









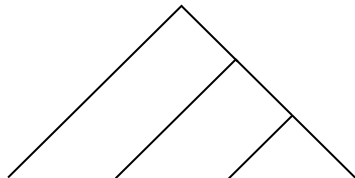
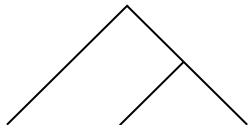
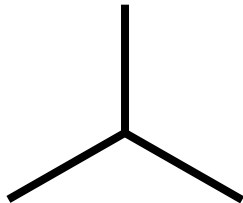
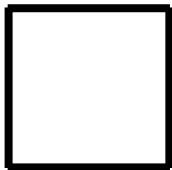


Sablé-Meyer et al. (2022) found that adults' reaction times and error rates in match-to-sample tasks were **predicted by the minimum description length (MDL)** of the shape's LOT program

This **fuses two features of geometric shape representations** that are partly independent, format (LOT) and selection (MDL), and uses MDL data to argue for LOT—Highly indirect evidence

We report more **direct evidence for tree structure in geometric shape representations** from three online experiments with adults

**trace**  
segment



**repeat**  
4 times    **trace**  
segment    **turn**  
90°

**repeat**  
3 times    **execute**  
& **return**    **trace**  
segment    **turn**  
120°





Different structured representations can be induced for the same shape

# Samples

# Targets

Shape

Structure

Matches

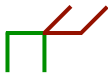
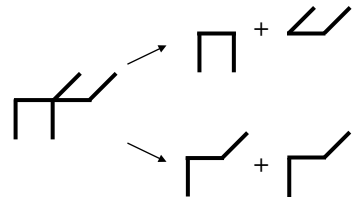
Deviants

Congruent

Incongruent

Modified  
congruent

Modified  
incongruent



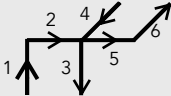
# Experiment 1: Structural Ambiguity







Sample: Encode



Target: Same shape?



# Background

We build on the recent proposal that **geometric shapes are represented in a language of thought (LOT) consisting of a handful of primitives that combine to recreate the encoded shape** (Sablé-Meyer et al. 2022)

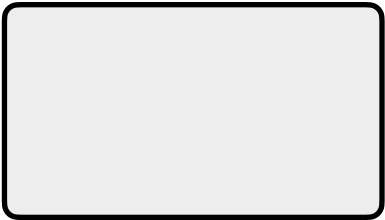


Subparts are easier to recognize when they belong to the same subtree

# Experiment 2: Subtree Facilitation

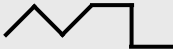
# Experiment 3: Movement Depth

Shapes are easier to reconfigure when they  
are split higher up in the tree





Sample: Encode



Target: Subpart?



# Samples

# Targets

Shape

Structure

Overlap

Matches

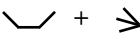
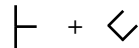
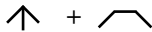
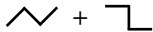
Deviants

Same  
subtree

Different  
subtrees

Rotated  
same

Rotated  
different







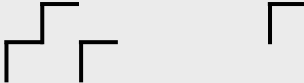




Sample: Encode



Target: Rearrangement?





