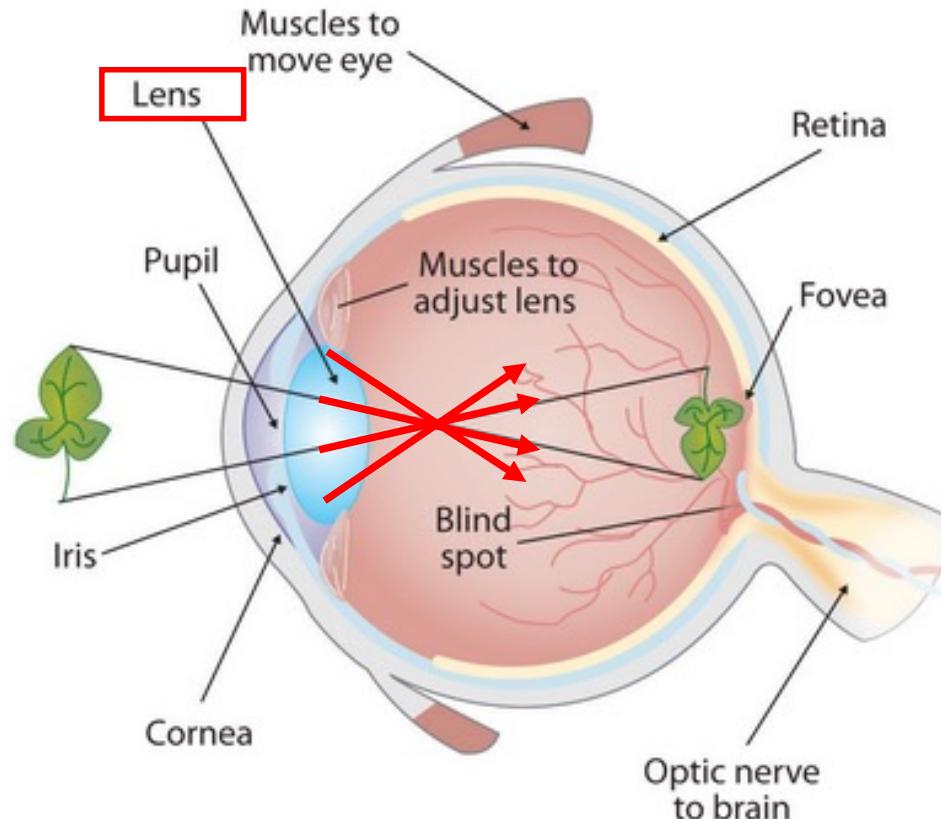
rapid movements that shifts the point of fixation

How does vision work?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications



Fovea

area of highest visual acuity

Fixations

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Saccades

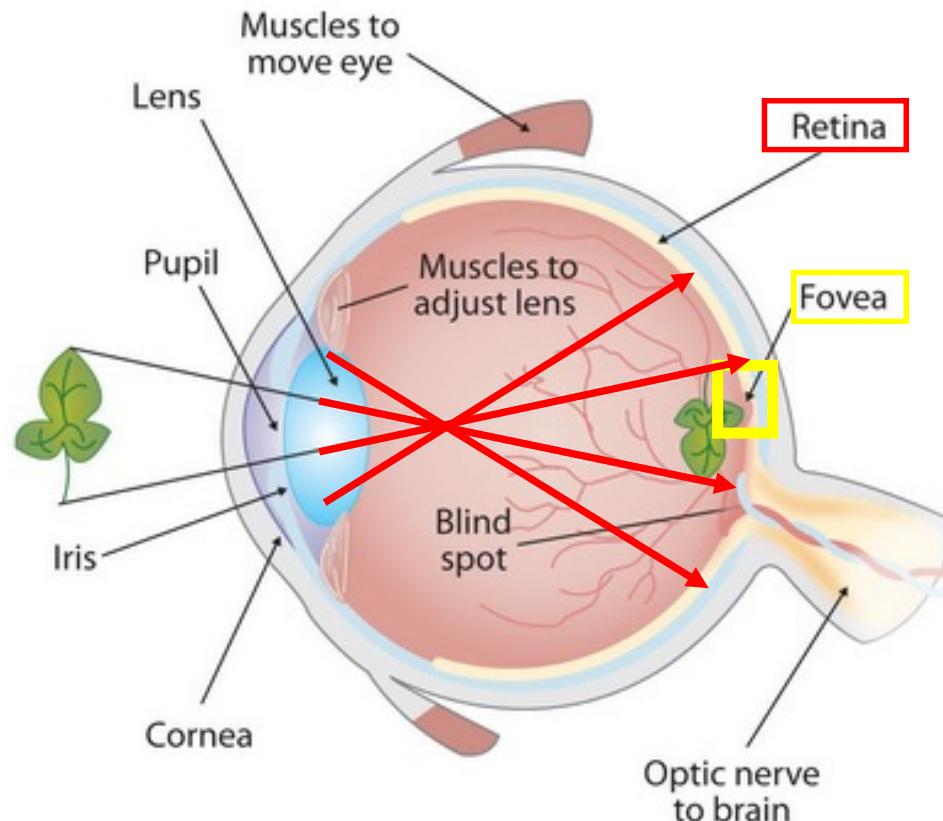
rapid movements that shifts the point of fixation

How does vision work?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications



Fovea

area of highest visual acuity

Fixations

brief stop of the eye to stabilize the image on the fovea

Saccades

rapid movements that shifts the point of fixation

How does an eye tracker work?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

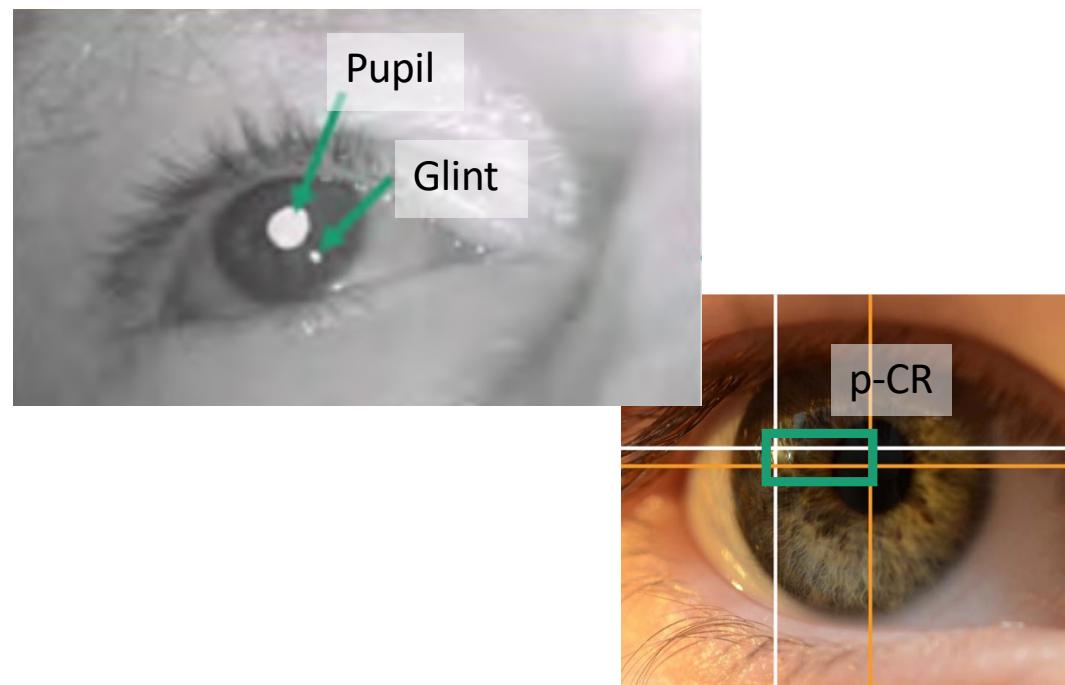
Pupil Center Corneal Reflection (PCCR)

Infrared light is reflected by the center of the pupil and the cornea (**glint**)



Pupil minus corneal reflection (p-CR)

Algorithms calculates gaze by subtracting the glint from the pupil center position



Valtakari et al., 2021

Tobii, «The fundamentals of eye tracking»

iMotion, «Eye Tracking: The Complete Pocket Guide»



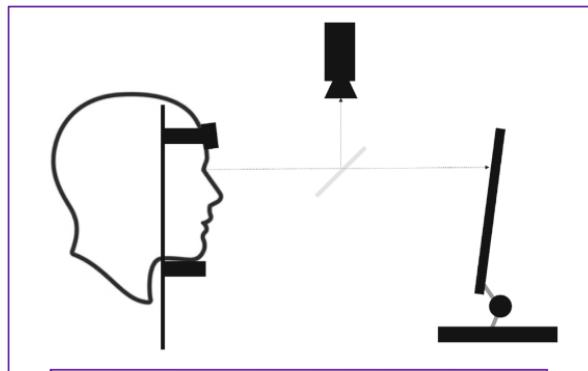
Choose your eye tracker

Fundamentals

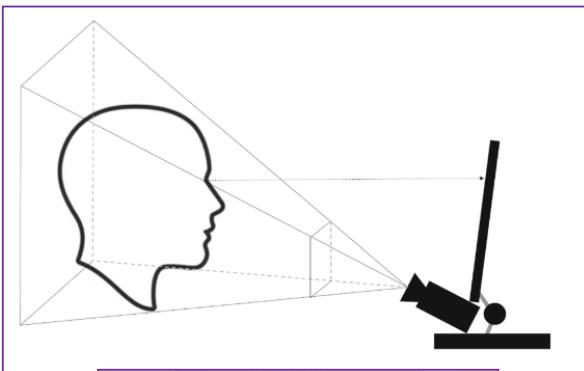
Data

Applications

Screen-based

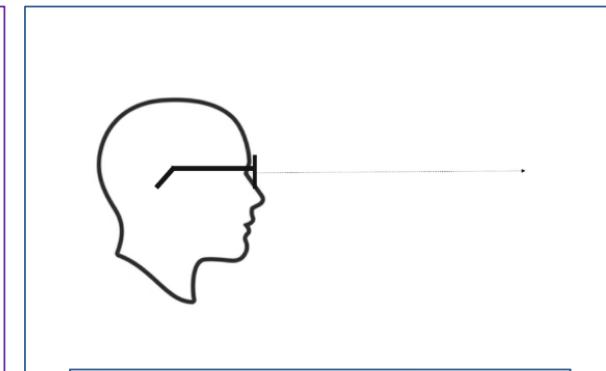


head-restricted set up



head-boxed set up

Wearable



Nystrom et al., 2025
Valtakari et al., 2021
<https://www.tobii.com/products/>



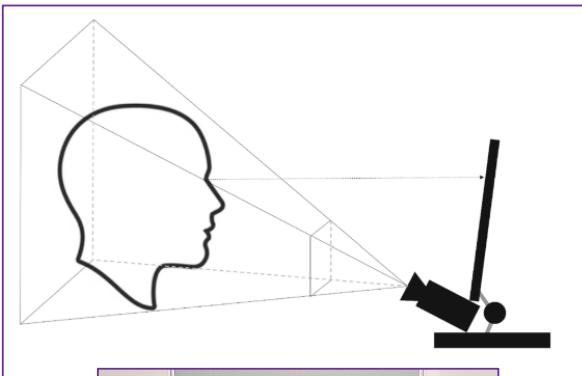
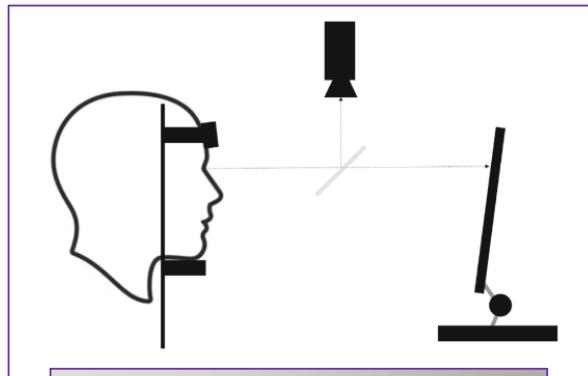
Choose your eye tracker

