

Perceptual and Conceptual Processing of Images: A Garner Interference Study
Examining the Interaction between Image Format and Semantic Classification
of Black-and-White, Greyscale, and Coloured Line-Drawings

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Abstract

22

23 We used the Garner paradigm to examine the relationship between the
24 perceptual and conceptual aspects of an image for identification.
25 Participants completed tasks that required them to selectively attend to
26 semantic identity (e.g., manmade vs. natural) while ignoring image format,
27 and vice versa, with the irrelevant dimension either held constant
28 (baseline block) or varying simultaneously (filtering block). Experiment 1
29 compared black-and-white and greyscale drawings (BWvGS) and
30 Experiment 2 compared coloured and greyscale drawings (CvGS). The
31 former assessed the contribution of structural form cues to perception,
32 while the latter assessed the importance of colour. Garner interference
33 was found with accuracy (with more errors in filtering than baseline) in
34 both the BWvGS and CvGS experiments, but this was asymmetric and
35 limited to the semantic classification task. Participants' selective attention
36 to semantic identity failed when the image format varied simultaneously,
37 indicating that conceptual processing is not independent of perceptual
38 processing. However, in the image format task, selective attention to
39 image format was successful despite variation in semantic identity,
40 demonstrating that perceptual processing can occur independently of
41 conceptual analysis. Together, these results demonstrate that the
42 semantic classification of images is influenced by the format of the
43 stimulus.

44

45 **Introduction**

46

47 Requiring individuals to semantically classify drawings of objects is near
48 ubiquitous in neuropsychological testing batteries, including the Boston
49 Naming Test (Kaplan et al., 1983), Hooper Visual Organization Test
50 (Hooper, 1983), Benton Visual Retention Test (Benton, 1945), and
51 Montreal Cognitive Assessment (Nasreddine et al., 2005). However, our
52 understanding of how we process the meaning and format of images is
53 limited. A notable, paradoxical example of this comes from patients with
54 visual form agnosia, who display impairments in perceptually recognising
55 line drawings and basic shapes (Peel & Chouinard, 2023). Many of these
56 patients are unable to judge the length of lines. This distortion, along with
57 complaints of unclear vision, or things ‘blurring together’, might explain
58 why recognition of figures composed solely of lines is so poor. Recognition
59 of stimuli tends to improve when other cues, such as colour or texture, are
60 present. For example, one patient could recognise a line drawing of a
61 female lion as an animal but guessed that it was a horse or a dog and
62 identified it as a lion when a yellow colour was added to the picture (Landis
63 et al., 1982). Thus, it is conceivable that recognition might improve if other
64 cues are present to provide diagnostic information, like surface
65 characteristics or other structural cues. Moreover, patients retain
66 knowledge about the objects depicted and can list their uses and functions
67 once they are informed about the object’s identity, thus demonstrating that
68 their problems in recognition are perceptual, not conceptual. In contrast,
69 patients with other conditions like associative agnosia demonstrate

opposite deficits, where perceptual recognition is intact, but semantically describing objects are deficient (Mendoza 2011). This raises the question, can these aspects of an image – their image format and their identity – be processed independently of one another?

In other words, how integral are the perceptual and conceptual aspects of an image for identification?

A typical view of object recognition implicates early visual areas, such as the primary visual cortex, with fine-grained featural analysis, and later visual areas, like the anterior temporal cortex, with conceptual aspects of processing (Kravitz et al., 2013). However, neuroimaging studies investigating how perceptual and conceptual processing interact in object recognition paint a more complicated picture (Chouinard et al., 2008; Chouinard & Goodale, 2012; Devereux et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2018; Victoria et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2020). For instance, Victoria et al. (2019) found that an extensive network of brain areas, including early visual areas, are involved with conceptual processing in a living/non-living task. The authors also found common activation to visual similarity in non-visual areas, such as the angular gyrus and the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex. This work demonstrates that the perceptual and conceptual aspects of image processing can interact in object processing in both early and later visual areas. Other neuroimaging work has highlighted that the effects of task demand and selective attention might modulate responses in both early and later visual areas (Bugatus et al., 2017; Çukur et al., 2013). In the present investigation, we extend this research by testing selective attention in a well-established psychophysical task that has not been

utilised in this context. We tested if participants could efficiently categorise Snodgrass & Vanderwart (1980) images according to their semantic identity (e.g., manmade or natural) while ignoring their image format (e.g., black-and-white vs. greyscale, or greyscale vs. colour), and vice versa, using a Garner speeded classification task (Garner, 1970).

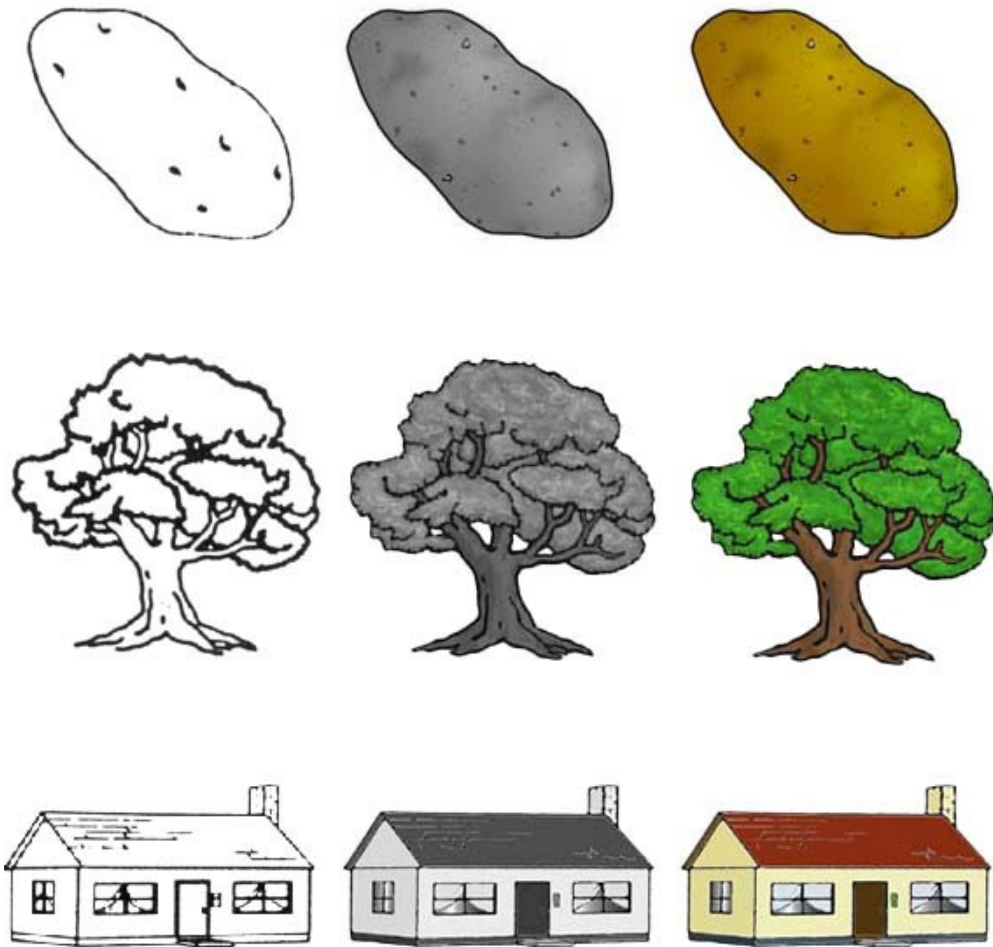
The Garner paradigm examines people's ability to selectively attend to one aspect of a stimulus while ignoring variation in another, much like the Stroop task (1935). In the Stroop task, people have more difficulty naming colour words when their font is in a different colour. For example, people are slower and make more errors when naming the word RED written in purple font compared to the word RED written in red font. The Garner paradigm exploits a similar effect by examining people's ability to selectively attend to one aspect of a multidimensional stimulus. The typical example of this effect is demonstrated by people being unable to selectively attend to the width of rectangles while ignoring their height (Garner, 1970). In one block of trials, termed 'baseline', people judge the width of rectangles that have a fixed height. In another block of trials, termed 'filtering', people again judge the width of rectangles, but the height of the rectangles can also vary from trial-to-trial. Garner interference is demonstrated with longer reaction times (RT) and / or more errors in the filtering compared to the baseline block. It is unclear from previous research if Garner interference can also occur with semantic identity and image format.