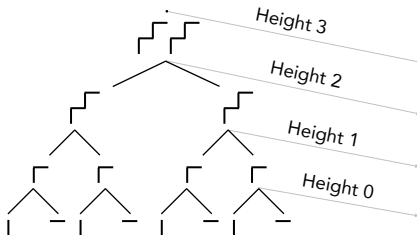


# Samples

Shape



Structure



# Targets

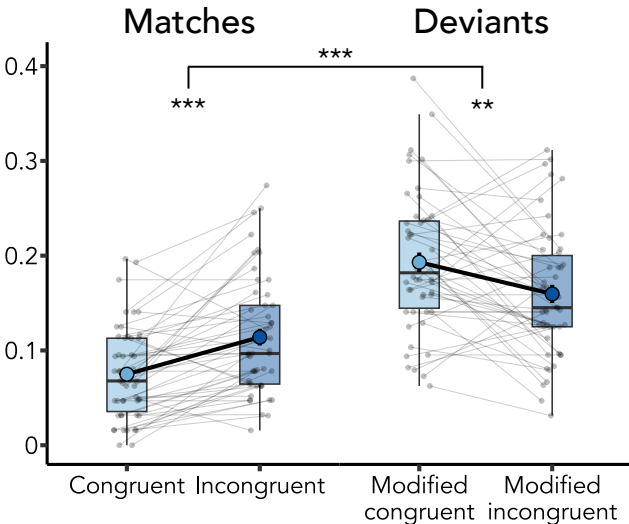
Matches

Tree preserved	Tree broken

Deviants

Tree preserved	Tree broken

# Error rates



50 subjects

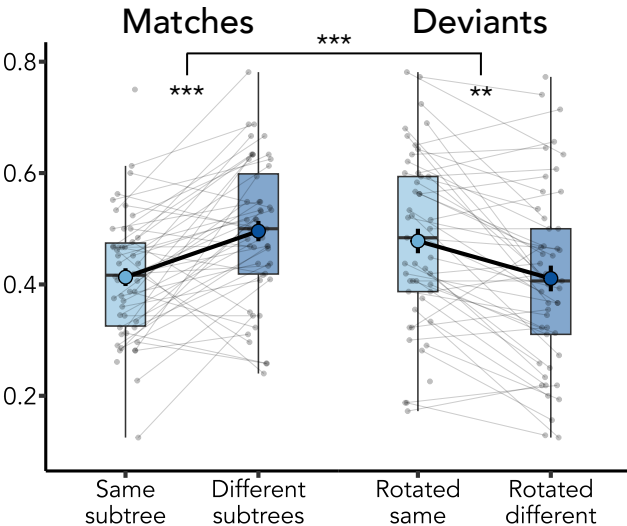
16 shapes

256 trials

Within-subjects



# Error rates



50 subjects

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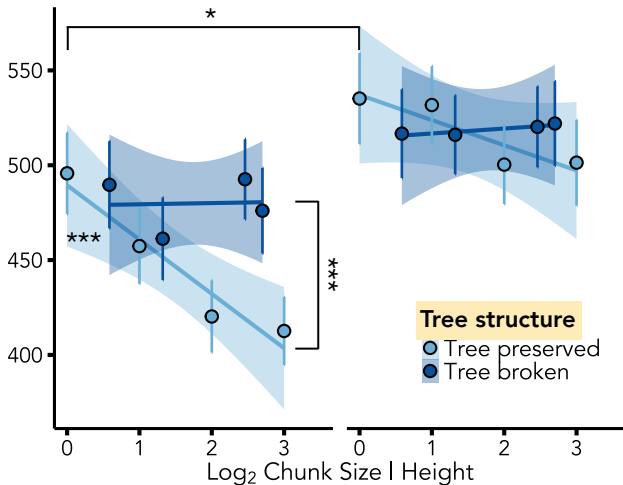
128 trials

