



The Mirror Effect within Perception: Not another Recognition Memory Study

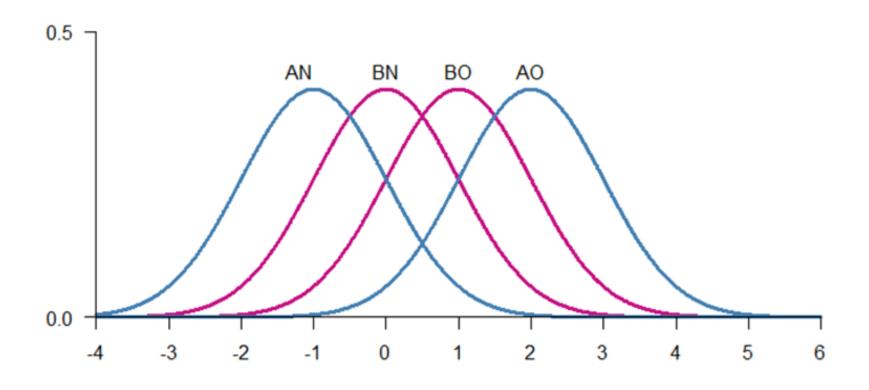
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Introduction: A memory phenomenon?

Signal Detection Theory has been applied to Recognition Memory studies to describe subjects' ability to discriminate between stimuli that have been presented before from a new set of stimuli (Wixted, 2007). When comparing subjects' performance between two classes of stimuli, one being more easily recognized (A) than the other (B), the response patterns obtained show that the difference in their discriminability is reflected in the identification of both target and lure stimuli, suggesting that stimuli distributions involved move along the decision axis in such a way that has lead to its identification as the Mirror Effect (Glanzer, Adams, Kim, 1993).



Evidence in favor of the Mirror Effect has been reported across different SDT-alike procedures. In typical Yes/No tasks, the Mirror Effect appears as:

$$FalseAlarms(A) < FalseAlarms(B) < Hits(B) < Hits(A)$$
 (1)

When participants are asked to valuate how confident they felt while answering each trial, the following pattern appears:

$$R(AN) < R(BN) < R(BS) < R(AS) \tag{2}$$

However, the Mirror Effect has only been studied within Recognition Memory and so, most theories and models proposed to explain it tend to do it in terms of high-level processes engaged in the study phase (DeCarlo, 2007, Glanzer et. al, 1993). The main goal of the present study was to explore the existence of the Mirror Effect outside Recognition Memory, thus testing these assumptions.

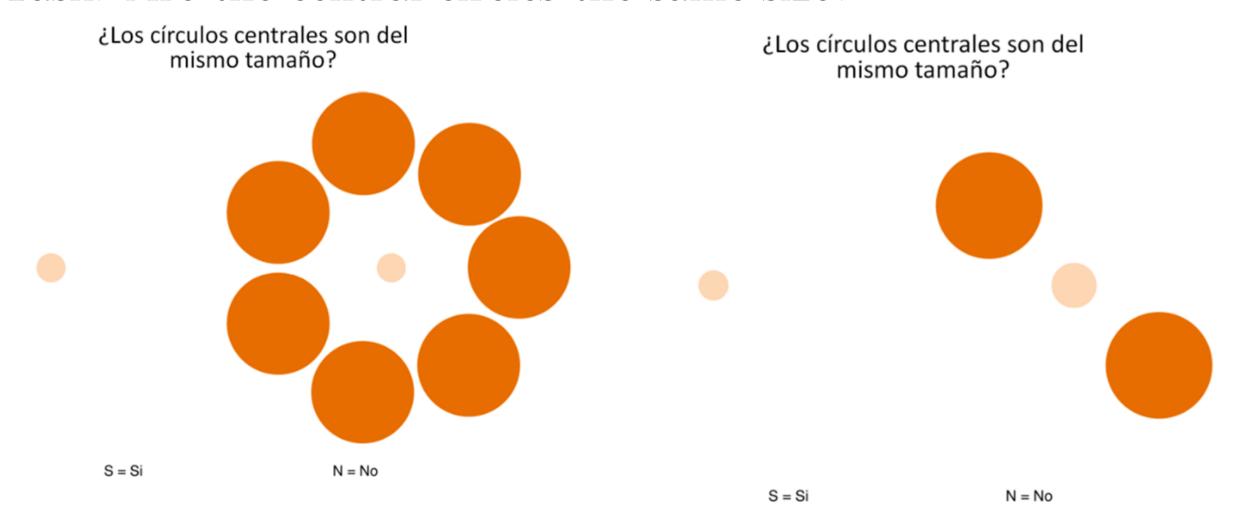
Method: A perceptual task

Ebbinghaus illusion: Two levels of perceptual discriminability (Massaro, 1971).