Two comparisons were of interest in the present investigation. The first compared black-and-white and greyscale images and the second

compared colour and greyscale images. Previous work with the Garner paradigm by Cant and colleagues (2008; 2009) examined the interaction between form and different surface characteristics. They reported that colour and texture were processed independently of form as they found no evidence of Garner interference and thus considered them separable. However, this work considered form only by its metric size dimensions of height and width. At the level of conceptual judgements, there is evidence that colour can be diagnostic and facilitate recognition. For example, colour has been reported to facilitate object recognition in semantic categorisation tasks for natural objects compared to artifacts (Chouinard & Goodale, 2012; Bramão et al., 2011). Whether Garner interference occurs for conceptual judgements when the image format varies between colour and greyscale remains an outstanding question to be answered.

Moreover, there are other ways to conceptualise form. From an artistic perspective, a 2D image has form only if it gives an impression of a third dimension (Arnheim, 1974). Images of squares and cubes provide examples of images without and with form, respectively. The former depicts width and height two dimensionally while the latter depict width, height, and length three dimensionally. One can also say that line drawings also depict form to various degrees, ranging from simple to complex (Figure 1). Comparing black-and-white (i.e., line drawings) versus greyscale images is of interest in this regard. Line drawings have long been used by humans to depict objects in the real world dating back to 73,000-years-ago (Henshilwood et al., 2018). For the most part, these images tend to be simple - composed of lines conveying a third dimension

145 primarily through occlusion. We refer to these instances as having simple
 146 pictorial form. Greyscale images, like those in the updated version of the
 147 Snodgrass & Vanderwart (1980) stimulus set, have additional pictorial
 148 cues, such as texture and shading, to depict a third dimension, which
 149 means they have more complex pictorial form.



150

151 *Figure 1.* Examples of lines drawings ranging from simple to complex form –
 152 original black-and-white, greyscale, and coloured line drawings from left to right
 153 of Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980) images updated by Rossion & Pourtois
 154 (2004) to contain coloured and greyscale versions.

155 In essence, this distinction between simple and complex pictorial
 156 form is one of structure. Complex pictorial form provides a richer
 157 simulation of real-world structure than simple pictorial form. The effects of

adding structural cues on object recognition is incompletely understood. Bonin and colleagues (2019) found that naming latencies in writing were fastest for colour images followed by greyscale images followed by black-and-white line drawings – demonstrating that image formats are processed differently when they are named in writing. To our knowledge, no previous research has examined the effects of image format in a semantic classification task using Garner interference.

We address this knowledge gap. Our primary interest was to test whether semantic classification can operate independently of variation in image format. Given the lack of precedence, we did not have specific predictions about whether Garner interference would be present or not. If interference was observed in the experiment using black-and-white and greyscale images (BWvGS), then that would be evidence for structural cues being important for identifying drawings. If interference was observed in the experiment using colour and greyscale images (CvGS), then that would indicate that colour is also integral for recognition.

Methods

Overview

Half ($n = 18$) the participants completed the black-and-white line drawings vs. greyscale images (BWvGS) experiment while the other half completed the colour vs. greyscale images (CvGS) experiment ($n = 18$). Each experiment comprised 6 blocks: 3 image format (2 baseline, 1 filtering) and

3 semantic category (2 baseline, 1 filtering) blocks that were completed in a counterbalanced order as determined by a Latin square. Eighteen participants also completed a control experiment verifying that our general procedures can replicate Garner interference with variations in the height and width of rectangles (2 baseline, 1 filtering). These participants completed the control experiment either before or after completing the BWvGS or CvGS experiment in a counterbalanced order. The entire session took between 30-60 minutes. The study was approved by the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee and was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants provided written informed consent.

Participants

Thirty-six right-handed participants completed the study ($M_{\text{age}} = 25.87$ years, age-range = 19-40, 24 females). We verified that all participants had at least 20/40 vision in each eye using the Snellen Eye Chart (Snellen, 1862) and were right-handed using the Edinburgh Handedness Inventory (Oldfield, 1971).

Stimuli and apparatus

All tasks were presented using E-Prime 3.0 software on a 24" ASUS VG248QE monitor (Taipei, Taiwan) running at 120 Hz with a display resolution of 1920 × 1080. Participants viewed the stimuli at a fixed viewing distance of 57cm, with their head placed on a chin-and-head rest. Responses were recorded with button pressing on a Chronos Multifunction

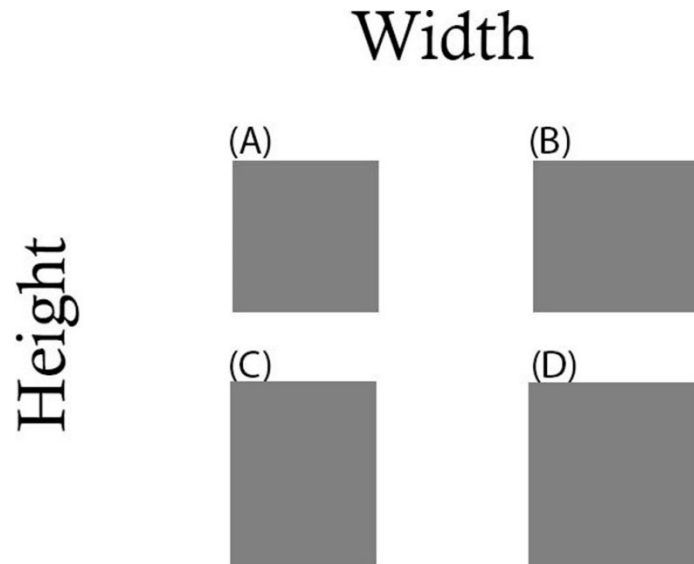
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207 Response and Stimulus Device (Model PST-100430, Psychology Software
208 Tools).

