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# Anticipating the f\*\*\*ing referent: An eye-tracking study on the role of Italian expressive adjectives during sentence comprehension

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## Abstract

Theoretical accounts of negative expressives such as "damn" have ascribed different properties to this type of adjectives: they are typically speaker-oriented and they can be syntactically flexible. Yet, it is not clear what this means during online sentence processing. In an eye-tracking study, we show that expressive content is rapidly integrated with information about the speaker's attitude, resulting in the anticipation of an upcoming referent, regardless of the expressive's syntactic realization. We argue that comprehenders use expressives as an ostensive cue that allows for automatic retrieval of the speaker's negative attitude.

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