- High accuracy (A): Ebbinghaus illusions with 2 or 3 surrounding circles.
- Low accuracy (B): Ebbinghaus illusions with 7 or 8 surrounding circles.

1 Detection Task: Are the central circles the same size?

¿Los círculos centrales son del



Confident Rating: How confident are you of your response?

Two experiments:

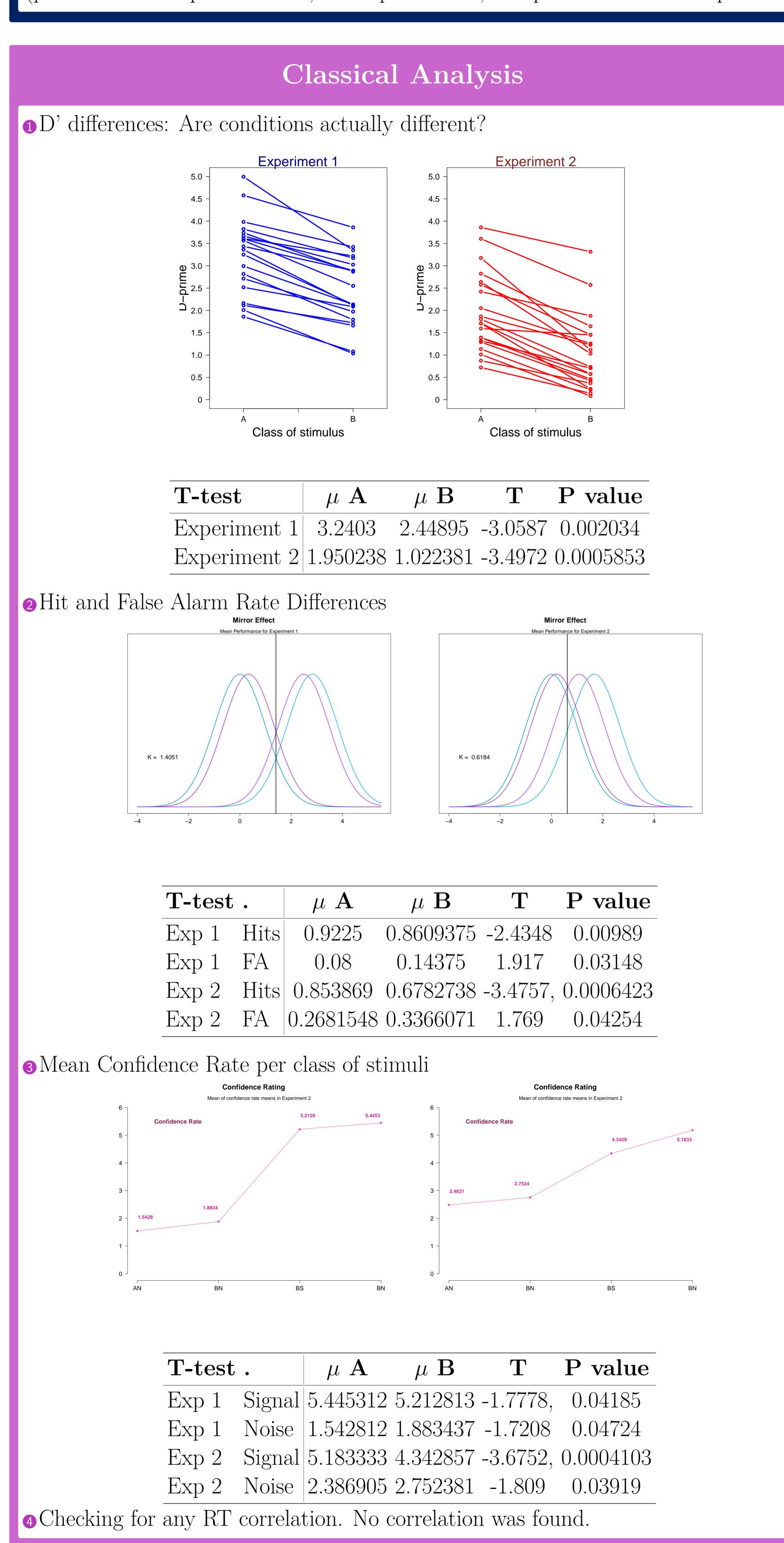
- Experiment 1: Just the right circle is shown as part of an Ebbinghaus illusion.
- Experiment 2: Both circles were constructed as Ebbinghaus illusions.