209 We used the following procedure to generate a set of images for the
210 experiments. Stimulus pairs (man-made and natural) were created from
211 the Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980) image set of 280-line drawings,
212 which was more recently updated to contain greyscale and coloured
213 versions of the same items (Rossion et al., 2004) (for examples, see Figure
214 1). We classified these items as either man-made or natural, with any
215 ambiguous images being removed (e.g., a cartoon heart, a directional
216 arrow etc.). Then, the stimulus set was further reduced according to the
217 existing naming reaction time (RT), naming accuracy, familiarity, and
218 complexity norms published in Rossion et al. (2004). Any item with < 90%
219 line drawing naming accuracy was removed as well as any item where
220 there was a substantial difference between line drawing and greyscale
221 naming accuracy (e.g., the item 'brush' dropped from 100% accurate with
222 line drawing to only 64% accurate with greyscale). Items were then
223 clustered according to 100ms increments in RT (e.g., 600-700ms, 700-
224 800ms, etc.) and selectively matched in manmade-natural stimulus pairs as
225 best as possible according to line drawing familiarity, and line drawing and
226 greyscale complexity ratings. Independent samples *t*-tests verified that
227 there was no difference between the manmade and natural items (all $p >$
228 .215) on any of these metrics. The result was a pool of 54 items or 27 pairs
229 of stimuli (for full list, see Appendix 1). Stimuli image files were resized so
230 that all subtended a visual angle of approximately 7.5. For the control task,
231 4 grey rectangles were created in Photoshop (Adobe Inc. 2019) that varied

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232 in height (46 vs. 56mm) and width (44 vs. 52mm) factorially (Figure 2).
233 These dimensions were chosen based on precedent use (Freud et al.,
234 2013).



235

236 *Figure 2.* Depicts the 4 grey rectangles used in the control experiment. (A) and (B)
237 are the ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ short rectangles, respectively. (C) and (D) are the ‘thin’
238 and ‘thick’ tall rectangles, respectively.

239

240 *Experimental Design*

241 The two main experimental tasks, BWvGS and CvGS, were identical except
242 that coloured images were presented in one while black-and-white line
243 drawings were presented in the other. Before each task, participants were
244 instructed to make their judgments as quickly and accurately as possible.

245

246 Baseline: There were four baseline blocks comprising two image format
247 (IF) tasks and two semantic category (SC) tasks. In each of these, one
248 aspect of the stimulus was held constant, while the other varied randomly
249 from trial-to-trial.

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250 *Image Format (IF)*: Participants were randomly presented with each
251 image from only one semantic category at a time using E-Prime. For
252 instance, in one block of trials, participants were shown all the "manmade"
253 images, presented once in colour and once in greyscale in the CvGS
254 experiment and once in black-and-white and once in greyscale in the
255 BWvGS experiment. Each baseline condition consisted of 54 trials (27
256 colour image and 27 greyscale images in the CvGS experiment, 27 black-
257 and-white images and 27 greyscale images in the BWvGS experiment).
258 Participants were instructed to classify each image based on its format by
259 pressing "1" for colour and "2" for greyscale in the CvGS experiment and
260 "1" for black-and-and-white and "2" for greyscale in the BWvGS
261 experiment. Each trial began with a 500-ms fixation point. This was
262 followed by a 500-ms blank screen and then the stimulus. The stimulus
263 remained on the screen for 3000-ms or until a response was made, which
264 ever came first. To prevent expectancy effects, an inter-trial interval was
265 randomly generated by E-Prime, ranging from 1200 to 2000-ms in
266 increments of 200-ms.

267 *Semantic Category (SC)*: The design and procedures were identical
268 as in the IF baseline, except participants were presented with stimuli in
269 only one image format (i.e., coloured or greyscale in the CvGS experiment
270 and black-and-white or greyscale in the BWvGS experiment) and the
271 semantic category varied randomly from trial-to-trial. Participants
272 classified images according to their semantic category by pressing '1' for
273 natural and '2' for manmade.

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275 Filtering: There were two filtering tasks. In the filtering tasks, participants
276 were presented with each image in a similar manner as the baseline
277 blocks. Trials began with a 500-ms fixation. This was followed by a 500-ms
278 blank screen and then the stimulus. The stimulus was shown until a
279 response was made or 3000-ms had elapsed, whichever came first. Each
280 filtering block consisted of 108 total trials. Both stimulus features (image
281 format and semantic identity) varied randomly from trial to trial. In one of
282 the tasks, participants were instructed to focus on the image format while
283 ignoring the semantic category. In the other task, the instructions were
284 reversed with participants being instructed to focus on the semantic
285 category while ignoring image format.

286

287 Control Experiment (HvW): The control experiment had the same logic.
288 Participants completed two baseline tasks: One for the 'short' rectangles
289 and the other for the 'tall' rectangles where only the width varied. The
290 presentation procedures were the same, beginning with a 500-ms fixation,
291 followed by a 500-ms blank screen, and then the stimulus appearing until a
292 response was made or 3000-ms elapsed, whichever came first. In the
293 'short' baseline block, participants saw only the short rectangles (both 46
294 mm tall) that varied in width (44 vs. 52mm). Each rectangle was presented
295 27 times for 54 trials in total. Similarly, in the 'tall' baseline block, only the
296 tall rectangles (both 56mm tall) were presented, varying in width (again 44
297 vs. 52mm) and each being presented 27 times for 54 trials in total.
298 Participants also completed a filtering block, where height and width

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varied randomly from trial-to-trial. All 4 rectangles were presented 27 times each in a random order for a total of 108 trials.

301

302 *Statistical Analyses*

303 The data were analysed using the *lme4* package in R (R Core Team, 2022).

304 The RT data for correct responses were logarithmically transformed to
305 reduce skewness. Outliers were identified and removed based on the
306 interquartile range (IQR) method. Specifically, the first and third quartiles
307 (Q1 and Q3) were computed, and the IQR was calculated as the difference
308 between Q3 and Q1. RT values were considered outliers if they were below
309 Q1 minus 1.5 times the IQR or above Q3 plus 1.5 times the IQR. Data points
310 falling outside this range were excluded from further analyses. The data
311 were then analysed in two stages.

312 First, the data were entered into a series of linear mixed-effects
313 models (LMMs) comparing each block to examine Garner interference
314 (filtering > baseline1 = baseline2) and to test if the baseline tasks were
315 significantly different. The latter point was important to verify. If the
316 baseline tasks were mismatched, then unequal discriminability could
317 cause a mandatory failure of selective attention and any further analysis
318 could be inappropriate (Burns, 2014). Block (baseline1 vs. baseline2 vs.
319 filtering) was entered into a model along with random intercepts and
320 slopes for participant and item. These random factors were included given
321 the potential for individual variability at both the participant and stimulus
322 level when responding to the images. In all cases, we specified the
323 'maximal model' structure for random effects by including both intercepts

and slopes (Barr et al., 2013). However, as recommended by Matuscheck (2017), in cases where the model failed to converge, or where singularity of model fit was a concern due to near perfect correlations between slopes and intercepts, slopes were excluded to have the most parsimonious model capturing the data to avoid loss of power with the maximal model structure. The same analysis, with Block as a fixed factor and participant and item as random factors, was done for each version of the task (IF and SC) and each experiment (BWvGS and CvGS), resulting in four LMMs. The p -values for fixed effects were calculated from an F test and t test based on Statterthwaite's approximation. Any significant effects were further examined with *post hoc* pairwise comparison of means, with a Bonferroni adjustment to correct for multiple comparisons.

In stage 2, the baseline tasks were combined into a single variable (Baseline Combined) and entered into another LMM with random slopes and intercepts for participant and item, and Block (Baseline Combined vs. Filtering), Task (IF vs. SC), and their interaction as fixed effects. This was done for the BWvGS and CvGS experiments. Again, we specified the maximal model structure without loss of power, and all instances where models failed to converge are described where applicable. From there, p -values for fixed effects were calculated from an F test and t test based on Statterthwaite's approximation, and any significant effects were further examined with *post hoc* pairwise comparison of means with a Benjamini-Hochberg False Discovery Rate (FDR) correction.

