

Agreement attraction does not depend on time pressure

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Introduction

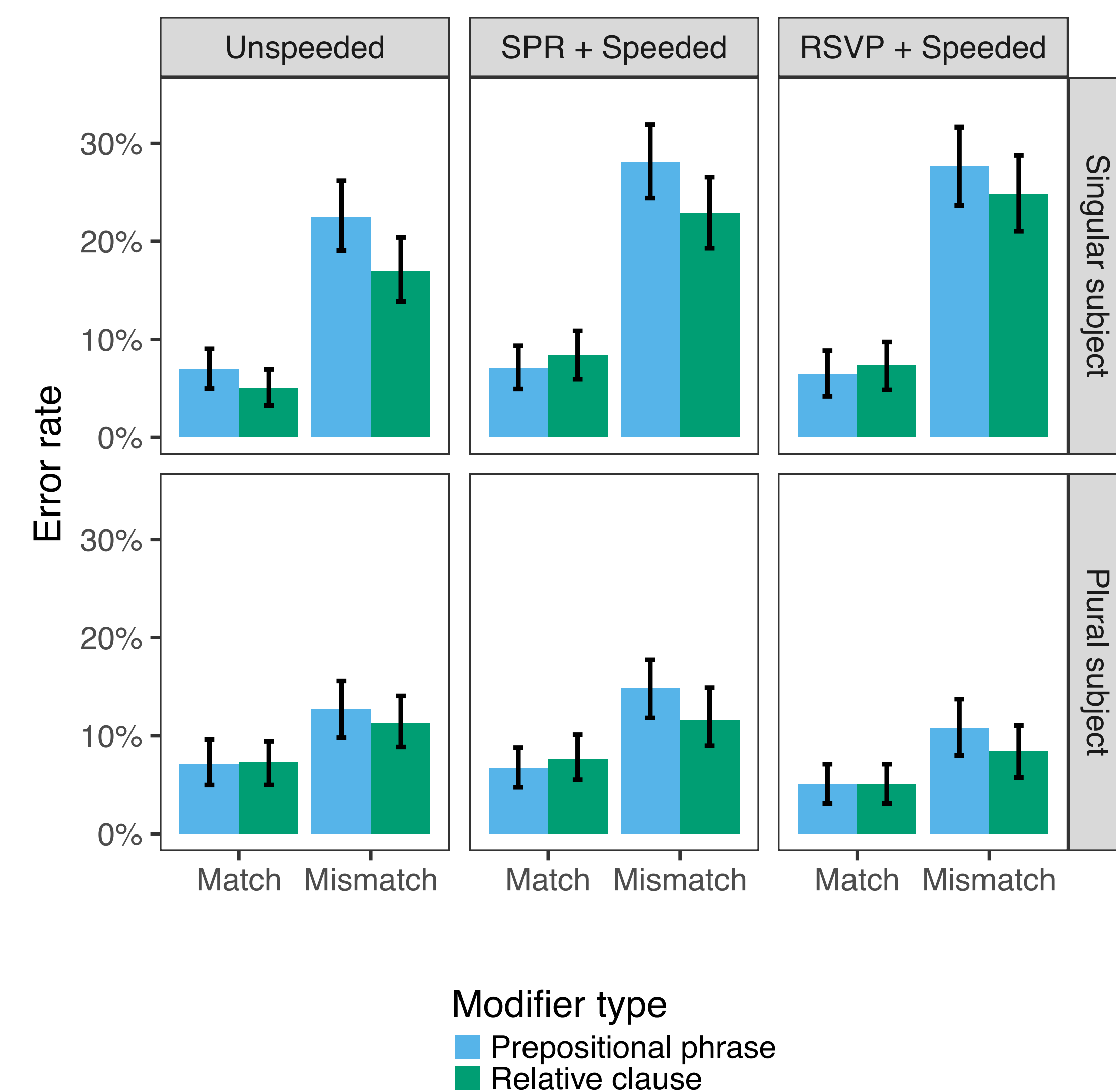
- Typical agreement attractors intervene between the head of the subject and the verb: the **key** to the **cabinets is...**
- Attraction errors (the **key** to the **cabinets are**) can be elicited in experiments, most of which put participants under time pressure
- Will the pattern of errors change when participants can take as long as they would like to perform the task?
- We directly compare minimally different speeded and unspeeded paradigms in comprehension
- **Forced choice** (Staub, 2009): participants read the preamble, then choose between **is** and **are**

