

Drawing as an Encoding Tool in Associative Memory: Distinctive Benefits of Strategies in Younger and Older Adults

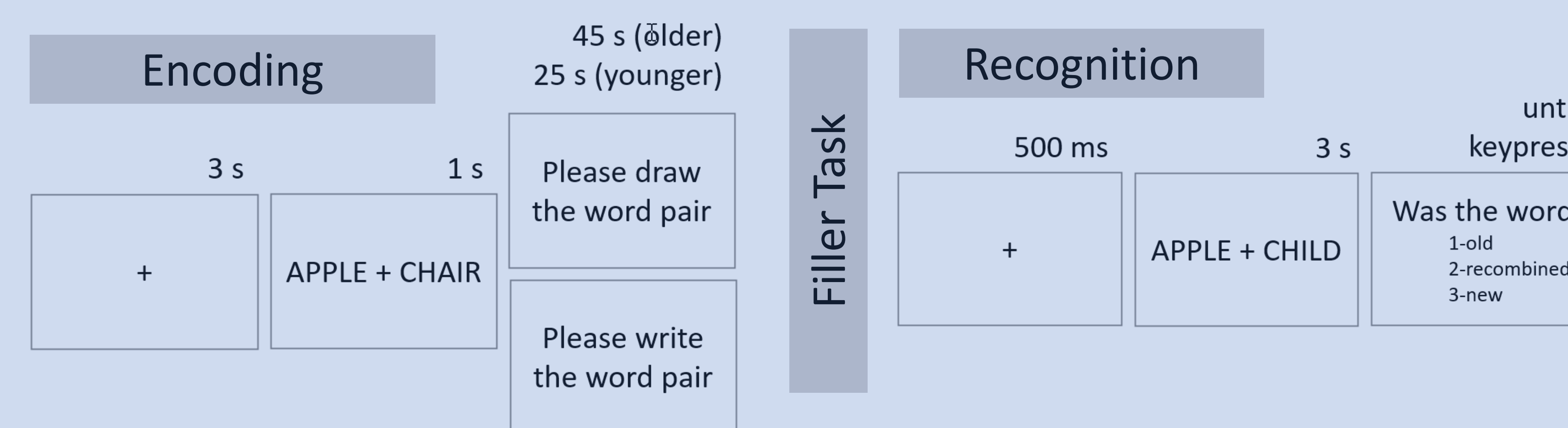
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Background

The disproportionately large **age-related** decline in **associative memory** at least partly hinges upon decreasing abilities to spontaneously use appropriate **encoding-strategies**. Using mental images as strategy enhances associative memory in older adults, but it is often not used spontaneously and not efficiently. Recent studies showed that **visual imagery processes** triggered by **drawing during encoding** benefitted memory for single items. To date, no study investigated if drawing also enhances associative memory, neither in younger nor in older adults.

Task & Questionnaire

Recognition memory task



Strategy questionnaire:

“Did you use **visual [verbal]** strategies during encoding?”
a) during drawing b) during writing c) never