As Garner interference is typically also inferred by increased error rates in the filtering compared to baseline blocks, we analysed accuracy in

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349 a similar manner as the RT data. However, given the accuracy data was
350 discrete and comprised scores of either 0 or 1, we performed a series of
351 Generalised Linear Mixed Models (GLMMs). With the GLMM, we specified
352 that the distribution of the dependent variable (i.e., accuracy) was
353 binomial (Brown, 2021). GLMM fit by maximum likelihood (Laplace
354 Approximation) was implemented, and the logit mixed effects model
355 included random intercepts and slopes for participants and items. For the
356 first stage of the GLMM, only Block (baseline1, baseline2, filtering) was
357 included as a fixed effect. For the next stage, Block (Baseline Combined vs.
358 filtering), Task, (SC vs. IF), and their interaction were included as fixed
359 effects. The significance of fixed effects was calculated using Type II Wald
360 Chisquare tests, and any interactions were further examined using *post*
361 *hoc* pairwise comparison of means, which corrected for multiple
362 comparisons with a Bonferroni and Benjamini-Hochberg FDR adjustment
363 for the first and second stages, respectively.

364 Finally, the RT and accuracy data from the HvW control experiment
365 were analysed using the same LMM and GLMM described earlier, with
366 Block (Baseline Tall vs. Baseline Short vs. Filtering) as a fixed factor and
367 participant and item as random factors. *Post hoc* pair-wise comparison
368 tests, which corrected for multiple comparisons with a Bonferonni
369 adjustment, were carried out to examine further any interactions and
370 effects deemed significant in the LMM and GLMM.

371 **Results**

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373 *RT*

374 *Stage 1:* LMMs included Block (Baseline1 vs. Baseline2 vs. Filtering) as a
375 fixed factor and participant and item as random factors. However, only the
376 participant random factor included both intercepts and slopes. The item
377 slopes for Block were excluded from the model as they were highly
378 correlated ($r > .99$) with the intercept for item. This resulted in an almost
379 singular fit, where the model failed to converge, and was likely due to the
380 images being simultaneously nested and crossed within conditions – i.e.,
381 only one kind of stimulus (e.g., manmade items) was presented in each
382 baseline block, but both kinds of stimuli were presented in the filtering
383 block. Thus, the final model for the BWvGS, CvGS, and control experiments
384 were: $RT \sim \text{Block} + (1 + \text{Block} \mid \text{participant}) + (1 \mid \text{item})$.

385 The results of these analyses are reported in Table 1 and displayed in
386 Figure 3. Figure 3 highlights that there were no differences between
387 baseline blocks nor evidence of Garner interference in the BWvGS (Figure
388 3, panels A & B) or CvGS (Figure 3, panels C & D) experiments. Secondly,
389 in the control experiment, Garner interference was observed, where RTs
390 were slower in the filtering block compared to the baseline ones (Figure 3,
391 panel E).

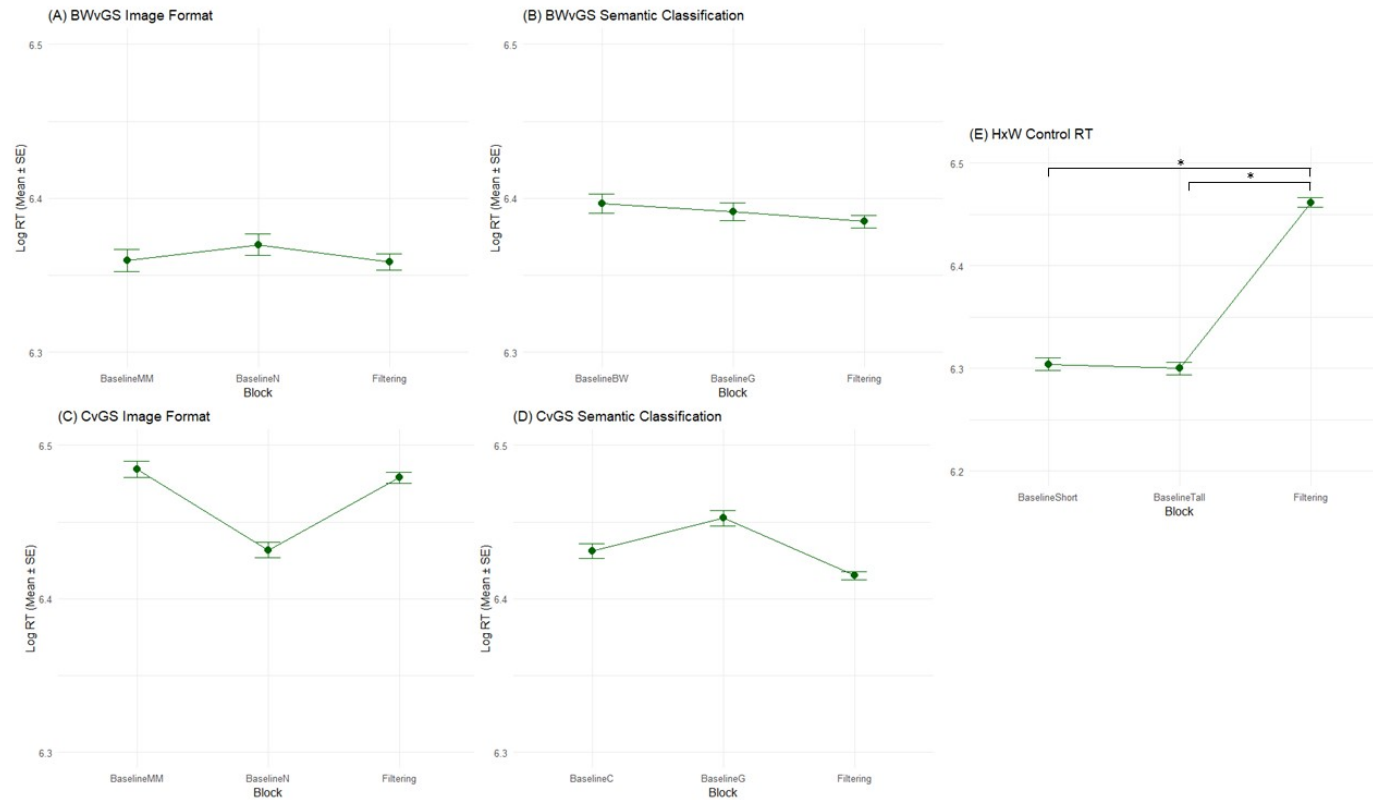
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Table 1. *LMM's examining differences between baseline and filtering blocks for reaction time data*

Experiment	Task	Fixed Effect Tests	<i>Post Hoc</i> Comparison	
BWvGS	Image Format	$F_{(2, 20.01)} = 0.52, p = .600$	-	
	Semantic	$F_{(2, 17.63)} = 0.16, p = .858$	-	
	Classification			
CvGS	Image Format	$F_{(2, 18.54)} = 1.15, p = .337$	-	
	Semantic	$F_{(2, 17.23)} = 0.94, p = .410$	-	
	Classification			
Control (HvW)	-	$F_{(2, 2460.30)} = 279.50, p < .001^*$	BaselineShort - BaselineTall	$z\text{-ratio} = -1.63, p = .327$
			BaselineShort - Filtering	$z\text{-ratio} = -17.89, p < .001^*$
			BaselineTall - Filtering	$z\text{-ratio} = -15.71, p < .001^*$

Asterisks (*) denote significant differences at the .016 level according to a Bonferroni adjustment



394

395 *Figure 3.* Line graphs depicting the Log RT mean \pm SE for the stage 1 analyses. Panels A, B, C, D, and E depict the baseline1,
 396 baseline2, and filtering analyses for the BWvsGS, CvGS, and control experiments. As can be visualised, there were no
 397 significant differences between the baseline blocks, or between the baseline blocks and filtering for the BWvGS and CvGS
 398 experiment. Panel E depicts the typical Garner interference effect with rectangles, where there is no difference between

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399 baseline blocks, and longer RT in the filtering condition. Asterisks (*) denote significant differences at the .016 level according
400 to a Bonferroni adjustment.