Fundamentals

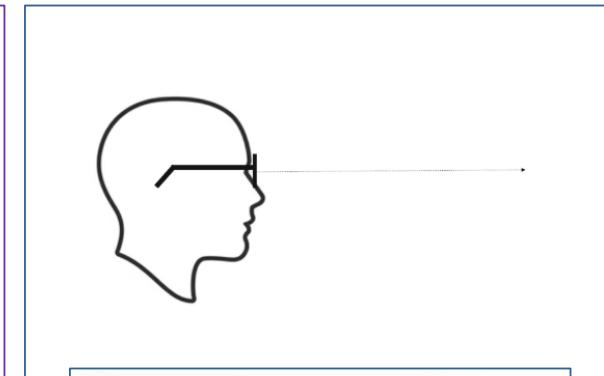
Data

Applications

Screen-based



Wearable



Dual setups?

Eye tracking in human interaction: Possibilities and limitations

Niilo V. Valtakari¹ · Ignace T. C. Hooge¹ · Charlotte Viktorsson² · Pär Nyström² · Terje Falck-Ytter^{2,3,4} · Roy S. Hessels¹

Accepted: 28 November 2020 / Published online: 6 January 2021
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Nyström et al., 2025
<https://www.tobii.com/products/>



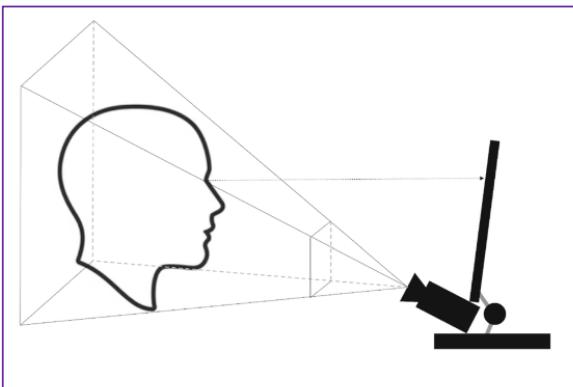
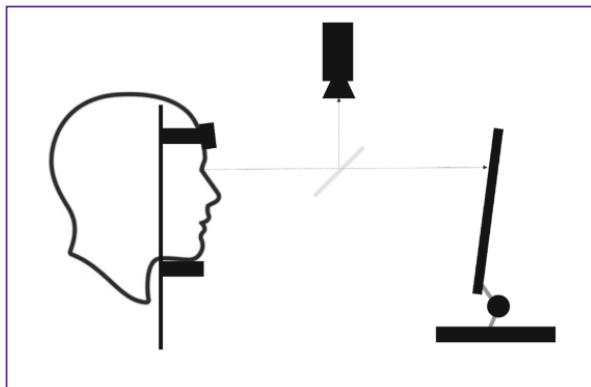
How do eye trackers compare?

Fundamentals

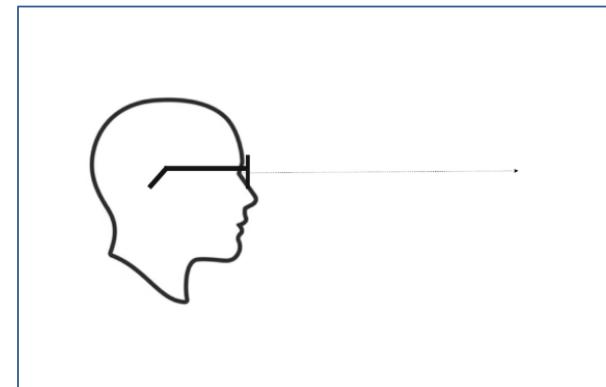
Data

Applications

Screen-based



Wearable



Nyström et al., 2025

✓ Precision; high data quality

✗ Restricted head movement

✓ Freedom of movement

✗ Lower precision; complex analysis

When is an eye tracker «good» for us?

Fundamentals

Data

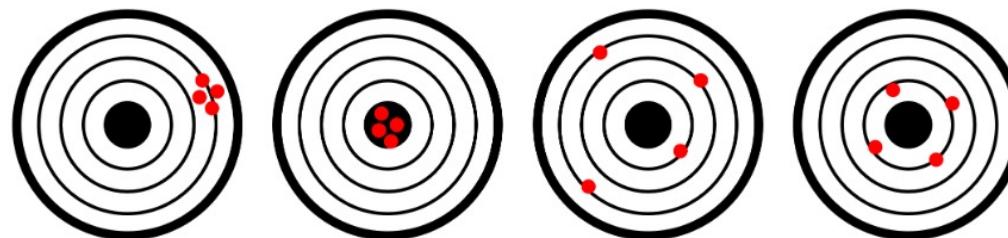
Applications

Accuracy

closeness between actual and reported gaze position

Precision

consistency of repeated measurements



- Poor accuracy
- Good precision

- Good accuracy
- Good precision

- Poor accuracy
- Poor precision

- Good accuracy
- Poor precision

Kasneci et al., 2024

Good data!



When is an eye tracker «good» for us?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Always keep in mind **your** experimental condition.

Tobii Pro Spectrum User Manual

Sampling frequency	60, 120, 150, 300, 600 or 1200 Hz (max. frequency depends on hardware version)
Precision	0.01° RMS* in optimal conditions (applying Savitzky-Golay filter settings listed in the test report) 0.06° RMS* in optimal conditions (raw signal)
Accuracy	0.3° in optimal conditions
Binocular eye tracking	Yes
Eye tracker latency**	Mean latency < 2 ms at 1200Hz (SD < 0.2 ms)*

A good tracker **for us** minimizes errors in accuracy and precision
under our experimental condition.

How do we obtain good data quality ?



Practical advice for data collection

Fundamentals

Data

Applications



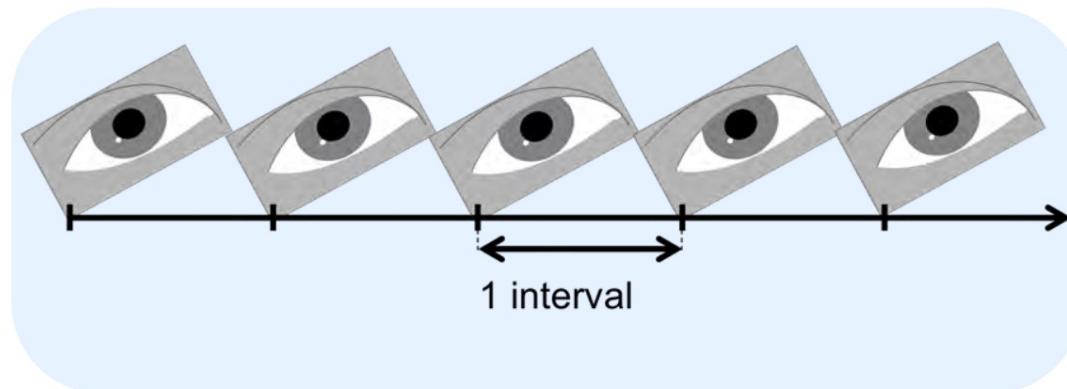
When is an eye tracker «good» for us?

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Sampling rate
how many times per second gaze is recorded (Hz)



Sampling frequency (Hz)	Sampling interval (ms)
30	33.33
60	16.67
120	8.33
250	4
300	3.33
600	1.67
1200	0.83

higher sampling rate
=
more detail
(fast eye movements)
↓
large data files
more expensive



Data collection and analysis



Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025



Types of software

Fundamentals → Data → Applications

- **Proprietary** software (from manufacturers)
- **External** software for design/analysis (via SDK in PsychoPy, MATLAB, Presentation, self-written scripts)

Company	Software for Experiment design	Software for Data analysis
Tobii	Tobii Pro Lab	Tobii Pro Lab
SR Research Eye Link	Experiment Builder	Data Viewer
SMI		Be Gaze
Open source		OpenGaze (Python) iView X SDK (SMI) OpenEyes Gaze Parser PyGaze (Python library) EyeRecToo ...

Adapted from
Roccaforte & D'Alesio, 2022



Eye tracker calibration

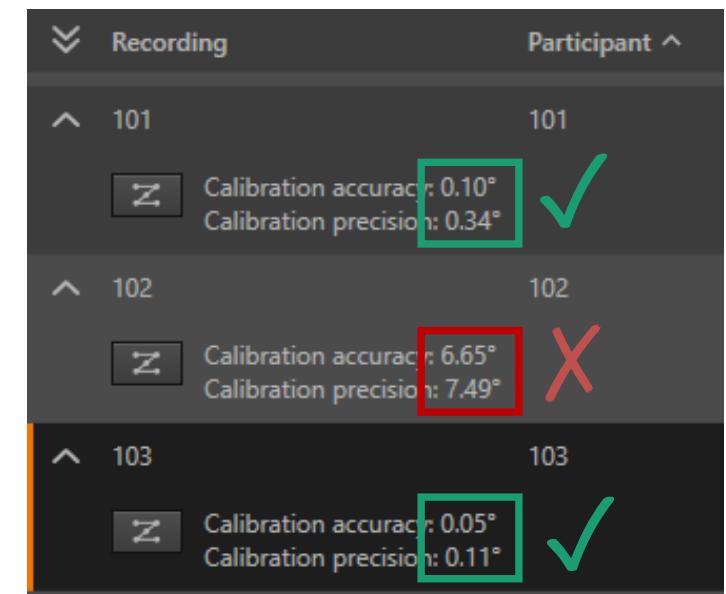
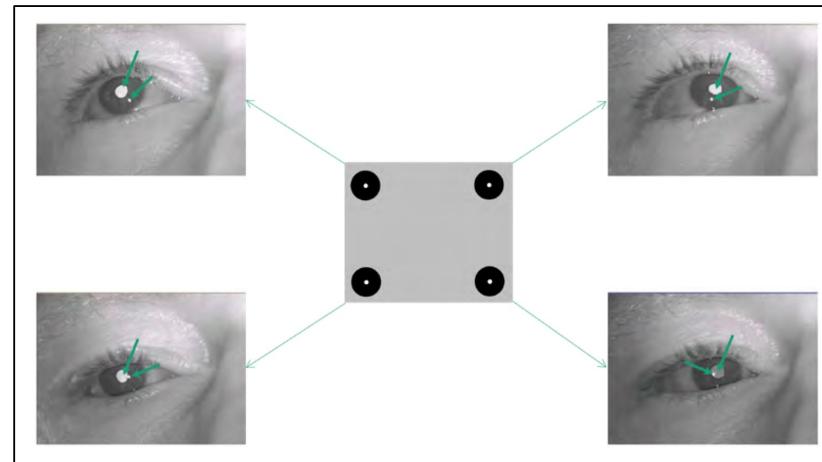
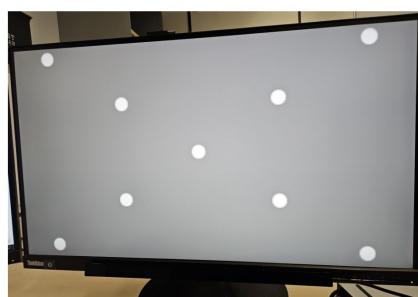
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Calibration

the process of adapting the eye tracker to the participant's eyes to ensure accurate gaze data



Kasneci et al., 2024

Tobii, «The fundamentals of eye tracking»

Eye tracker calibration

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Calibration

Consider your experimental condition:

Working with **adults**?

