



*Strooping
the
Colour*

STROOPING THE COLOUR

How colour and language can trick your brain

Introduction

Virtually unique to the relationship between colour and language, the Stroop Effect is a psychological phenomenon that is remarkably simple to demonstrate. First published in England in 1935, by John Ridley Stroop, the effect has since been replicated hundreds of times under controlled conditions, reinforcing its validity as a recognised occurrence and making the original paper one of the most cited in the history of experimental psychology.

In simple terms, the Stroop Effect refers to the identification of a delay in naming the colour a word is printed in, if the word itself denotes a different colour. This is in comparison to the speed of naming, if the colour of the word is the same as its meaning. So it is easier to name the colour of a word printed in red, if the word itself also says 'red'.

Although a relatively easy concept to grasp, the true explanation of the Stroop Effect remains contentious. It is understood to occur because we are required to override interference in our brains from the comprehension of a word, in order to correctly identify the colour it is depicted in. The standard explanation put forward for this, is that words are read automatically and can be recognised faster than colours can be named. However, experiments exploring the Reverse Stroop Effect, which can be demonstrated through colour matching rather than verbalisation, have brought these two theories into question.

The aim of this book is not only to illustrate the Stroop Effect, but to examine how the use of more or less complex colour terms, and the presentation of these terms might influence the effect. If a colour term is obscure and unfamiliar does that interfere with the processing of a colour in the same way that it does with a basic colour term? At the heart of the Stroop Effect lies a unique phenomenon that encapsulates the complex relationship colour has with language.



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BASIC
COLOUR
TERMS

pink

red

orange

yellow

green

blue

purple

brown

grey

white

orange

green

pink

blue

red

yellow

grey

white

purple

brown

SOPHISTICATED
COLOUR
TERMS

beige

cream

indigo

lilac

lime

magenta

maroon

salmon

turquoise

violet

OBSCURE
COLOUR
TERMS

gamboge

loden

cerulean

porphyry

bice

adobe

greige

alizarin

celadon

ianthine

NON
COLOUR
TERMS

fruit

house

flower

table

cat

bottle

glass

button

coat

money

COLOUR
AND TERM
COMBINATIONS

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

pink

red

red

red

red

red

red

red

red

red

red

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

orange

yellow

yellow

yellow

yellow

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white

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white

white

COLOURED
SURROUND

orange

green



pink





yellow

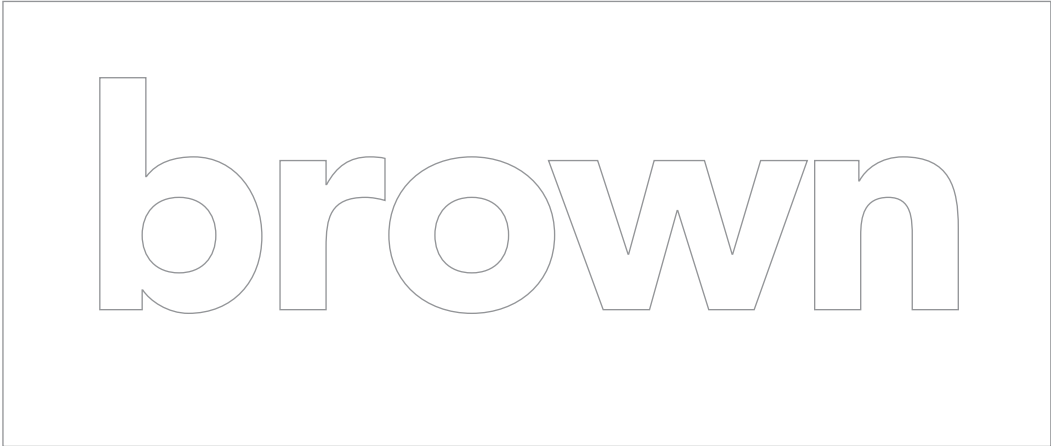


grey



white

purple



COLOURED
BACKGROUND

orange

green

pink

blue

red

yellow

grey

white

purple

brown