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402 *Stage 2:* Having verified that the RT in baseline blocks did not differ, we
 403 then combined them into a single variable for each task. For experiments 1
 404 and 2, a LMM with Task (SC vs. IF) and Block (Baseline vs. Filtering) and
 405 their interaction as fixed factors, and participant and item as random
 406 factors was performed. For the BWvGS experiment, the model failed to
 407 converge when the intercepts and slopes for the random factors, including
 408 their interaction, were included. This was due to the high degree of
 409 correlation between the intercept for item and the slopes for Block ($r >$
 410 $.99$) and Task ($r = -.82$). A model with only the intercept for item was able
 411 to converge and thus was used as the maximal model. The same was true
 412 for the CvGS experiment. Thus, the final model was: $RT \sim \text{Block} * \text{Task} + (1$
 413 $+ \text{Block} * \text{Task} \mid \text{participant}) + (1 \mid \text{item})$.

414 No main effect of Block ($F_{(1, 16.97)} = 0.39, p = .543$) or a Block \times Task
 415 interaction ($F_{(1, 17.00)} = 0.24, p = .629$) was observed with RT data in the
 416 BWvGS experiment (see *Figure 4*, panel A). However, the main effect of
 417 Task was approaching significance ($p = .060$), where participants were
 418 marginally faster in the IF compared to SC task. Thus, there was no
 419 evidence of Garner interference (Filtering $>/$ Baseline) in either the IF
 420 (Baseline $M = 6.37, SE = 0.05$, Filtering $M = 6.37, SE = 0.05$) or SC tasks
 421 (Baseline $M = 6.41, SE = 0.04$, Filtering $M = 6.40, SE = 0.05$).

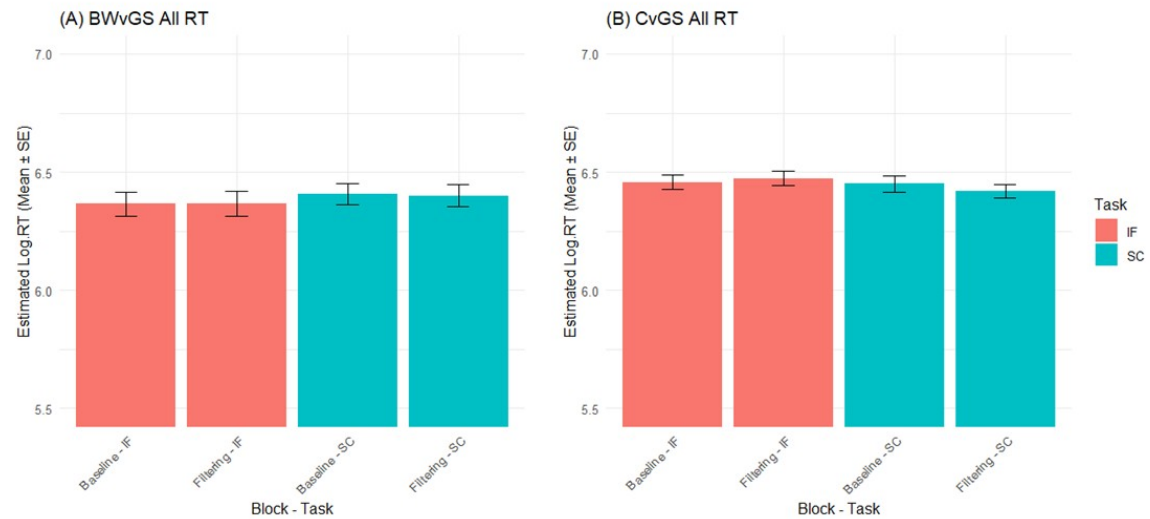
422 Similarly, there was no main effect of Block ($F_{(1, 16.98)} = 0.88, p$
 423 $= .418$), Task ($p = .798$) or a Block \times Task interaction ($F_{(1, 16.67)} = 2.11, p$
 424 $= .174$) in the CvGS experiment (see *Figure 4*, panel B). Again, there was no
 425 evidence of Garner interference (Filtering $>/$ Baseline) in the IF (Baseline

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426 $M = 6.46$, $SE = 0.03$, Filtering $M = 6.47$, $SE = 0.03$) or SC tasks (Baseline
 427 $M = 6.45$, $SE = 0.03$, Filtering $M = 6.42$, $SE = 0.03$).

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431 *Figure 4.* Bar graphs depicting the Log RT mean \pm SE for the stage 2 analyses. No
 432 differences in RT were detected for the BWvGS (panel A) or the CvGS (panel B)
 433 experiments.

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435 *Accuracy*

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437 *Stage 1:* GLMMs were calculated with Block (Baseline1 vs. Baseline2 vs.
438 Filtering) as a fixed factor and participant and item as random factors.
439 However, the inclusion of the item and participant slopes in all models
440 resulted in an almost singular fit, where the model failed to converge as the
441 slopes for Block and participant were highly correlated with the intercepts
442 for item and participant ($r > .99$). Therefore, the random slopes for both
443 random factors were excluded, making this an intercept only GLMM. The
444 final model was: Accuracy \sim Block + (1 | participant) + (1 | item).

445 The results of these analyses are reported in Table 2 and displayed in
446 Figure 5. As depicted in Figure 5, there were no differences between the
447 baseline and filtering blocks (Figure 5, panels A and C) in either IF tasks,
448 as well as the BWvGS SC task (Figure 5, panel B). However, accuracy was
449 lower in the filtering condition compared to the baseline greyscale in the
450 CvGS SC task ($z.ratio = 2.50$, $p = .037$), although this did not survive
451 correction for multiple comparisons (Figure 5, panel D). Finally, Garner
452 interference was again observed (Figure 5, panel F) in the control
453 experiment (see Table 2).