- aim for optimal values (close to 0°)
- values <1–2 are acceptable

Recording		Participant ^
101	101	Calibration accuracy: 0.10° Calibration precision: 0.34°
102	102	Calibration accuracy: 6.65° Calibration precision: 7.49°
103	103	Calibration accuracy: 0.05° Calibration precision: 0.11°



Eye tracker calibration

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

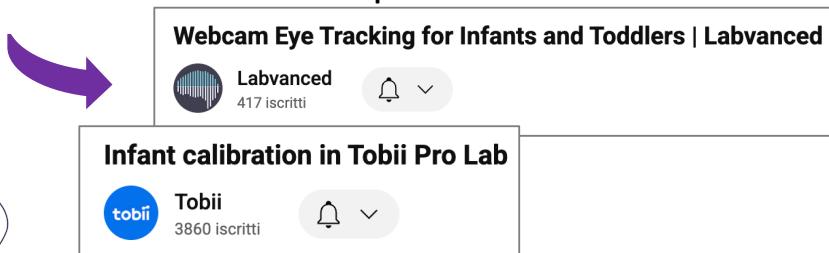
Calibration

Consider your experimental condition:

Working with **infants and toddlers**?

- prioritize participants' **attention** over perfect calibration
- prioritize a **stable position within** the head box over achieving high accuracy
- create an **engaging calibration** with images, videos, and sounds

Want infant calibration tips?



use animal icons instead of dots



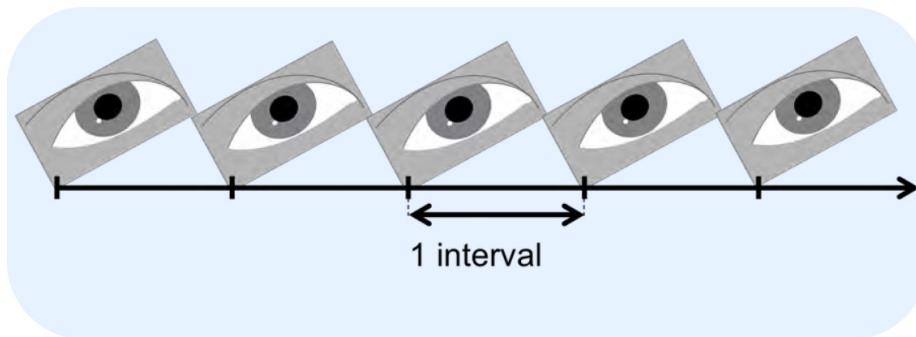
Basic metrics

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Gaze points: basic unit → x and y coordinates of eye position, at a given moment (sampling interval)



Sampling frequency (Hz)	Sampling interval (ms)
30	33.33
60	16.67
120	8.33
250	4
300	3.33
600	1.67
1200	0.83

Tobii, «The fundamentals of eye tracking»

time	xPos	yPos
1	396	
4717	-296	43
4725	-298	39
4733	-297	43
4742	-298	39
4750	-298	44
4758	-298	36

gaze point

sampling interval

position on the screen

Basic metrics

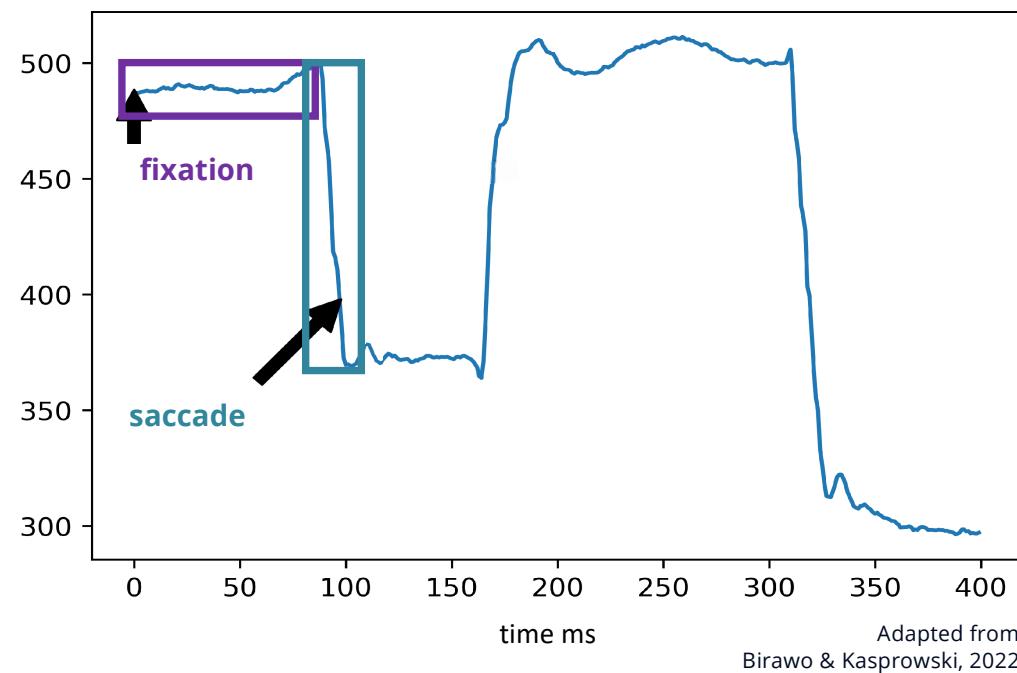
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Fixations: a series of gaze points close in time (100 – 300ms) and space → extract detailed visual information

Saccades: eye movements between fixations → bring the fovea from one point to the other



Adapted from
Birawo & Kasprowski, 2022



Data analysis



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Define Areas of Interest (AOI)

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

First step of analysis: define Areas of Interest



Areas of Interest
user-defined subregions of
a displayed stimulus.

Extract separate metrics
for each AOI to evaluate
the gaze behaviors in two
or more specific areas in
the same trial.

Eye tracking metrics

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

METRIC	SCALE	DEFINITION
Fixation		
Time to first fixation	Time	The time period from entering the AOI until the first fixation is made
First fixation duration	Time	The duration of the first fixation made in an AOI
Gaze duration	Time	The sum of all fixations on a word prior to an eye movement to another word
First pass reading time	Time	The sum of all fixations recorded for a multi-word interest area up to the point when the eyes leave the interest area
Second pass time	Time	The summed duration of all fixations that are made within an interest area when the eyes visit the area for the second time; This includes cases where the interest area was originally skipped
Rereading time	Time	The summed duration of all fixations in an interest area except for those fixations made during first pass
Average fixation duration	Time	Mean of fixation duration on each AOI
Total fixation duration	Time	The summed duration of all fixations in an AOI
Number of fixations	Count	The number of fixations made in an AOI
Proportion of fixations	Count	The proportion of total fixations that are directed to an AOI, or the number of fixations between AOIs and between experimental groups
Fixation position	Space	Location of a fixation



Eye tracking metrics

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Metric	Scale	Definition
Fixation		
Time to first fixation	Time	The time period from entering the AOI until the first fixation is made
First fixation duration	Time	The duration of the first fixation made in an AOI
Gaze duration	Time	The sum of all fixations on a word prior to another word
First pass reading time	Time	The sum of all fixations recorded for word interest area up to the point when the eye interest area
Second pass time	Time	The summed duration of all fixations made within an interest area visit the area for the second pass includes cases where the area was originally skipped
Rereading time	Time	The summed duration of all fixations except for those fixations in the first pass
Average fixation duration	Time	Mean of fixation durations in an AOI
Total fixation duration	Time	The summed duration of all fixations in an AOI
Number of fixations	Count	The number of fixations in an AOI
Proportion of fixations	Count	The proportion of fixations in an AOI relative to the expected number of fixations
Fixation position	Space	LC

Saccade		
Saccade duration	Time	The amount of time that it takes to actually move the eyes
Saccade count	Count	The number of saccades counted within an AOI
Saccade length	Space	The distance between two consecutive fixations
Dwell		
First pass time	Time	Time spent for the first entering of an AOI until leaving
Rereading time	Time	Summed duration of revisited time spent within an AOI
Total reading time	Time	Total time spent within an AOI or spent for a reading task
Total visit duration	Time	The summed duration of all visits to a particular interest area
Total number of visits	Count	The total number of visits made to an AOI
Dwell rate	Count	The number of entries into a specific area of interest per minute
Regression		
Regression path duration/go-past time	Time	The time spent on the word itself and any prior parts of the sentence before the reader moves past the critical word to the right
Regression rate	Count	The number of regressions per second, per line, or paragraph, etc.
Regression in	Count	A regressive eye movement that lands in a predefined interest area
Regression out	Count	A regressive eye movement that is launched from a given interest area
Skip		
First-pass skipping rate	Count	The proportion of participants who skipped an AOI when first encountering it
Skip count	Count	The total number of times an interest area was skipped

Eye tracking metrics

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Many metrics! → choose based on your research question

METRIC	SCALE	DEFINITION
Fixation		
Time to first fixation	Time	The time period from entering the AOI until the first fixation is made
First fixation duration	Time	The duration of the first fixation made in an AOI
Gaze duration	Time	The sum of all fixations on a word prior to another word
First pass reading time	Time	The sum of all fixations recorded for word interest area up to the point when the eye interest area
Second pass time	Time	The summed duration of all fixations made within an interest area visit the area for the second pass includes cases where the eyes originally skipped
Rereading time	Time	The summed duration of interest area except for those fixations in the first pass
Average fixation duration	Time	The mean of fixation durations in an AOI
Total fixation duration	Count	The total duration of fixations in an AOI
Number of fixations	Count	The number of fixations in an AOI
Proportion of fixations	Count	The proportion of fixations in an AOI relative to the expected number of fixations
Fixation position	Space	The spatial location of a fixation in an AOI
Saccade		
Saccade duration	Time	The amount of time that it takes to actually move the eyes
Saccade count	Count	The number of saccades counted within an AOI
Saccade length	Space	The distance between two consecutive fixations
Dwell		
First pass time	Time	The time spent for the first entering of an AOI until leaving
Rereading time	Time	The summed duration within an AOI
Total reading time	Time	The total time spent with the reading task
Total visit duration	Time	The summed duration of all visits to a particular interest area
Total number of visits	Count	The total number of visits to an interest area
Dwell rate	Count	The number of entries into an interest area per minute
Regression		
Regression path duration/go-past time	Time	The time spent on the word it moves past the critical word to prior parts of the sentence before it moves past the critical word to
Regression rate	Count	The number of regressions per sentence, line, or paragraph, etc.
Regression in	Count	A regressive eye movement that looks back into a predefined interest area
Regression out	Count	A regressive eye movement that looks away from a given interest area
Skip		
First-pass skipping rate	Count	The proportion of participants who skipped an AOI when first encountering it
Skip count	Count	The total number of times an interest area was skipped
Pupil		
Pupil diameter	Space	The pupil size for the current position of the eye
Pupil dilation latency	Time	The time elapsing between the onset of increased luminance (or other stimulus) and the beginning of pupil dilation
Blink		
Blink rate	Count	The number of blinks per unit of time
Blink duration	Time	The complete time from when the eyelid starts moving down until it is fully up again
Gaze pattern		
Heatmap	None	The visualization of the screen display, overlaid with a smooth landscape of fixation data represented in different colours
Scanpath	Space	An ordered set of fixations points (depicted by circles) connected by saccades (depicted by lines)