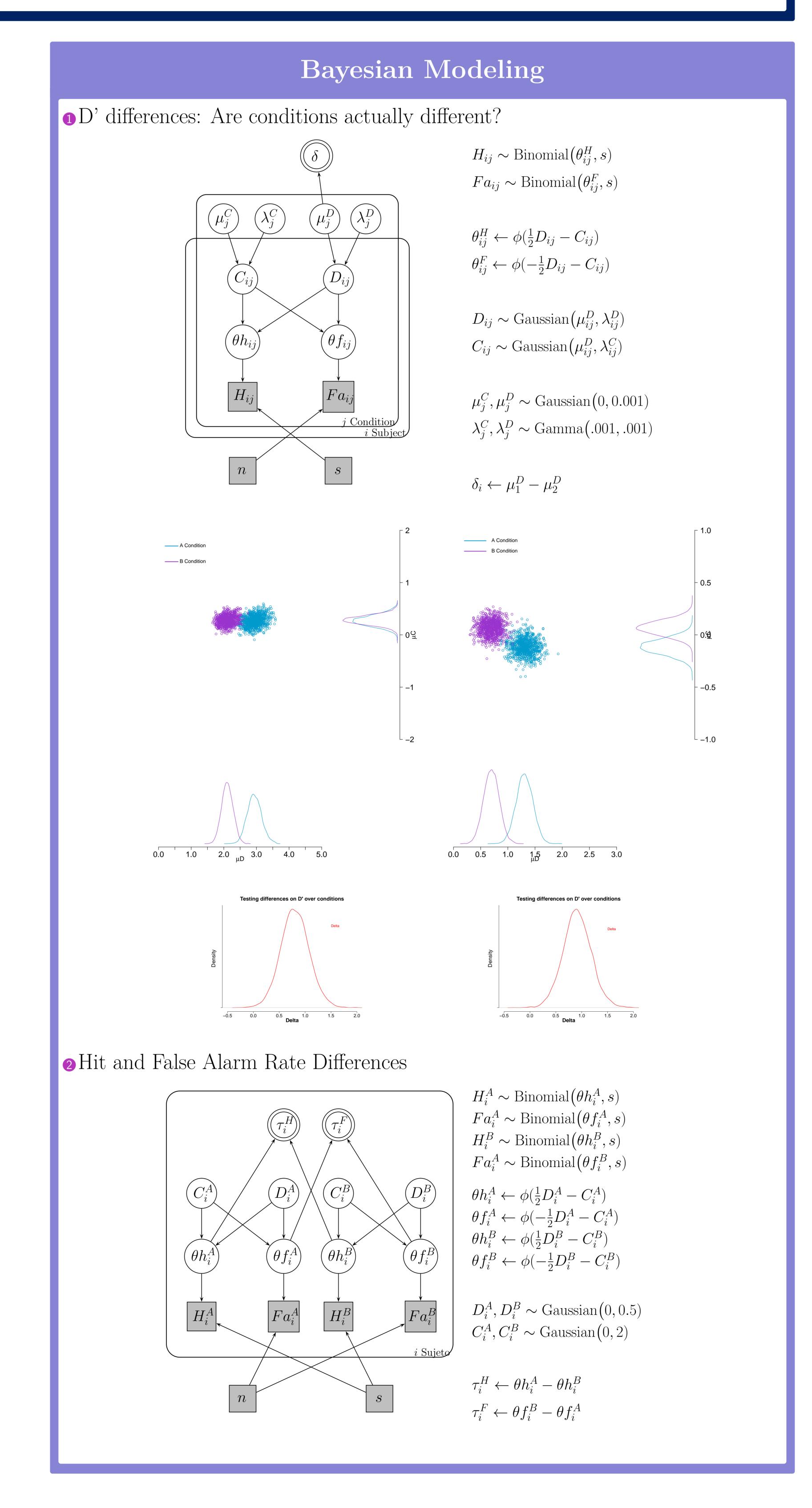
Technical details:

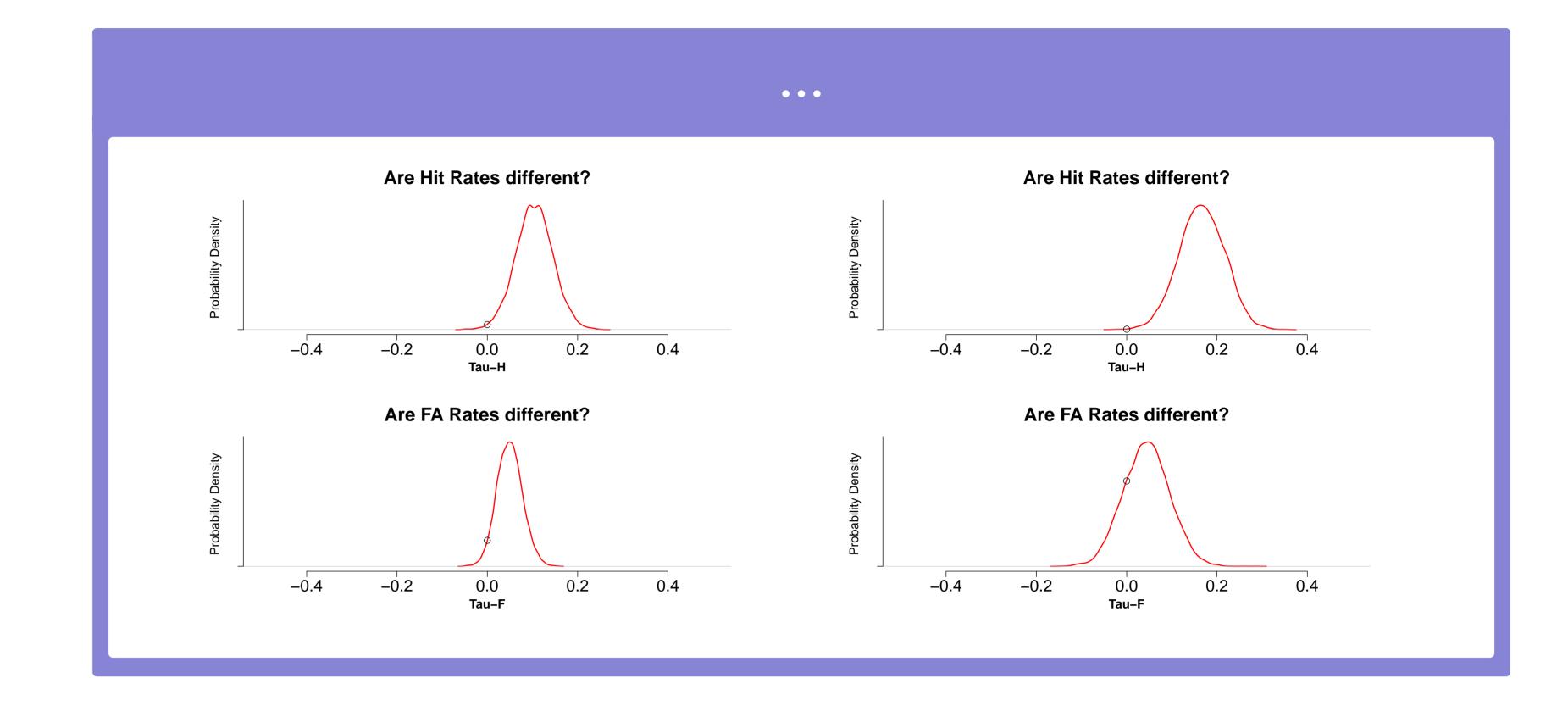
- 640 trials (total)
- 40 different stimuli, (10 repetitions, at least)
- 1.5 s exposure
- Space-bar between trials

What did we find? (Spoiler alert!)

We had 20 and 21 participants on Experiments 1 and 2 respectively. In both cases, we found evidence for the Mirror Effect in at least 85% of the participants. In experiment 1, we had 17 cases showing the Mirror Effect pattern within hits and false alarm rates and 18, presenting it in terms of Confidence Ratings, while in experiment 2 we had 19 participants out of 21 showing the Mirror Effect in both response. All these proportions show great significance against chance when we apply a simple Binomial Test (p=0.002577 and p=0.0004025, for Experiment 1, and p=0.0002213 for Experiment 2).







Conclusion

The present study is the first to show evidence of the Mirror Effect patterns of response, on a SD task that does not involve recognition memory. The perceptual task here presented lacked a pre-experimental phase where participants had the chance to manipulate how powerful were the illusions included in each condition, contradicting what has been proposed within recognition memory studies. This may be suggesting that there's a much more basic principle regulating the observed pattern of responses.

References

Acknowledgments & Contact Information

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