Within-subjects

## Reaction times

## Matches

## Deviants



36 subjects

8 shapes

256 trials

## Within-subjects



**Fyssen**



**Cerc**



**NeuroSpin**

**cea**

**Inserm**

**Geometric shape representations in human adults  
have syntactic structure**

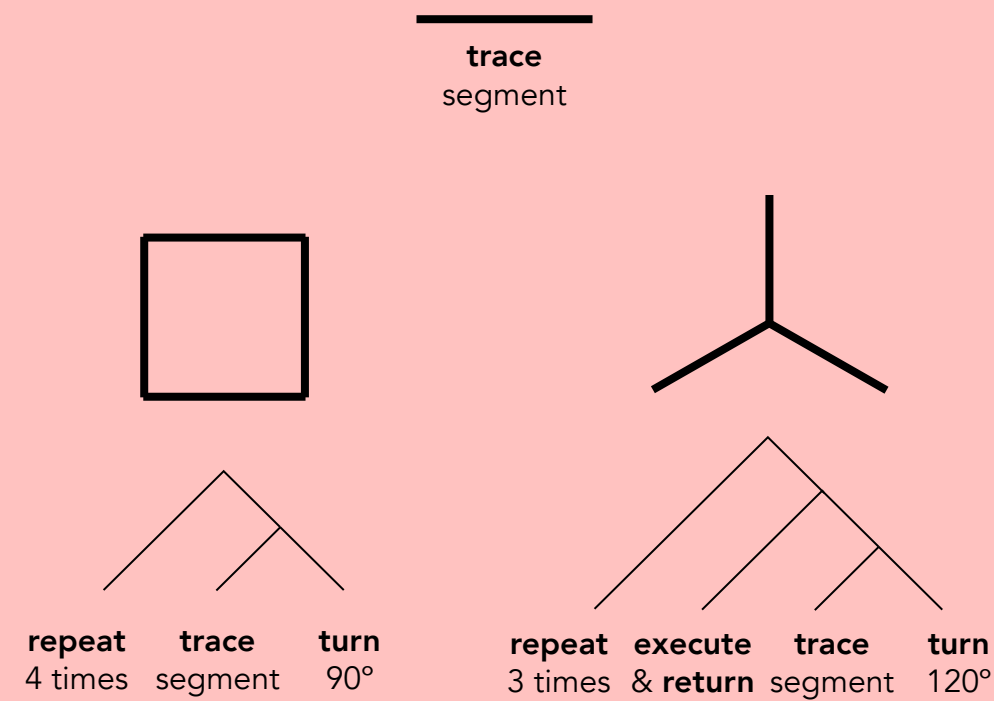
**Barbu Revençu and Stanislas Dehaene**

NeuroSpin Cognitive Neuroimaging Unit | CEA | INSERM | Université Paris-Saclay



## Background

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We report more direct evidence for tree structure in geometric shape representations from three online experiments with adults



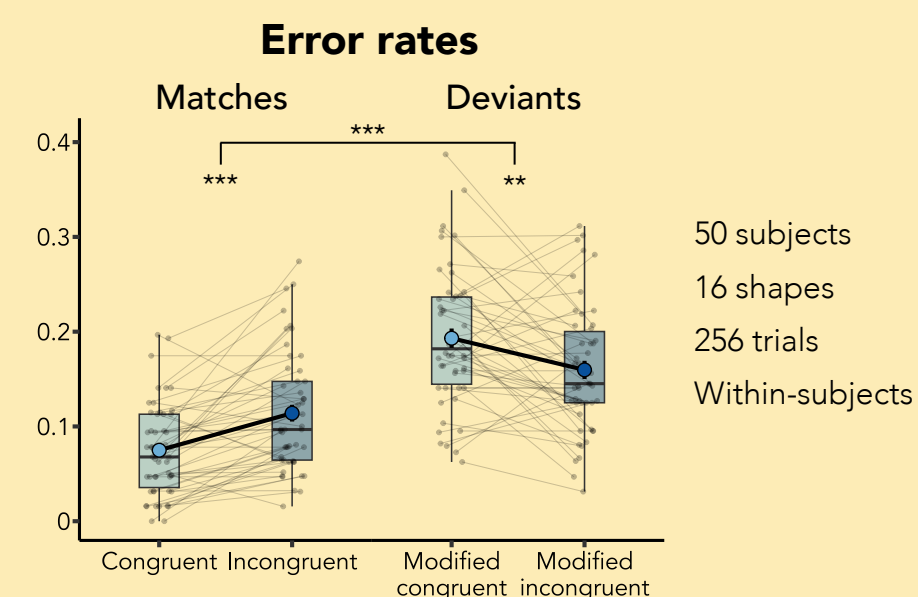
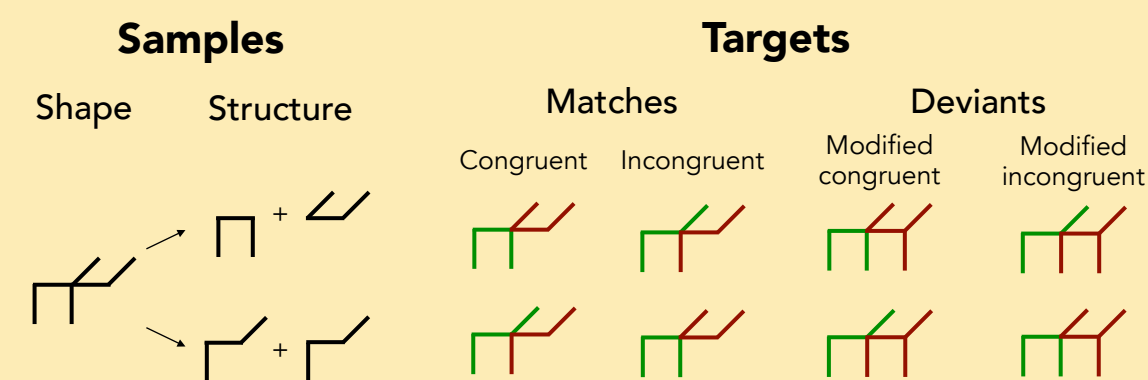
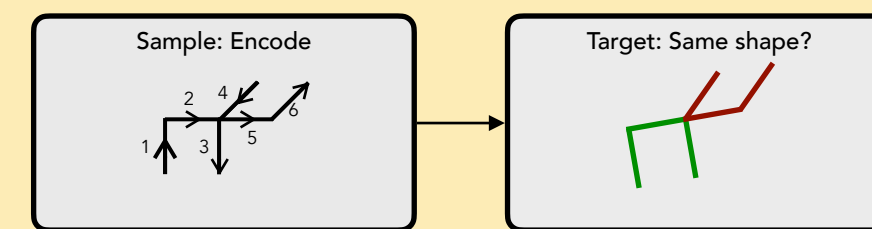
# Geometric shape representations in human adults have syntactic structure