Roccaforte & D'Alesio, 2025



Eye tracking metrics

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Many metrics! → choose based on your research question

Fixation

- time to first fixation
- first fixation duration
- gaze duration

Saccade

- saccade duration
- saccade count

Pupil

- pupil diameter
- pupil dilation latency



Pupillometry

Fundamentals

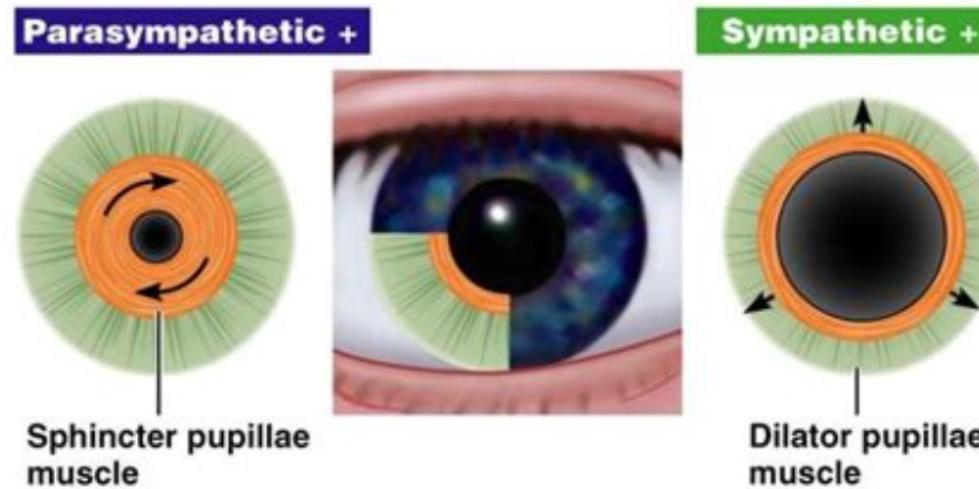
Data

Applications

Pupil dilation reflects mental processes.

Involuntary. Mostly respond to light variations.

When lighting is constant size reflects changes in cognitive processes.



Locus coeruleus → norepinephrine → dilation
↑
arousal, attention, cognitive demands, etc...

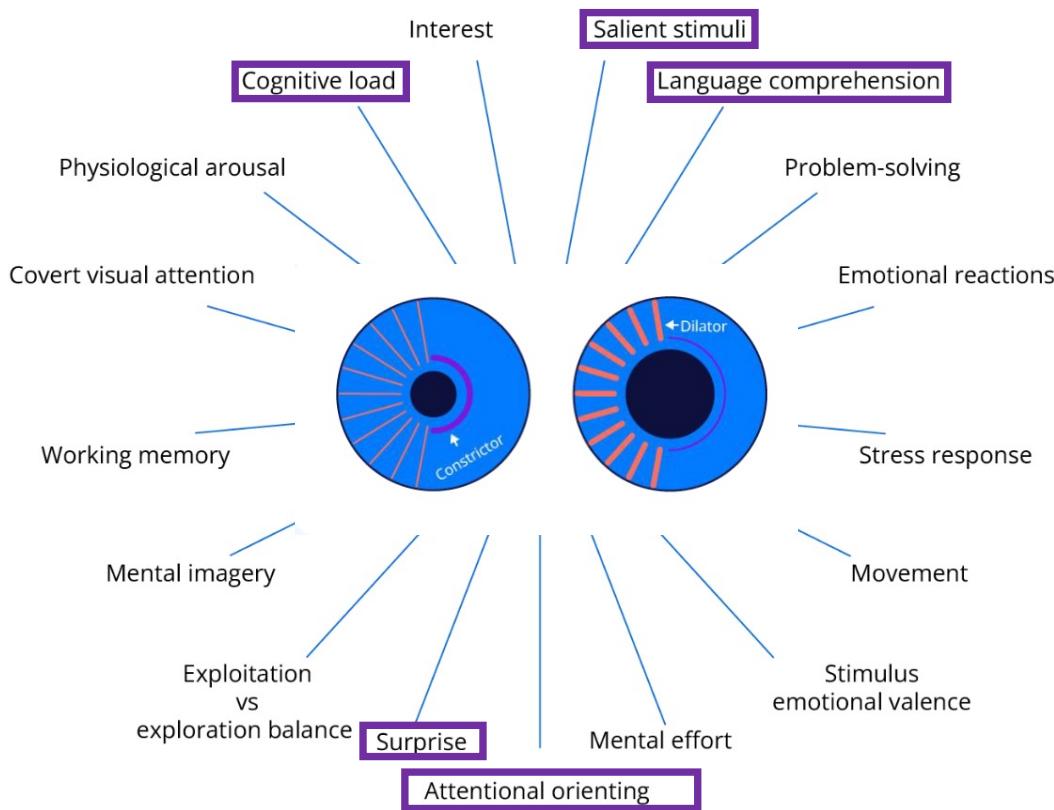
Pupillometry

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Pupil dilation is involuntary and reflects mental processes.



In language studies:

- Syntactic complexity
(Schluhoff, 1982; Just & Carpenter, 1993)
- Grammaticality violations
(Gutiérrez & Shapiro, 2010)
- Sentence comprehension
(Wright & Kahneman, 1971)
- Context integration
(Engelhardt et al., 2010)
- ...

adapted from
Tobii, "Eye Tracking for Pupillometry Insights"»



Pupillometry

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Fundamental info:

- Recorded with gaze data (same sampling rate)
- Highly **sensitive** to light → keep brightness constant
- **Slower** than gaze
 - e.g. response to light increase: latency ~200 ms, peak 500–1000ms
 - task-evoked response: delay: 200–300 ms, peak ~1200 ms (500–2000 ms)

Stimuli:

- Keep brightness and color **constant**
- Allow for **2–3 s window** for the pupil response to unfold
- + **≥3 s intertrial** interval → avoid carryover effects
- Eye position affects pupil size
- Physical responses (e.g. button press) affect pupil size



Pupillometry

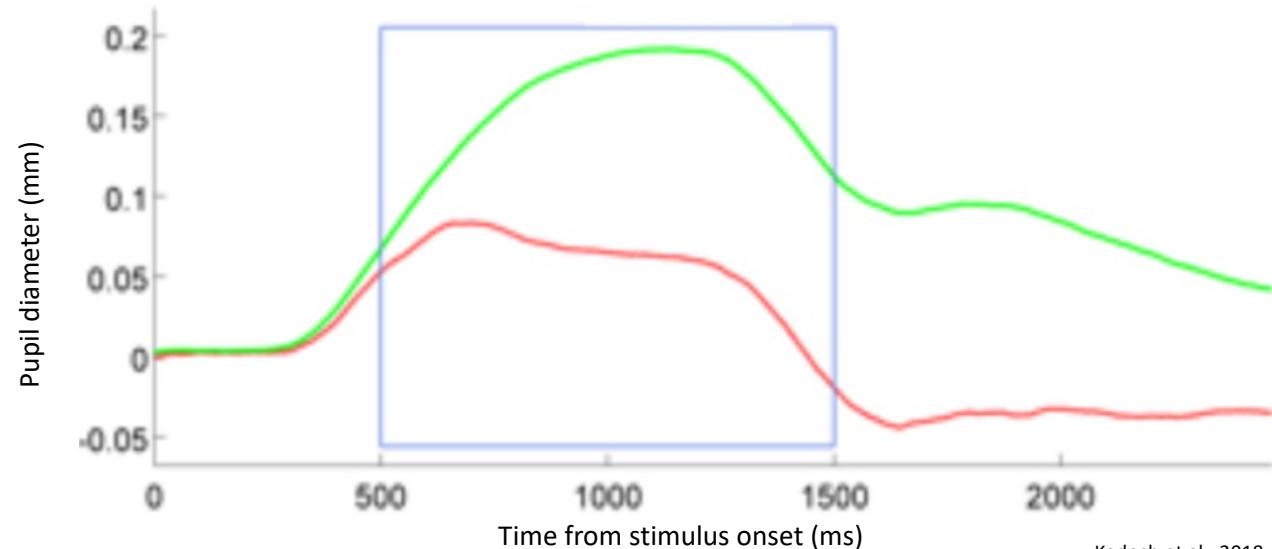
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Metrics and visualizations

Pupil		
Pupil diameter	Space	The pupil size for the current position of the eye
Pupil dilation latency	Time	The time elapsing between the onset of increased luminance (or other stimulus) and the beginning of pupil dilation



Kadosh et al., 2018



Pupillometry

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Suggested reading

From pre-processing to advanced dynamic modeling of pupil data

Lauren Fink^{1,2}  · Jaana Simola^{3,4}  · Alessandro Tavano⁵  · Elke Lange¹  · Sebastian Wallot^{6,7} 
Bruno Laeng^{8,9} 

Accepted: 20 February 2023
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Pupillometry (with a focus on children and language)

Tom Fritzsche
University of Potsdam
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OXFORD