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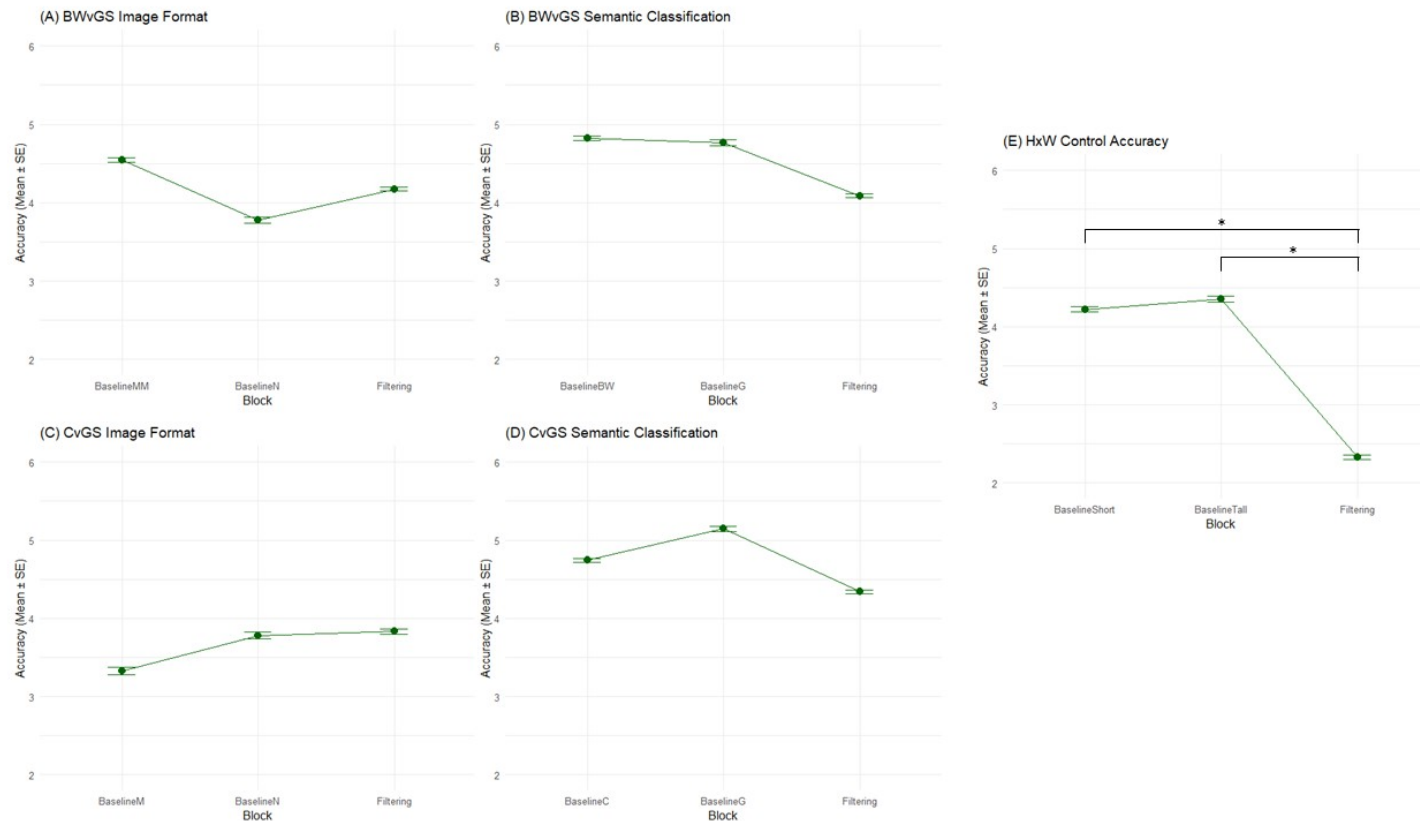
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Table 2. *GLMM examining differences between baseline and filtering blocks for accuracy data*

Experiment	Task	Fixed Effect Tests	Post Hoc Comparison	
BWvGS	Image Format	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.21, p = .331$	-	
	Semantic Classification	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 3.16, p = .206$	-	
CvGS	Image Format	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 3.16, p = .206$	-	
	Semantic Classification	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 6.83, p = .033^*$	BaselineC - BaselineGS	$z.ratio = -1.16, p = .740$
			BaselineC - Filtering	$z.ratio = 1.00, p = .951$
			BaselineGS - Filtering	$z.ratio = 2.50, p = .037$
Control (HvW)	-	$\chi^2_{(1)} = 135.73, p < .001^{**}$	BaselineShort - BaselineTall	$z.ratio = -0.24, p = .968$
			BaselineShort - Filtering	$z.ratio = 7.98, p < .001^{**}$
			BaselineTall - Filtering	$z.ratio = 8.56, p < .001^{**}$
<i>Note.</i> Results are given on the log odds ratio (not the response) scale Single asterisks (*) denote significant differences at the .05 level Double asterisks (**) denote significant differences at the .016 level according to a Bonferroni adjustment				



463

464 *Figure 5.* Line graphs depicting the logit scale accuracy mean \pm SE for the stage 1 analyses. Panels A, B, C, D, and E depict the
 465 baseline1, baseline2, and filtering analyses for the BWvsGS, CvGS, and control experiments. As can be visualised, there were
 466 no significant differences between the baseline blocks, or between the baseline blocks and filtering for the BWvGS and CvGS
 467 experiment. Panel E depicts the control experiment, where they typical Garner interference effect can be seen with no

27

468 difference between baseline blocks, and lower accuracy in the filtering condition. Asterisks (*) denote significance at the .016
469 level according to a Bonferroni adjustment.

470 *Stage 2:* Having verified that baseline blocks did not differ, a GLMM was
 471 calculated with Block (Baseline Combined vs. Filtering), Task (SC vs. IF),
 472 and their interaction as fixed factors, and participant and item as random
 473 factors. The maximal model including all random factor slopes (i.e., Block,
 474 Task, and Block \times Task) failed to converge and was singular. This was due
 475 to near perfect correlations between the slopes for Block and Task with the
 476 intercept for item ($r = .98$ and $-.84$, respectively). With these excluded, the
 477 model still failed to converge, due to extremely low correlations between
 478 the slopes for Block and Task and the intercept for participant ($r = .06$ and
 479 $-.09$, respectively). Therefore, an intercept only model was used for both
 480 BWvGS and CvGS experiments. The final model was: Accuracy \sim Block *
 481 Task + (1 | participant) + (1 | item).

482 For the BWvGS experiment (panel A, *Figure 6*), Garner interference
 483 was observed (filtering < baseline) in the SC task ($z.ratio = 3.17$, $p = .003$)
 484 and there was a Block \times Task interaction ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 7.19$, $p = .007$). This was
 485 driven by higher accuracy in the SC baseline relative to the other three
 486 blocks. However, no Garner interference was detected in the IF task
 487 ($z.ratio = -0.37$, $p = .778$).

488 A Block \times Task interaction was also observed in the CvGS
 489 experiment ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 9.09$, $p = .002$; panel B, *Figure 6*). Like in the BWvGS
 490 experiment, this was driven by Garner interference in the SC task ($z.ratio$
 491 $= 2.46$, $p = .017$) but not in the IF task ($z.ratio = -1.77$, $p = .078$). The
 492 interaction effect also seems to be driven by differences in accuracy
 493 between the tasks, where accuracy was lower in the IF compared to SC

task - IF baseline accuracy was lower than SC baseline and filtering, and IF filtering was lower than SC baseline and filtering (all $p < .001$).