Barbu Revencu and Stanislas Dehaene

NeuroSpin Cognitive Neuroimaging Unit | CEA | INSERM | Université Paris-Saclay

## Experiment 1: Structural Ambiguity

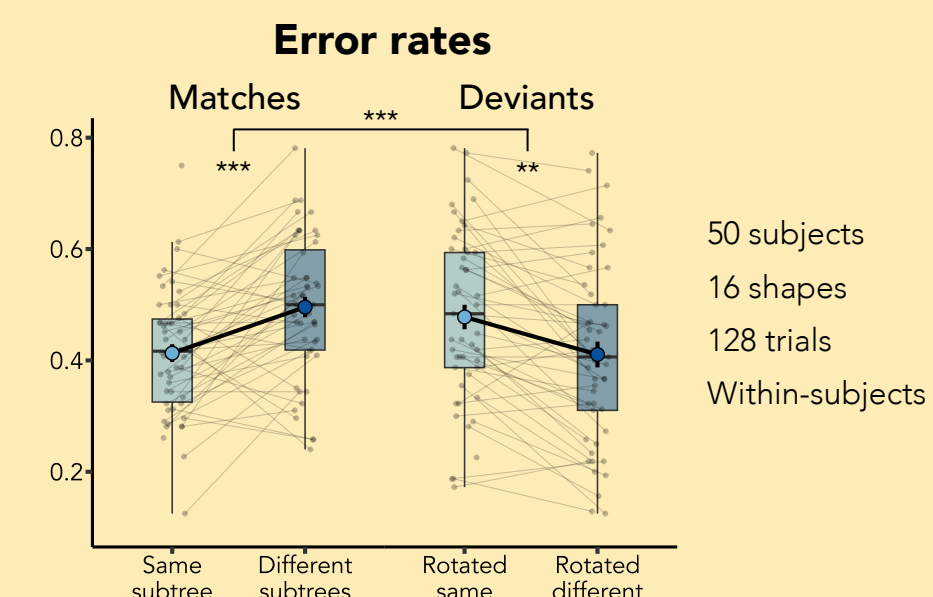
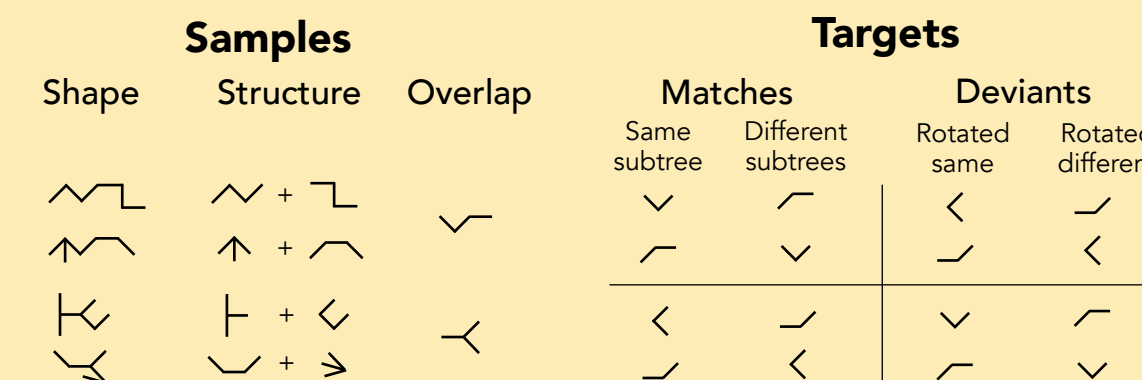
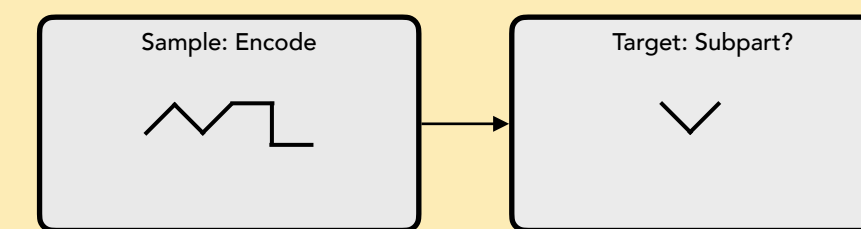
Different structured representations can be induced for the same shape