EYE TRACKING

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE
TO METHODS AND MEASURES

KENNETH HOLMQVIST | MARCUS NYSTRÖM
RICHARD ANDERSSON | RICHARD DEWHURST
HALSZKA JARODZKA | JOOST VAN DE WEIJER

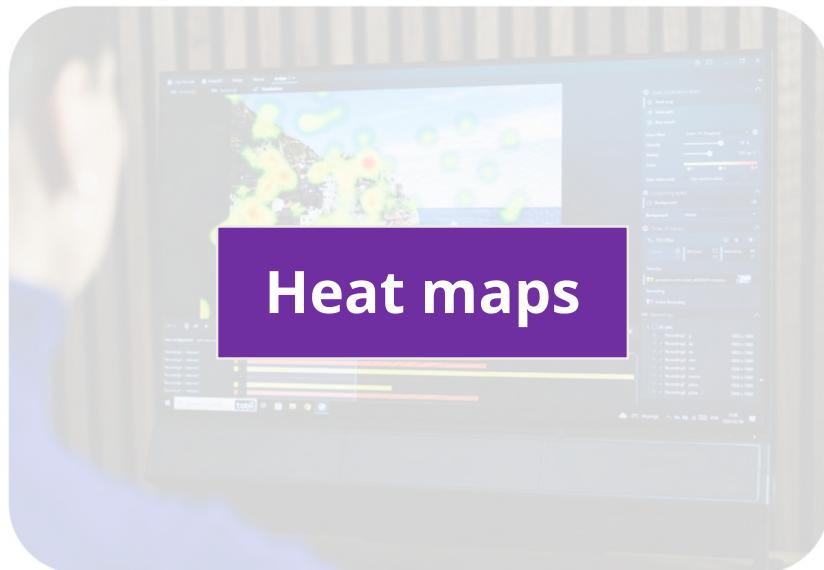


Data visualization

Fundamentals

Data

Applications



Data visualization

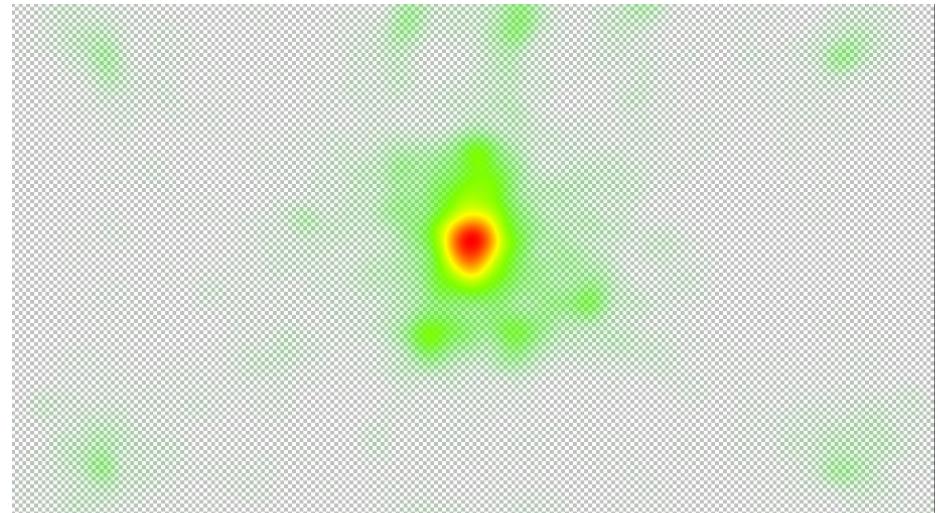
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Heat map:

- warm color = longer/more fixations



Heat map of a 5-point calibration screen

Data visualization

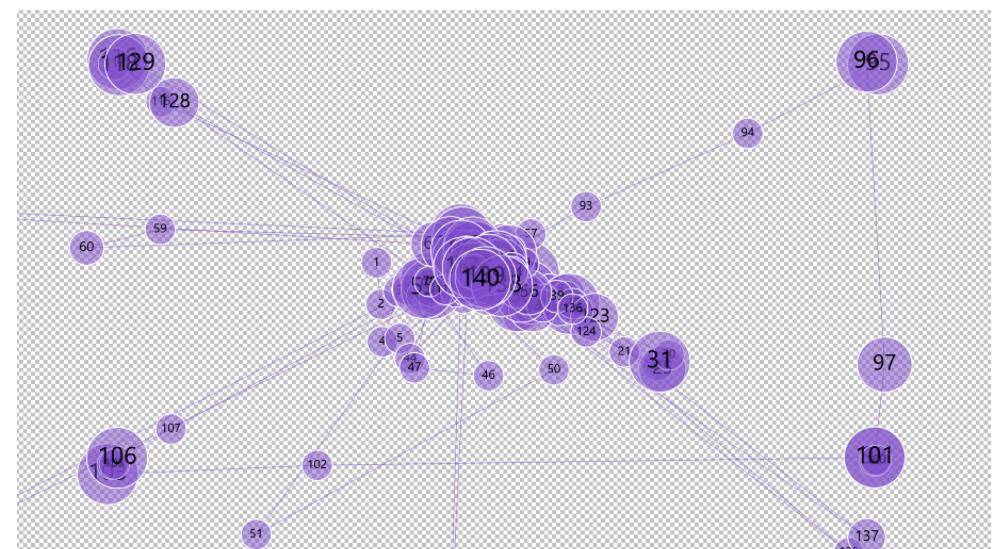
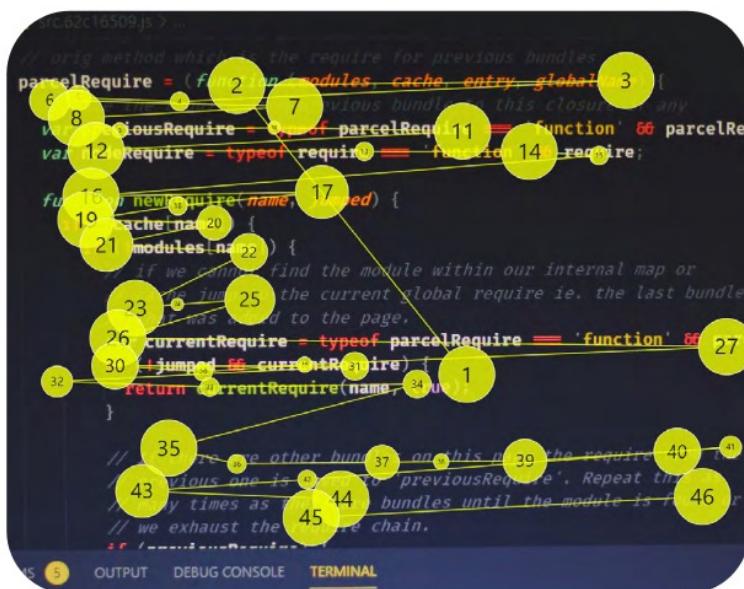
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Scan path:

- circle = fixation
- circle size = total fixation duration
- numbers = fixation order



Practical advice for data collection

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Maximizing calibration and data collection

Control the **environment**:

- Stable, **moderate lighting** (avoid sunlight and darkness)
- Neutral background

Control **position**:

- **Minimize head movement**
 - Chin rest
 - Comfortable setup with chair



trade-off between natural behavior and data quality

Practical advice for data collection

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Working with infants and toddlers

Position:

- Sit on **baby chair**
- Sit on **caregiver's lap**
- Caregiver helps to stabilize



BabyLAB Potsdam/Thomas Hözel



<https://www.tobii.com/solutions/>

Practical advice for data collection

Fundamentals

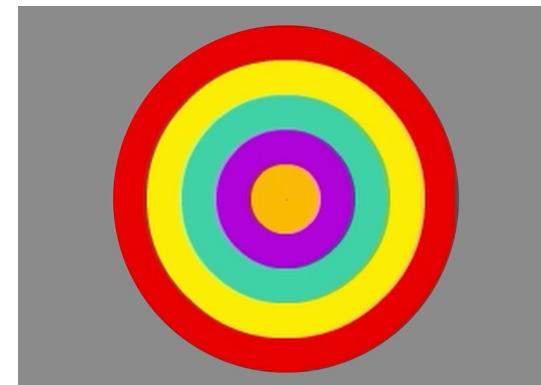
Data

Applications

Working with infants and toddlers

Engagement:

- Keep tasks **short** (avoid repetition)
- Use colorful, audiovisual **attention-getters**
- Frame as **game-like** narrative with small rewards



Want infant calibration tips?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROX3Bd8PKI0>

Infant calibration in Tobii Pro Lab

tobii 3860 iscritti



Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025



Practical advice for data collection

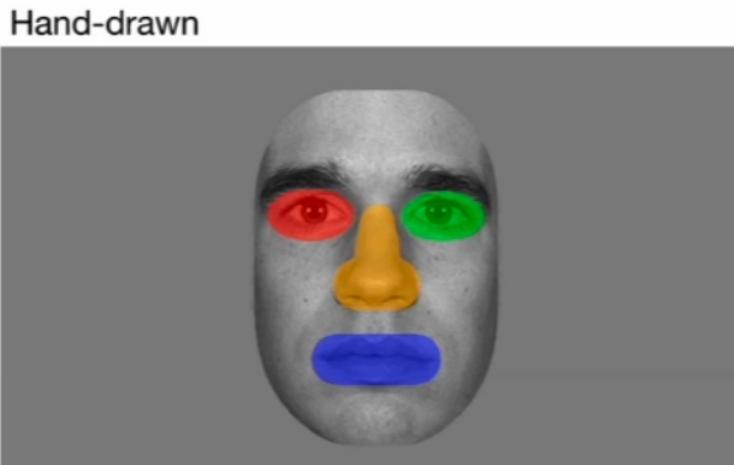
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Use **large** Areas of Interest (AOIs)

Compensate for
head
movements and
a less precise
and accurate
calibration



good



better!

Practical advice for data collection

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Movement and data loss are inevitable...

Dalrymple, K. A., Manner, M. D., Harmelink, K. A., Teska, E. P., & Elison, J. T. (2018). An Examination of Recording Accuracy and Precision From Eye Tracking Data From Toddlerhood to Adulthood. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1–12.
<http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00803>

20% excluded toddlers

Hessels, R. S., Hooge, I. T. C., & Kemner, C. (2016). An in-depth look at saccadic search in infancy. *Journal of Vision*, 16(8), 10.
<http://doi.org/10.1167/16.8.10>

30% excluded infants

Birmingham, E., Smith Johnston, K. H., & Iarocci, G. (2017). Spontaneous Gaze Selection and Following During Naturalistic Social Interactions in School-Aged Children and Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology/Revue Canadienne De Psychologie Expérimentale*, 71(3), 243–257.
<http://doi.org/10.1037/cep0000131>

All eye-tracking data excluded

... but **following the tips** and **planning carefully**
will help keep data quality high.



Applications in language studies



Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025



Applications in language studies

Fundamentals >>> Data >>>

Applications

Reading

Visual World paradigm

Preferential Looking paradigm



Applications in language studies

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Reading

Visual World paradigm

Preferential Looking paradigm



Reading

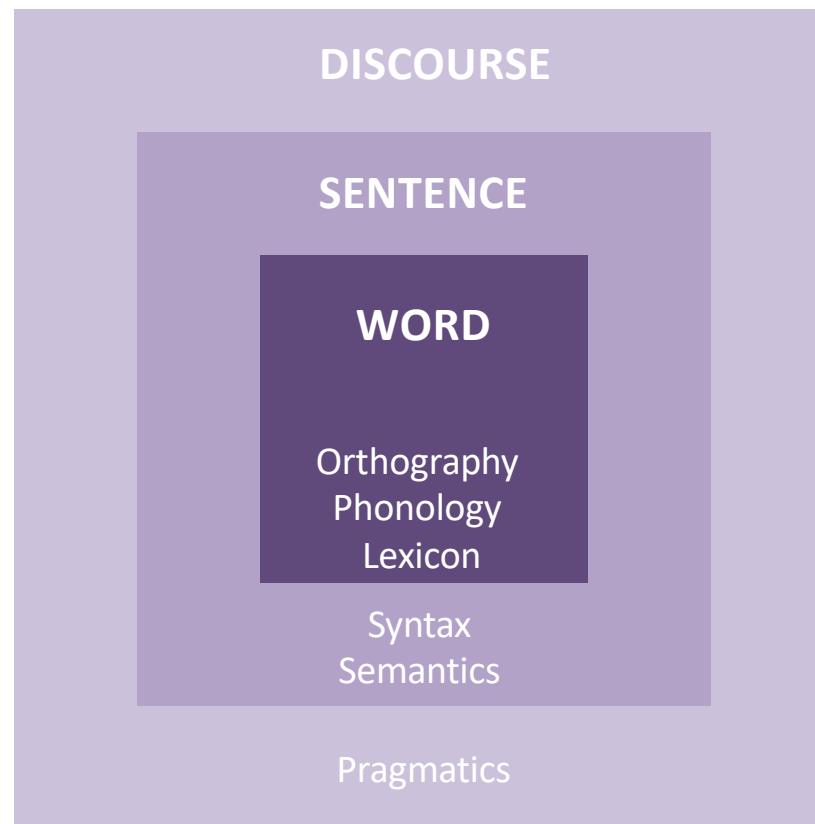
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Reading research shows how eye movements reflect multiple levels of language processing.

single word
multi-word units
texts



not only
lexical level
but higher-
order
processes
too



Key variables in reading

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Length

number of characters
≈ 14–15 to the right of fixation

Frequency

How often a word occurs in the language.