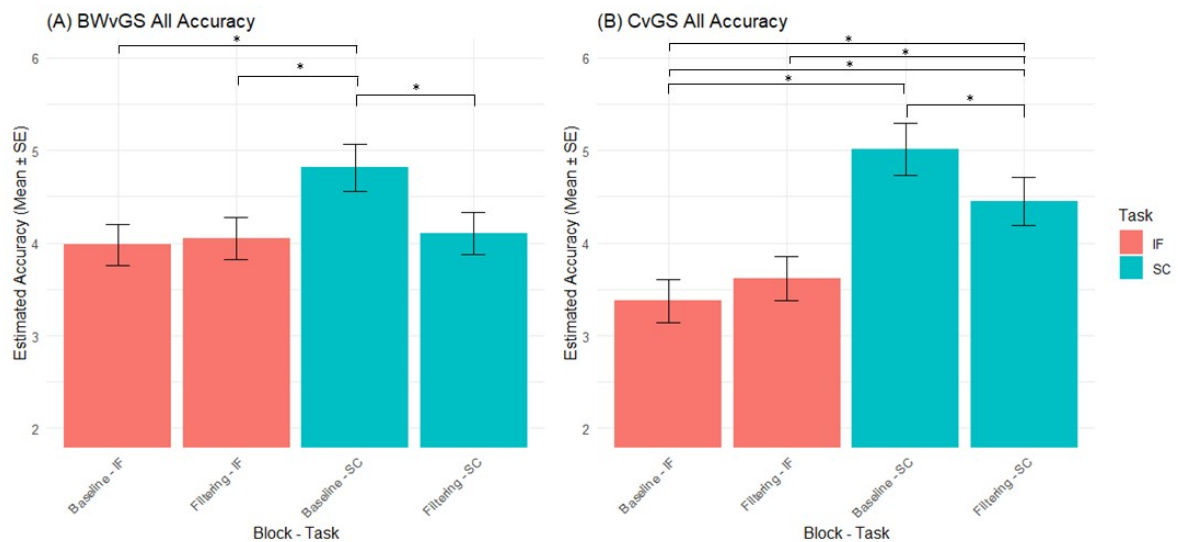


Figure 6. Bar graphs depicting the logit scale accuracy mean \pm SE for the stage 2 analyses. Panels A and B depict the significant Block \times Task interaction for the both the BWvGS and CvGS experiments, where Garner interference was detected in the SC, but not IF tasks. Asterisks (*) denote significance at the $< .05$ level.

Discussion

We investigated whether participants could selectively attend to image format while ignoring semantic category, and vice versa, by examining Garner interference. Garner interference was replicated in a control experiment examining selective attention to the width while ignoring the height of rectangles. In this task, participants made more errors and took

30

511 longer in the filtering compared to baseline blocks – confirming that the
512 typical Garner interference effect can be observed with our general
513 procedures. In both the BWvGS and CvGS experiments, no significant
514 differences were observed in the RT data, but there was significant Garner
515 interference with the accuracy data in the SC but not IF task. The most
516 likely explanation for finding the same effects in both tasks is that the
517 semantic classification of drawings is not independent of the image format,
518 but, classification of image format can occur independently of the images’
519 semantic category. The theoretical implications of these results are
520 discussed.

521 Garner interference with accuracy but not RT data has been
522 reported previously, although it is uncommon (Freud & Ganel, 2015).
523 Freud and Ganel (2015) reported the effect when participants were
524 completing a task that required the engagement of the dorsal and ventral
525 visual streams for action and perception, respectively, in an interactive
526 manner, as opposed to a typical perceptual task engaging the ventral
527 visual stream, like the present study. It is unlikely that speed-accuracy
528 trade-offs could account for us obtaining Garner interference with the
529 accuracy data only, as averaging accuracy and RT scores across blocks and
530 tasks for each participant and then correlating them (Wickelgren, 1977)
531 revealed no association between the two measures (all $p > .348$). It is
532 unclear why Garner interference was only observed with the accuracy
533 data.

Nevertheless, Garner interference with accuracy demonstrates that classifying an image's semantic identity is not separable from its image format. In both the BWvGS and CvGS experiments, our theoretical rationale for testing if selective attention to perceptual and conceptual aspects of the images was possible came from observations in form agnosia patients. People with form agnosia show the greatest impairment with processing simple, black-and-white line drawings, but show some improvement when identifying images that have more pictorial cues like the greyscale images used here (Farah, 2004; Peel & Chouinard, 2023). Our results support the notion that the difference in format between black-and-white and greyscale images is important when semantically classifying them. In neurotypical populations, previous naming experiments have demonstrated that the identification of black-and-white line drawings is slower than naming greyscale drawings (Bonin et al., 2019). However, we found no differences (both in RT and accuracy) between the baseline tasks when participants semantically classified items from only one format. This may relate to task differences. We had participants classify objects into semantic categories while Bonin et al. (2019) had participants name them. If this explanation is correct, then the processes involved in naming compared to semantically labelling items could be distinct. This is an interesting point – it is tempting to assume that one needs to identify a stimulus to semantically label it, but it appears that processing an image at the semantic level might be more automatic. Previous studies demonstrate that pictures are processed according to their semantic identity faster than their names (Carr et al., 1982; Catling &

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559 Johnson, 2006). Further research is required to differentiate semantic
560 processing from naming, but this interpretation nevertheless fits with
561 anecdotal reports from participants in our study who reported that they
562 were not identifying the stimulus according to its name before making
563 their judgement (i.e., the sequence did not follow = that's a banana →
564 that's a natural item → button press).

565 There is also evidence that colour perception is largely normal in
566 visual form agnosia patients (Peel & Chouinard, 2023), and, given that
567 colour can be diagnostic and facilitate recognition (Chouinard & Goodale,
568 2012; Bramão et al., 2011), we wanted to examine whether Garner
569 interference could be observed with structurally identical objects that
570 differed only by colour. Indeed, interference was found in the CvGS
571 experiment in the SC task, suggesting that image format colour is integral
572 with semantic classification. Some research has reported that colour and
573 form are processed independently. In an electroencephalography study,
574 Proverbio et al. (2004) report different underlying mechanisms are at play
575 when colour and form are being recognised in everyday objects, where
576 there is a primacy of global shape over colour in object recognition.
577 Likewise, in other Garner interference studies, Cant et al. (2008; 2009)
578 demonstrated that shape and colour are processed independently. The
579 present result builds from this earlier work by showing that colour and
580 form may be independent, while colour and semantic classification are not.
581 Why might this be the case?

582

For both experiments, the observed Garner interference for the SC task but not IF suggests asymmetric interference. In other Garner interference studies, asymmetric interference has been observed with emotion and identity judgements with face perception (Schweinberger et al., 1999), and two broad explanations for asymmetric Garner interference have been put forth by Atkinson et al. (2005). The first relates to the differences in processing speed of the two types of information that are under investigation where faster tasks tend to interfere with slower ones, but not vice versa. There is trending evidence that this may be the case in the BWvGS experiment, as the difference in RT between tasks was approaching significance, but the same cannot be said in the CvGS experiment. The second explanation for asymmetric interference relates to a reliance of one process over another that is unidirectional as opposed to bidirectional. We believe this best explains the effect observed in both experiments. Algom and Fitousi (2016) describe this effect as follows – given a pair of dimensions, A and B, A can be separable with respect to B, but B is integral with respect to A. Moreover, if A exists then B also exists, but if B exists A may or may not exist. For example, a phoneme must have a pitch, but a pitch can exist without any linguistic property like a phoneme. In our case, it would be the processing of featural information facilitating judgements about semantic identity but not the other way around. That is, a drawing can have a semantic identity, but it must simultaneously possess an image format to exist (if A exists then B also exists) whereas an image format does not have to possess a semantic identity (if B exists A may or may not exist).