50 subjects  
16 shapes  
256 trials  
Within-subjects

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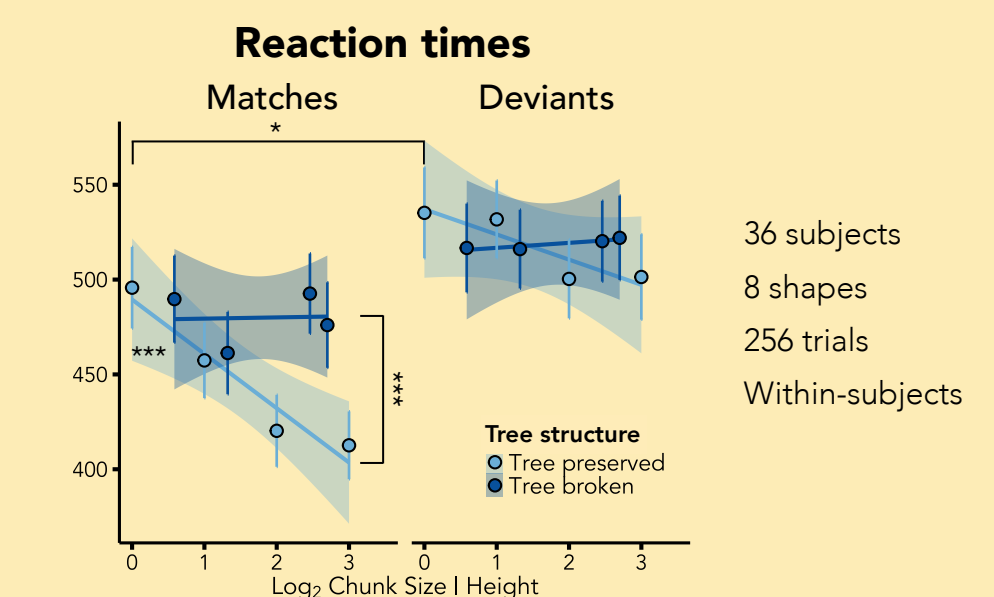
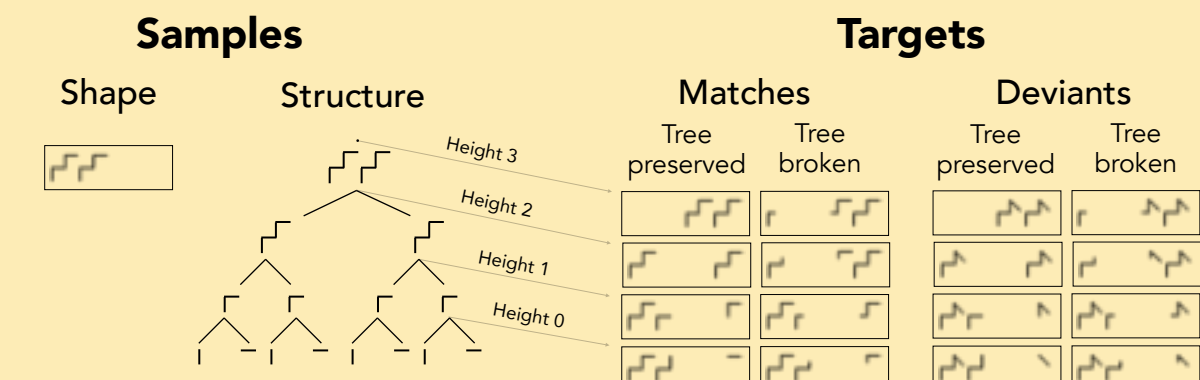
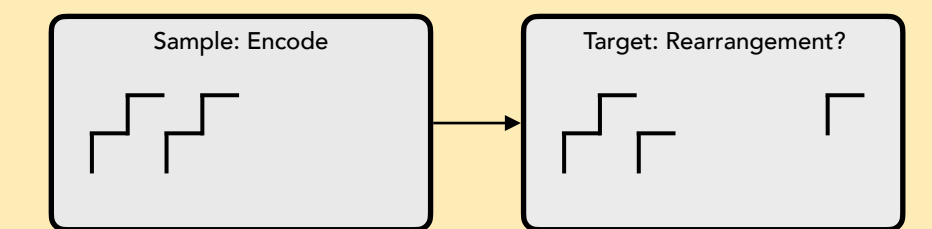
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## Experiment 3: Movement Depth