Predictability

How expected a word is in a given sentence context.
Measured with cloze tests (*«He mailed a letter without a_____»*)

Orthographic familiarity, grammatical category, semantic ambiguity, ...



Roccaforte & D'Alesio, 2025

Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025



Key variables in reading

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Typical reading measures:

First fixation duration	Time	The duration of the first fixation made in an AOI
Gaze duration	Time	The sum of all fixations on a word prior to an eye movement to another word
Total reading time	Time	Total time spent within an AOI or spent for a reading task
Regression rate	Count	The number of regressions per second, per line, or paragraph, etc.
Skip count	Count	The total number of times an interest area was skipped

Research showed different

- **Fixation time:** longer for long, low-frequency, and unpredictable words (e.g., Just & Carpenter, 1980; Rayner & Duffy, 1986)
- **Skipping rate:** higher for short, high-frequency, and predictable words (e.g., Rayner, 1998)
- **Regressions:** more frequent for syntactically complex or semantically unexpected words (e.g., Frazier & Rayner, 1982; Staub & Goddard, 2019)



Reading Models

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Reading model = formalized hypothesis about how **attention shifts** and word **recognition unfolds** over time.

Serial models:

Words are processed
one by one

E-Z Model

(Reichle et al., 2006)

Parallel models:

Multiple words can be processed **in parallel**

SWIFT Model

(Engbert et al, 2005)

OB1-Reader Model

(Snell et al., 2018)

Hybrid/ completion models:

Glenmore Model

(Reilly, Radach, 2003)

Different models make different assumptions about how words are processed.



Practical guidelines for a reading experiment

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Linguistic parameters:

- Control **length, frequency, predictability** across condition:
 - Use **corpora** to estimate frequency
 - Collect **cloze test** data to determine predictability
(``He mailed a letter without a _____'')
- **Match words** for lexical category



Manipulate only the variable relevant to your research question

- Use **filler trials** to mask your manipulated variable
- Interleave experimental trials with **simple questions** to keep focus



Practical guidelines for a reading experiment

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Visual parameters:

- Keep sentences on **one line**
- Add **spacing** to avoid overlapping saccades
- Leave **margin** between text lines
- Avoid AOIs at **sentence edges** or before punctuation
- Use **monospace** font (Courier New)
- Prefer **gray / black** backgrounds to reduce eye strain
- Leave **empty margins** at screen edges



Applications in language studies

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Reading

Visual World paradigm

Preferential Looking paradigm



What is the Visual World Paradigm?

Fundamentals

Data

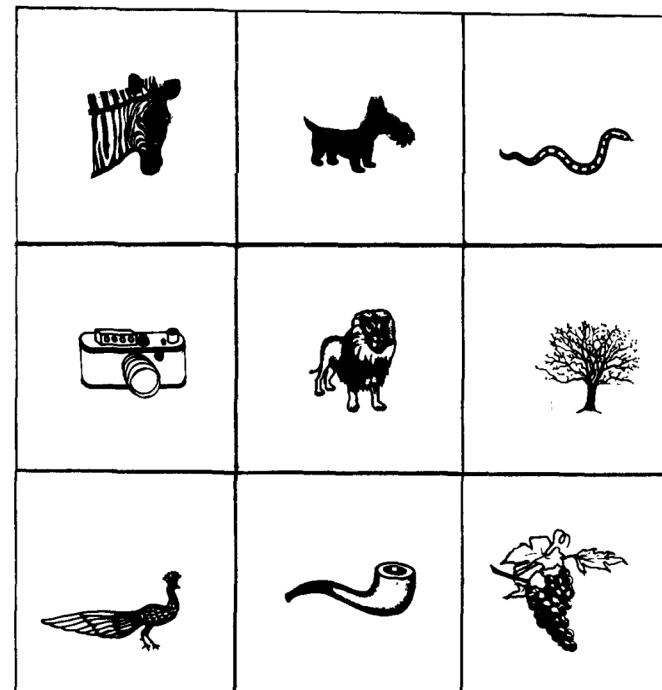
Applications

The Visual World Paradigm **integrates auditory linguistic input with visual stimuli**, which can be either extralinguistic (e.g., pictures or scenes) or linguistic (e.g., isolated words).

→ Aim: study language comprehension as it unfolds (auditory language processing)

Advantages:

- Natural
- suitable for non-readers
(e.g., children, special populations)



Cooper, 1974

→ There is a **direct link** between **auditory processing** and **visual attention**.

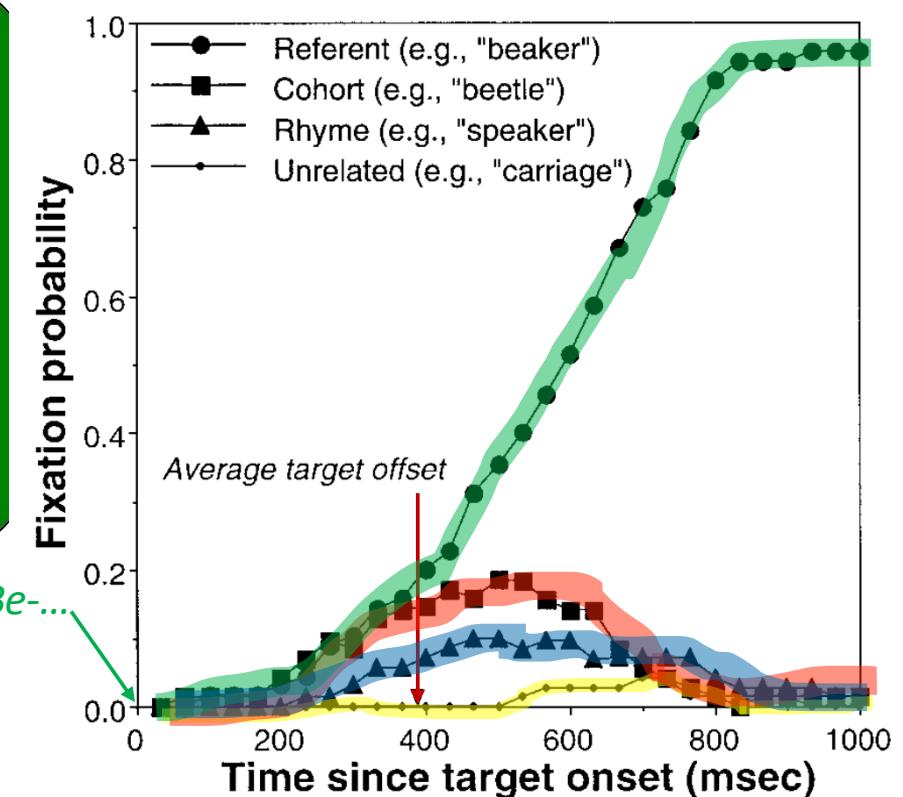
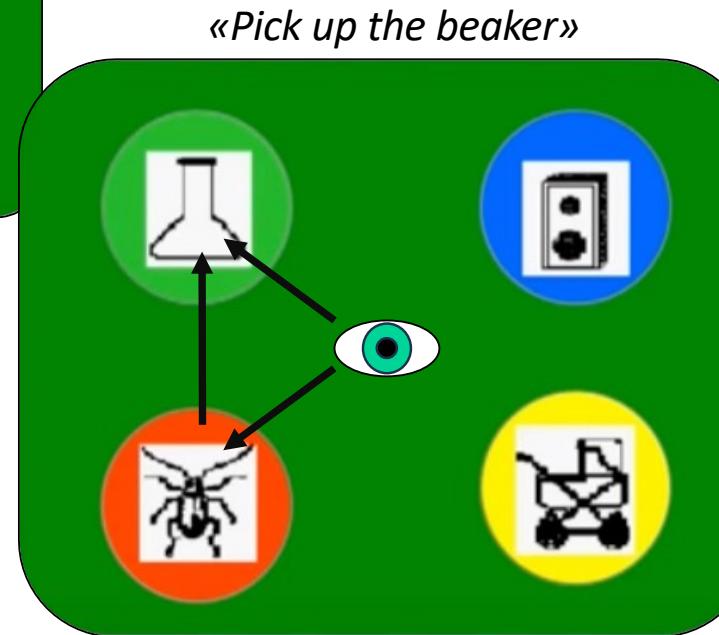
Spoken word recognition

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

How spoken word recognition unfolds over time.



adapted from Allopenna et al. (1998)
Images from M.Tanenhaus



Other studies

The Visual World Paradigm has been used to study many aspects of language processing:

- **Tanenhaus et al. (1995)** → Real-time integration of linguistic and visual information
- **Altmann & Kamide (1999)** → Predictive processing: listeners use verb meaning to anticipate upcoming referents before they are mentioned.
- **Trueswell et al. (1999)** → Syntactic ambiguity resolution: visual context guides parsing and interpretation.
- **Snedeker & Trueswell (2003)** → Early integration of prosody: intonational cues help disambiguate syntactic structure.

...



Applications in language studies

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Reading

Visual World paradigm

Preferential Looking paradigm



The Preferential Looking Paradigm

Fundamentals

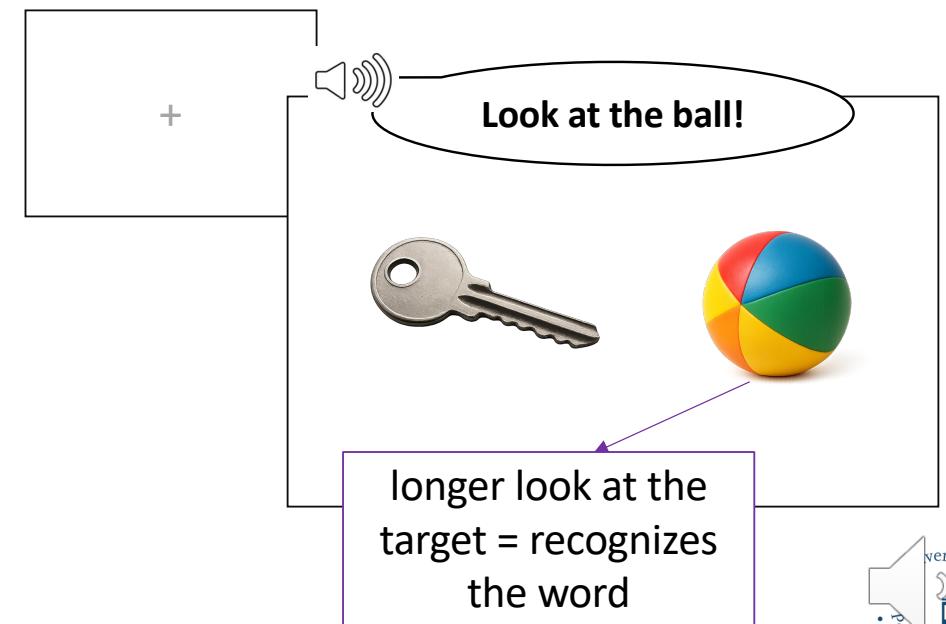
Data

Applications

One of the most used methods to study **language comprehension in infants and toddlers**.