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608 This observed relationship between conceptual and perceptual
609 processes aligns with neuroimaging results. Dirani and Pylkkanen (2024)
610 found magnetoencephalography evidence that semantic representations
611 are not strictly amodal but contain visual components. Davis and
612 colleagues (2020) also demonstrated with fMRI that visual representations
613 predict perceptual memory in visual areas, but also facilitate conceptual
614 and general memory in more anterior regions, highlighting the importance
615 of visual properties in influencing conceptual judgements. Other fMRI
616 research from Victoria et al., (2019) showed that perceptual features help
617 organize mental categories throughout the object processing hierarchy,
618 demonstrating that visual similarity impacted adaptation in nonvisual
619 brain regions like the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex. The neural correlates
620 of Garner interference have not been investigated to the authors'
621 knowledge, but whole brain analyses have shown that fronto-parietal
622 attention networks are key to selective visual attention (Salo et al., 2017).
623 Future research could seek to elucidate the relative importance of early
624 visual areas to each task investigated here to clarify our interpretations of
625 early visual processing impacting later processing, but not vice versa.

626

627 *Methodological considerations*

628 Compared to the typical Garner effect that assesses the height and width of
629 objects, the stimuli in our experiment were more complex and differed by a
630 host of other factors including configuration, size in reality, and so on. This
631 potential limitation means there may be other factors, beyond the natural

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632 vs. manmade, or colour vs. greyscale distinction that influenced processing
633 speed and accuracy owing to target image variability. To statistically
634 account for this possibility, we included the random effects associated with
635 item in our analyses. Indeed, we found the same pattern of effects in both
636 the BWvGS and CvGS analyses experiments, which supports the reliability
637 of the asymmetric interference between conceptual and perceptual
638 processing.

639 Future research could examine more precisely what kinds of featural
640 information might be producing Garner interference in the semantic
641 classification task. One possibility is line curvature. Natural objects
642 comprise more *organic* irregular lines and manmade items contain more
643 *inorganic* straight lines (Arnheim, 1974). In our stimulus set, all natural
644 objects had irregular contours while our manmade objects contained a
645 mixture of straight and irregular lines (e.g., wheel, television, and whistle).
646 These perceptual differences between categories might normally facilitate
647 their semantic classification and influence Garner interference.

648 It is also apparent from our analyses that there may have been
649 differences between the tasks in terms of difficulty. In the BWvGS
650 experiment, there was a trend for participants being faster to classify
651 objects on the IF compared to SC task, but no differences in terms of
652 accuracy. This effect did not reach statistical significance, but it is
653 suggestive of more rapid classification of items as being black-and-white or
654 greyscale, compared to judging if they are manmade or natural. In the
655 CvGS experiment, the opposite was true, where participants had higher

accuracy for the SC task but no differences with RT. This suggests that semantic classification was easier than classifying stimuli as coloured or greyscale. Although stimuli from the 'colour' block had colour and were qualitatively different from achromatic grey, it is conceivably more difficult to classify images of elephants and metallic pliers, which are ordinarily grey, as being greyscale or coloured compared to images of strawberries and tennis balls, which are ordinarily red and yellow, respectively.

Indeed, the data suggests some variability in the participants' ability to classify images as either grayscale or colour. Half the participants performed with accuracy levels of over 95% while the other half had more difficulty (range: 89 - 94%), which may relate to differences in basic visual functions (e.g., contrast sensitivity). Including participant and item as random factors in our analyses makes us more confident that the difference in difficulty between the IF and SC tasks is real and not the result of confound in our choice of stimuli or driven by a sampling bias. Conceptually discriminating images was perhaps a more familiar task than perceptually labelling them as being in one format versus another. The former is conceivably done more frequently in daily life - rarely are we asked, or required, to classify images based on their format. In any case, this observed difference between the tasks, while interesting, was not central to our research question assessing Garner interference, and does not affect our conclusions that semantic classification is not separable from image format.

Another methodological consideration is our choice of stimuli. We used the Snodgrass and Vanderwart drawings given they have been extensively used in research, and as such, have many norms associated with them that made it possible to match them according to various criteria as we did here. We did not use photographs or other more salient image formats because (1) we were specifically interested in how we process drawings, and (2), there are existing norms that made them possible to match into manmade / natural categories. Although photographs and more salient images contain more features that people use to recognise objects in the real world, they are also two dimensional like our stimuli. In contrast, real-world objects are three-dimensional. So, further investigation of how this difference might translate to real-world settings with solid objects is required.

One suggestion for future research would be to perform similar Garner interference experiments in virtual reality (VR) using more salient stimuli than those we used in this study. VR affords the researcher ample control of how visual stimuli are presented, with potentially the same high levels of internal validity as in experiments using flatscreen monitors, but better emulates real world viewing by presenting images with stereoscopic cues to give the impression of a third dimension. Our results point to the importance of structural form cues in guiding conceptual judgements so it would be informative to better understand how changes to the metric features of stimuli in a three-dimensional environment might affect such processes. For example, viewpoint rotations or manipulations of stimulus size could be one avenue for future research to pursue using VR.

38

704

705 *Conclusions*

706 In closing, we demonstrate that image format and semantic classification
707 are not independent, although the relationship is asymmetric. In both the
708 BWvGS and CvGS experiments, participants could not selectively attend to
709 semantic identity when image format varied, highlighting that random
710 variation in image format cues interfered with the ability to conceptually
711 classify images. However, the same was not true when the task required
712 perceptual classification of image format when semantic identity varied
713 from trial to trial, highlighting that image format could be processed
714 independently of its conceptual identity.

715

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721

722 **Declarations**

723 Open Practices Statement: The datasets generated during and/or analysed
724 during the current study are available from the corresponding author on
725 reasonable request. Materials for the experiments reported here is
726 available here from Michael Tarr's stimulus set

39

727 (<https://sites.google.com/andrew.cmu.edu/tarrlab/stimuli>). None of the
728 experiments was preregistered.

729 • Funding – this research received in kind support from La Trobe
730 University

731 • Conflicts of interest/Competing interests – the authors report no
732 conflict of interest

733 • Ethics approval - The study was approved by the La Trobe University
734 Human Ethics Committee HEC20104

735 • Consent to participate – Written informed consent was obtained
736 from the participants

737 • Consent for publication – Participants provided signed informed
738 consent to publish their data

739 • Availability of data and materials – The data will be made available
740 upon reasonable request, and the materials are available at Michael
741 Tarr's stimulus set repository
742 (<https://sites.google.com/andrew.cmu.edu/tarrlab/stimuli>)

743 • Code availability – The code is available in text (see Results section)

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884

46

885 **Appendix**

886

887

Natural	Manmade
Umbrella	Tree
Table	Carrot
Windmill	Kangaroo
House	Butterfly
Basket	Pineapple
TV	Chicken
Shoe	Cat
Tie	Mushroom
Key	Flower
Bottle	Banana
Guitar	Bear
Pram	Monkey
Suitcase	Swan
Whistle	Strawberry
Canon	Leopard
Traffic light	Camel
Wheel	Caterpillar
Violin	Ostrich
Nail	Potato
Cigar	Pepper
Kettle	Duck
Wrench	Onion

47

Harp	Grasshopper
Roller-skate	Bee
Sled	Fly
Pliers	Asparagus

890