Methods

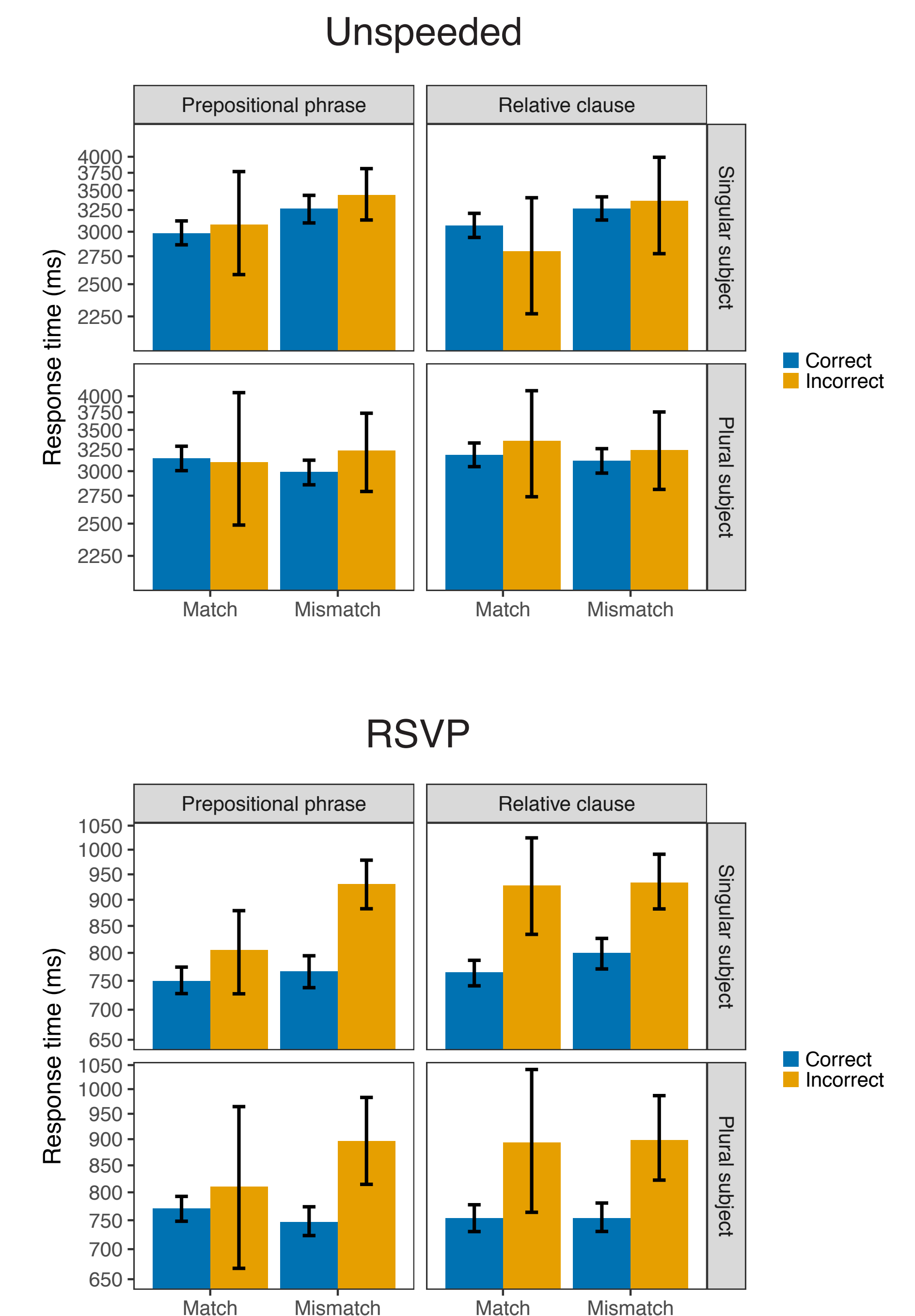
- **Unspeeded**: the sentence and the two options appear on the screen together, unlimited time to read the sentence
- **Self-paced reading** + speeded decision (1500 ms timeout)
- **Serial presentation** (400 ms per word) + speeded decision
- **Materials** (Bock & Cutting, 1992): **Match** and **Mismatch** conditions

| | | |
|----|----------|--|
| PP | Singular | The demo tape from the popular rock singer |
| PP | Singular | The demo tape from the popular rock singers |
| PP | Plural | The demo tapes from the popular rock singer |
| PP | Plural | The demo tapes from the popular rock singers |
| RC | Singular | The demo tape that promoted the popular singer |
| RC | Singular | The demo tape that promoted the popular singers |
| RC | Plural | The demo tapes that promoted the popular singer |
| RC | Plural | The demo tapes that promoted the popular singers |
- 32 critical items and 56 fillers
- 128 participants in each paradigm (recruited on Prolific Academic)
- Excluded participants who made errors on 20% or more of the fillers (Unspeeded: n = 4; SPR: n = 4; RSVP: n = 15)
- Response times (RTs) transformed using the Box-Cox method

Accuracy



Response times



Conclusions

- Online forced choice experiments generally consistent with production experiments (Bock & Cutting, 1992)
- One exception: error rates are moderately higher than in production experiments (even in Match trials)
- Small relative clause advantage: significant overall and in SPR, nonsignificant elsewhere (no interaction with experiment)
- Consistent attraction with plural subjects calls into question the privative feature (markedness) account
- Time pressure does not modulate the qualitative pattern of errors, though errors are somewhat less frequent overall in the unspeeded paradigm
- Singular subject Mismatch preambles (which have the most errors) are read more slowly
- In contrast to Staub (2009), RSVP error RTs were longer than correct RTs in Mismatch cases