Basic assumptions:

- **Where** and **how long** a child looks reflects **what they understand**.
- **Longer looks** at the target vs distractor = **comprehension**



The Preferential Looking Paradigm

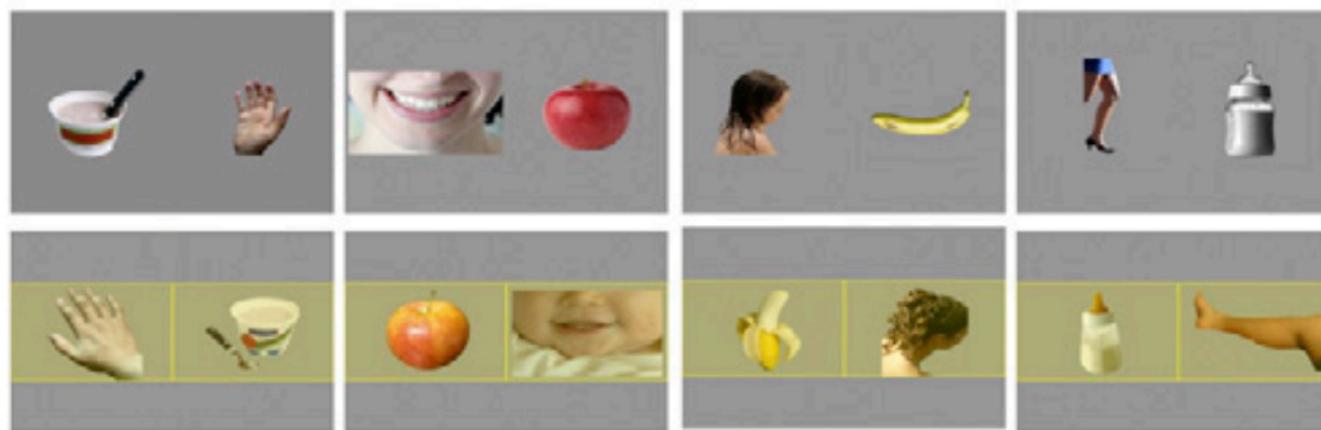
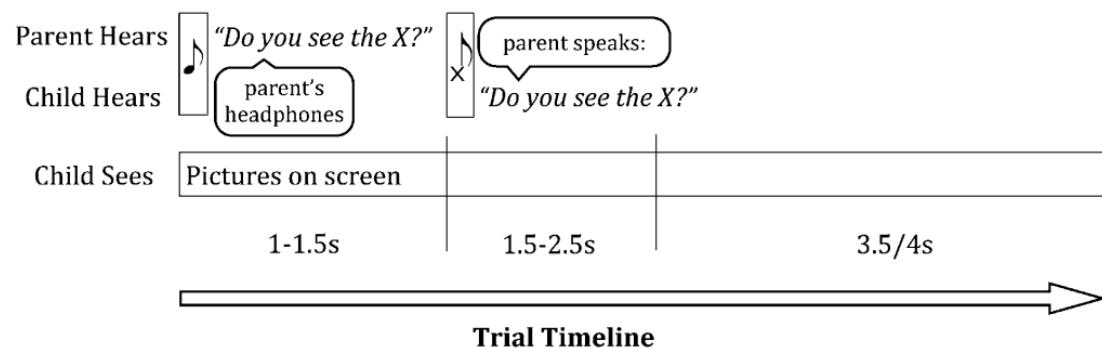
Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Vocabulary comprehension

Infants as young as 6 months know the meanings of common nouns



Bergelson & Swingley, 2012

The Preferential Looking Paradigm

Fundamentals

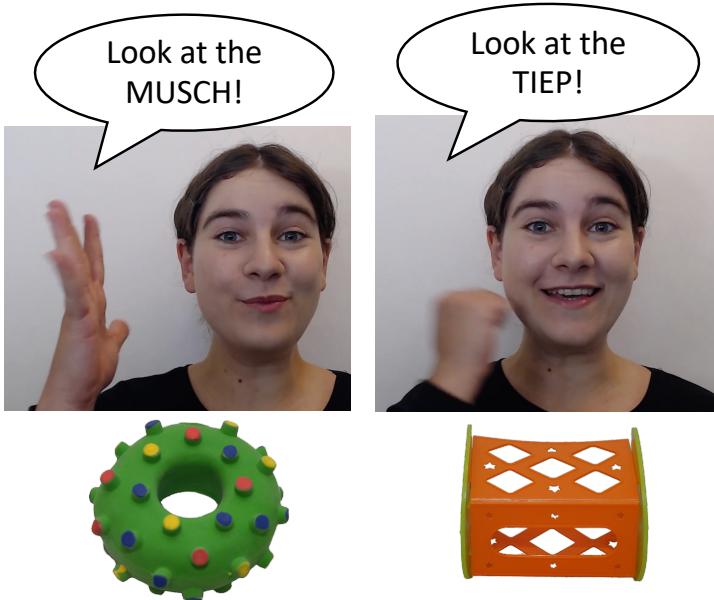
Data

Applications

Language Learning

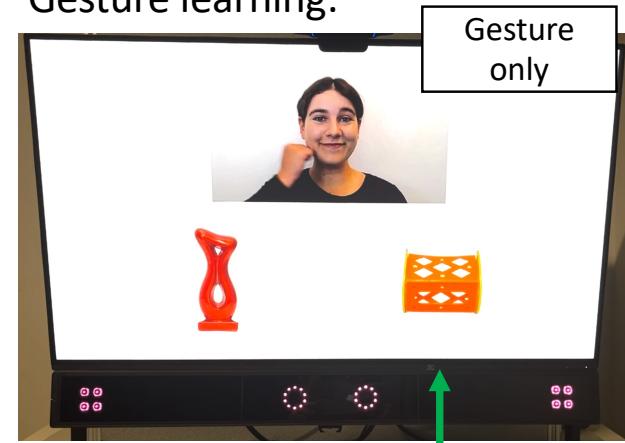
An example with **novel gestures** learning (14-month-old infants).

Familiarization

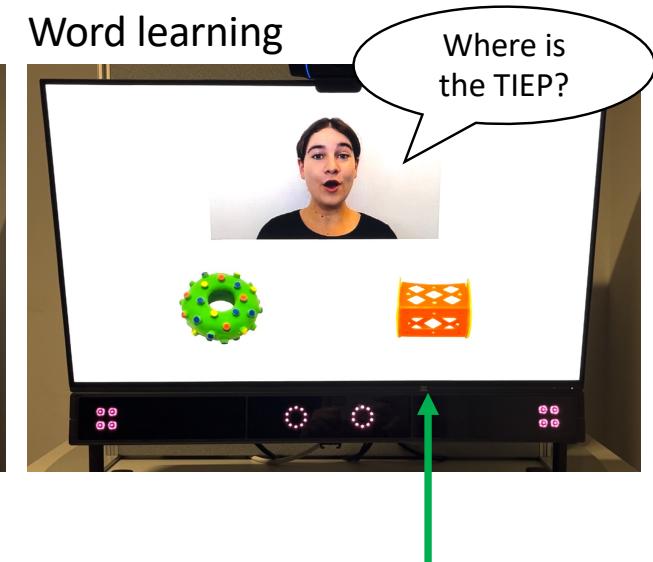


Test

Gesture learning:



Word learning



If infants learned the associations, they would **look longer at the correct referent** –whether the cue is the **word** or the **gesture**.

BabyLAB Potsdam/Arianna Colombani

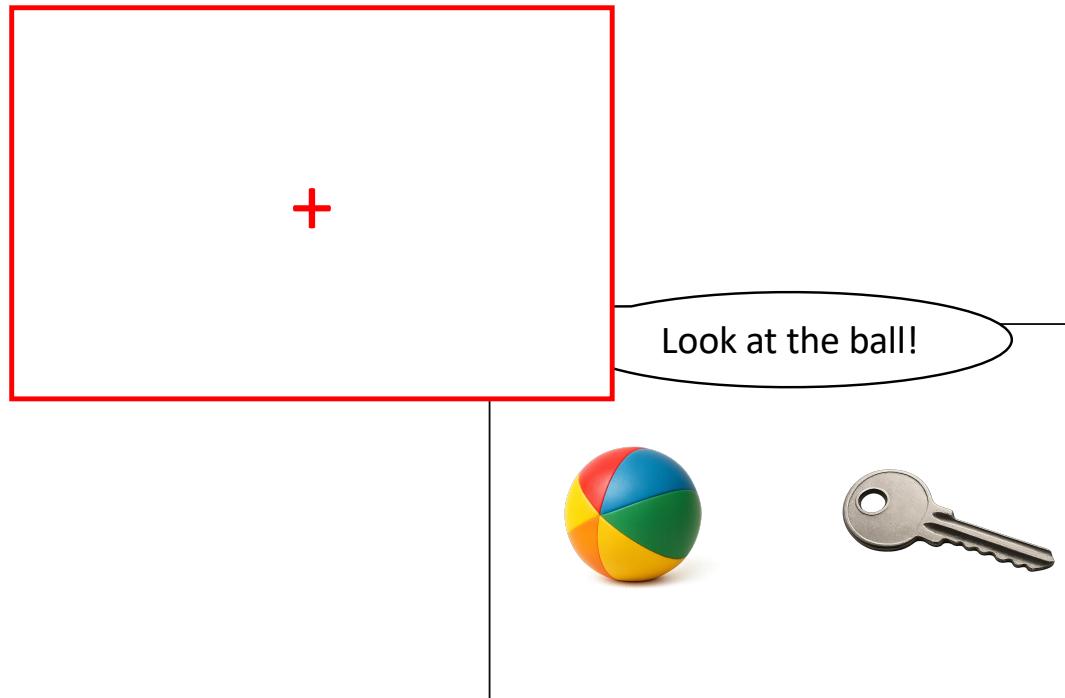
Practical guidelines

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Start each trial with a **fixation cross** for consistent gaze alignment