Summary & Conclusions

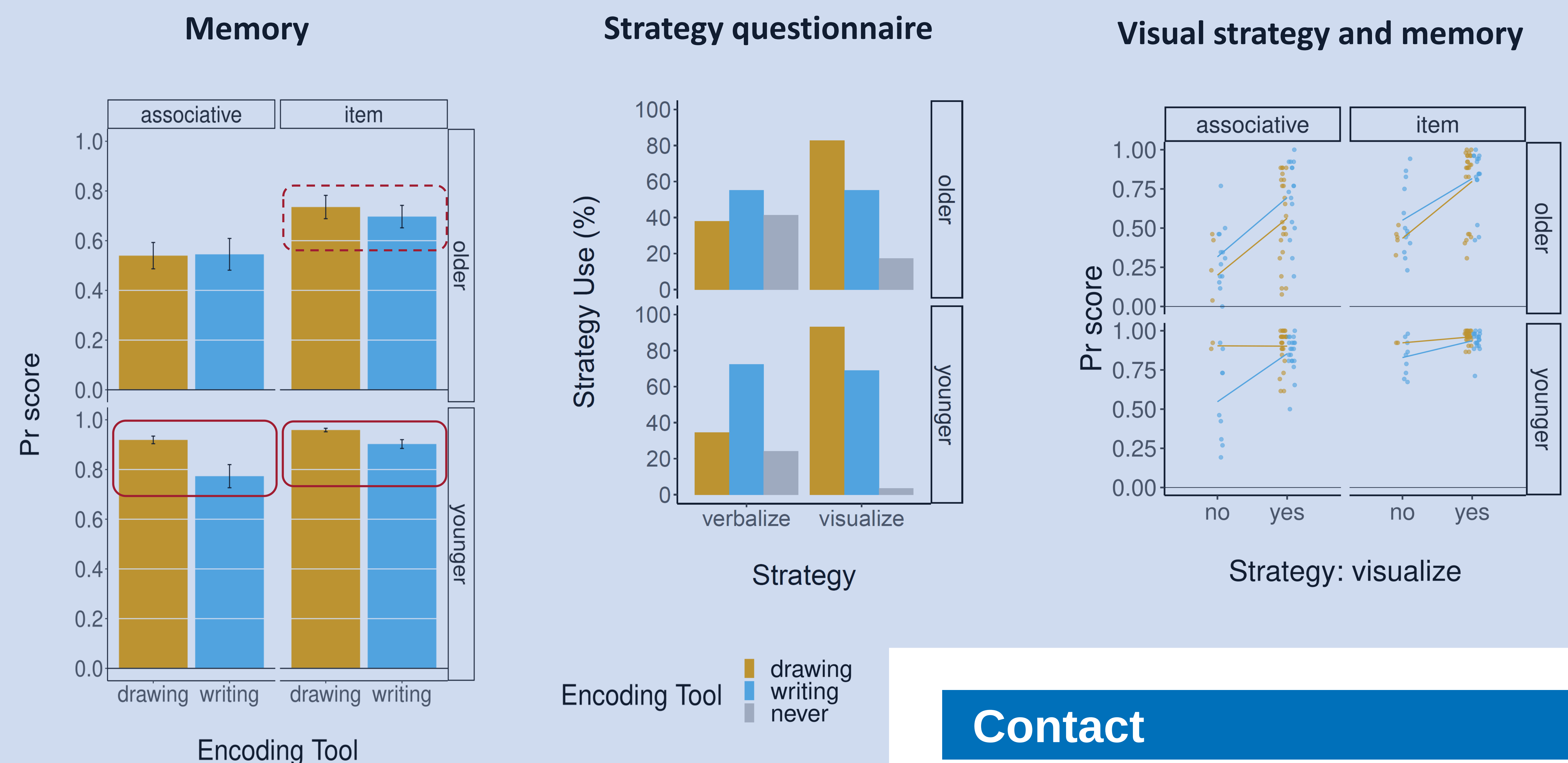
- **Benefit** of drawing on associative memory **in younger but not older** adults
- **Similar** pattern of strategy use in both age groups
- **Differential** pattern in the relations between strategy use and memory between age groups

Younger adults automatically **benefitted** from **visual imagery processes** involved in drawing but **not older** adults.

Goals

- Extend existing evidence for a **benefit of drawing on associative memory**
- Investigate **age differences** in this benefit
- Explore if potential differences in a benefit between age groups were related to **strategy use during encoding**

Results



Participants & Design

- **Participants**
Older: $n = 29$, age $M = 70$ years ($SD = 4$)
Younger: $n = 29$, age $M = 27$ years ($SD = 5$)
- **Independent variables**
Age group (older vs. younger)
Encoding tool (drawing vs. writing), within
Memory type (associative vs. item), within
- **Dependent variable**
Recognition memory performance (Pr scores)

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