Counterbalance item position across trials

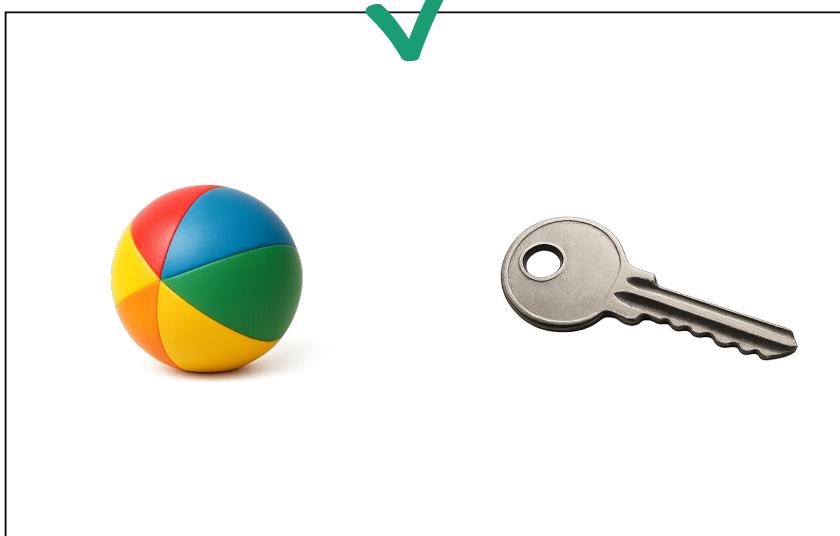
Practical guidelines

Fundamentals

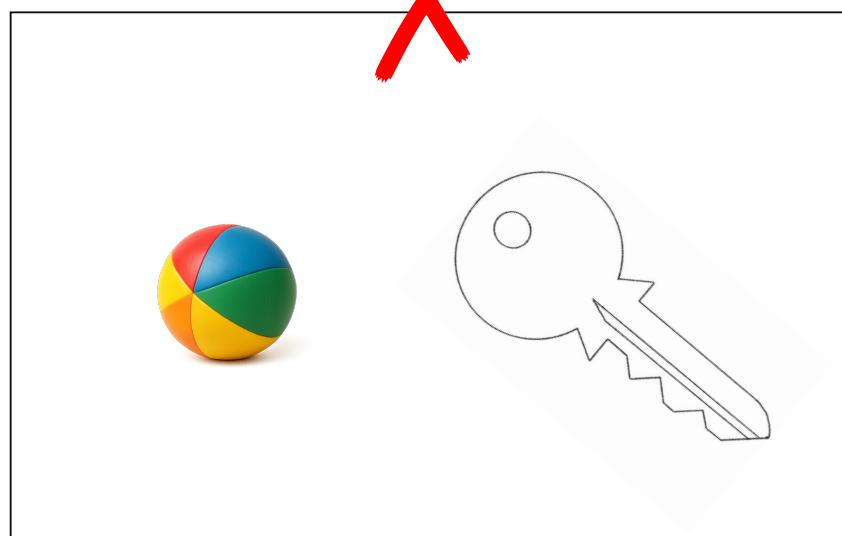
Data

Applications

Control **object size** and **visual salience**



same size and salience



different size and salience

Practical guidelines

Fundamentals

Data

Applications

Use homogeneous images

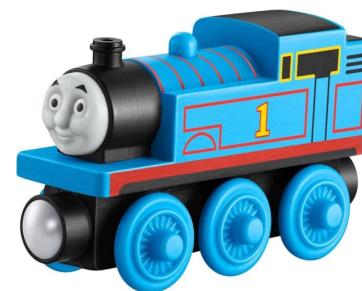
- style
- background
- color palette → salience

Generative AI tools ([Leonardo.ai](#), [DALL·E](#), [MidJourney](#)) can help create your set of images



Colombani et al., in review

same style, salience, and color palette



different styles and salience

Practical guidelines

Fundamentals

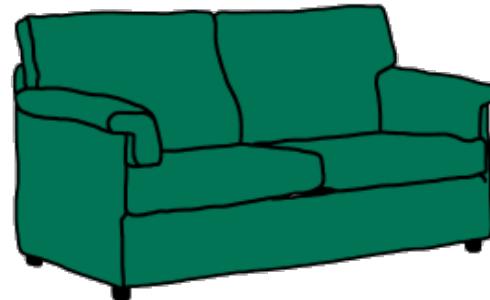
Data

Applications

Pre-test for **naming agreement**

- test with **external participants**
- use **databases**
 - e.g. Snodgrass e Vanderwart (1980)
 - e.g., Multipic (Duñabeitia et al., 2022).

couch?



sofa?

Duñabeitia et al., 2022

Practical guidelines

Fundamentals >>> Data

Applications >>>

Control the **phonological parameter** of the spoken words

- Keep consistent
 - Syllable **structure**
 - Syllable **count** (prefer monosyllables)
- **Onset:** Different onsets help discrimination

CVC vs. CVC is easier to compare
than CVC vs. CVCC

Ball vs Sofa is easier to discriminate
than Ball vs Baby

and the **linguistic parameters** too

Edit audio files so target
words have **consistent**
onset/offset across items



Practical guidelines for a reading experiment

Fundamentals >>> Data >>> Applications >>>

Linguistic parameters:

- Control **length, frequency, predictability** across condition:
 - Use **corpora** to estimate frequency
 - Collect **cloze test** data to determine predictability
(«He mailed a letter without a _____»)
- **Match words** for lexical category



Recommended readings



Colombani, 2nd International SOLAB Conference, October 2025



Recommended readings

Tobii's series «The fundamentals of eye tracking» :

The fundamentals of eye tracking part 1: The link between theory and research question

Roy S. Hessel
Ignace T. C. Hooge

The fundamentals of eye tracking part 2: From research question to operationalization

Ignace T. C. Hooge^{1,2}
Richard Andersson⁷.

The fundamentals of eye tracking part 3: How to choose an eye tracker

Marcus Nyström¹ 
Roger Johansson⁵.

The fundamentals of eye tracking part 4: Tools for conducting an eye tracking study

Diederick C. Niehorster
Dan Witzner Hansen⁶.

The fundamentals of eye tracking part 5: The importance of piloting

Roy S. Hessel¹  · Diederick C. Niehorster^{2,3} · Marcus Nyström² · Richard Andersson⁴ · Gijs A. Holleman⁵ ·
Ignace T. C. Hooge¹

Tobii's white papers:

tobii

A complete guide
to the fundamentals
of eye tracking

**Eye tracking for
pupilometry insights**



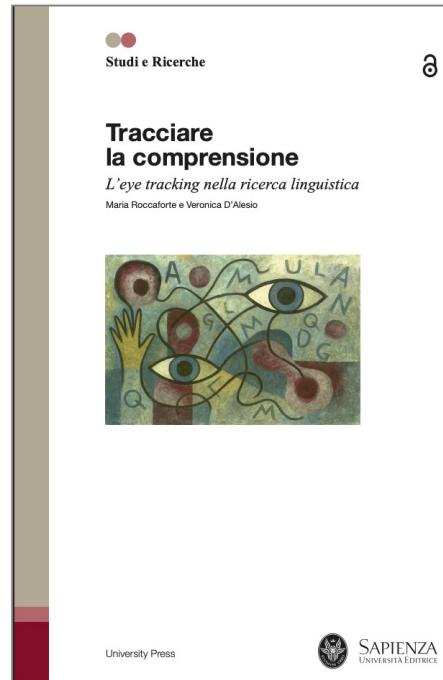
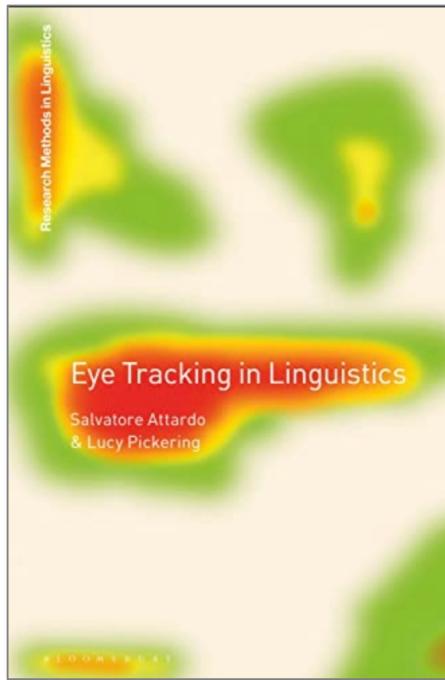
Recommended readings

Manuals and tutorials:

Attardo, S., & Pickering, L. (2023). *Eye tracking in linguistics* (First publishing). Bloomsbury Academic.

Roccaforte, M., & D'Alesio, V. (2025). *Tracciare la comprensione. L'eye tracking nella ricerca linguistica*. <https://doi.org/10.13133/9788893773874>

Kasneci, E., Gao, H., Ozdel, S., Maquiling, V., Thaqi, E., Lau, C., Rong, Y., Kasneci, G., & Bozkir, E. (2024). *Introduction to Eye Tracking: A Hands-On Tutorial for Students and Practitioners* (No. arXiv:2404.15435). arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2404.15435>



INTRODUCTION TO EYE TRACKING: A HANDS-ON TUTORIAL FOR STUDENTS AND PRACTITIONERS

A PREPRINT

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April 25, 2024

Recommended readings

Video resources:

How to set a Preferential Looking experiment in Tobii Pro Lab:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4jdD6q1D1Q>

Webcam Eye Tracking for Infants and Toddler (Labvanced):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m2n-L-Nzf4>

Infant calibration in Tobii Pro Lab : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0X3Bd8PKI0>

Labvanced Blog: <https://www.labvanced.com/content/research/en/blog/>

How Do You See? Visual Structures & Pathway - Visual Cortex - Occipital Lobe:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rozqChRO0zY>

What Can Our Eyes Tell Us About Language? Eye Tracking:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXx73W0uyCg>

Suggested papers:

Conklin, K., & Pellicer-Sánchez, A. (2016). Using eye-tracking in applied linguistics and second language research. *Second Language Research*, 32(3), 453–468.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26375858>

Valtakari, N. V., Hooge, I. T. C., Viktorsson, C., Nyström, P., Falck-Ytter, T., & Hessels, R. S. (2021). Eye tracking in human interaction: Possibilities and limitations. *Behavior Research Methods*, 53(4), 1592–1608. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-020-01517-x>



Thank you!

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<https://clmrnn.github.io/>



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Workshop Content

Fundamentals

1. Why measuring gaze behavior?
2. How does vision work?
3. How does an eye tracker work?
4. Choose your eye tracker
5. How do eye trackers compare?
6. When is an eye tracker «good» for us?

Data collection and analysis

1. Eye Tracker Calibration
2. Practical Advice for Data Collection
3. Types of Software
4. Basic Metrics
5. Define Areas of Interest (AOIs)
6. Eye Tracking Metrics
7. Data Visualization
8. Pupillometry

Applications in Language studies

1. Reading
2. Reading models
3. Key variables in reading
4. Practical guidelines for a reading experiment
5. What is the visual world paradigm?
6. Spoken word recognition
7. Other studies
8. What do we measure?
9. The preferential looking paradigm
10. Practical guidelines

References



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Hessels, R. S., Nuthmann, A., Nyström, M., Andersson, R., Niehorster, D. C., & Hooge, I. T. C. (2024). The fundamentals of eye tracking part 1: The link between theory and research question. *Behavior Research Methods*, 57(1), 16. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-024-02544-8>

Hooge, I. T. C., Nuthmann, A., Nyström, M., Niehorster, D. C., Holleman, G. A., Andersson, R., & Hessels, R. S. (2025). The fundamentals of eye tracking part 2: From research question to operationalization. *Behavior Research Methods*, 57(2), 73. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-024-02590-2>

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ADDITIONAL SLIDES



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