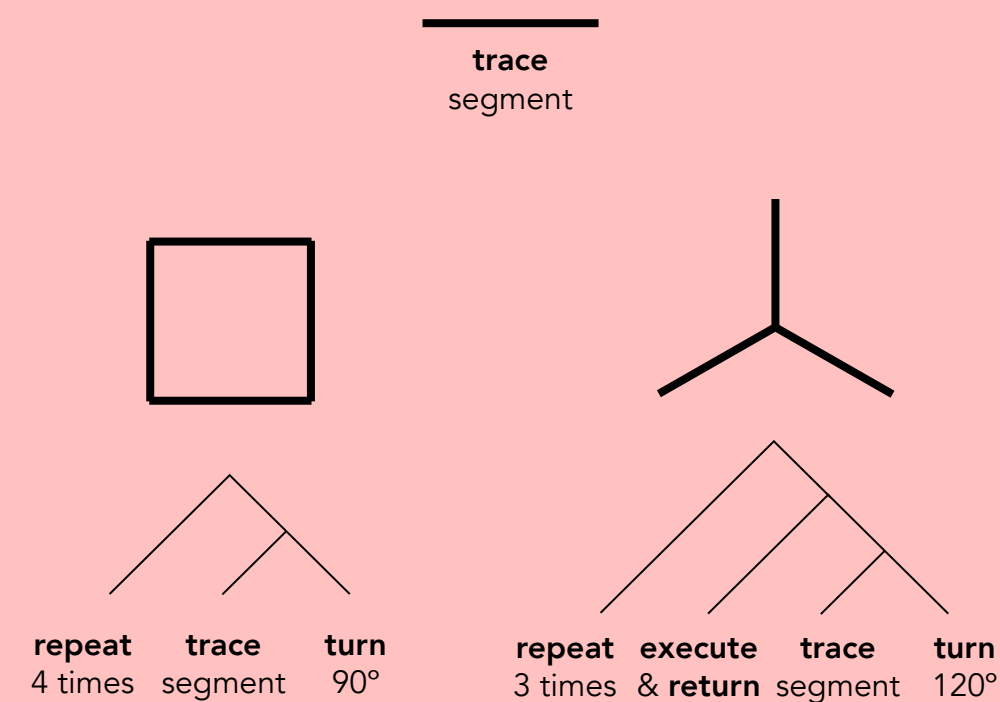
Shapes are easier to reconfigure when they are split higher up in the tree



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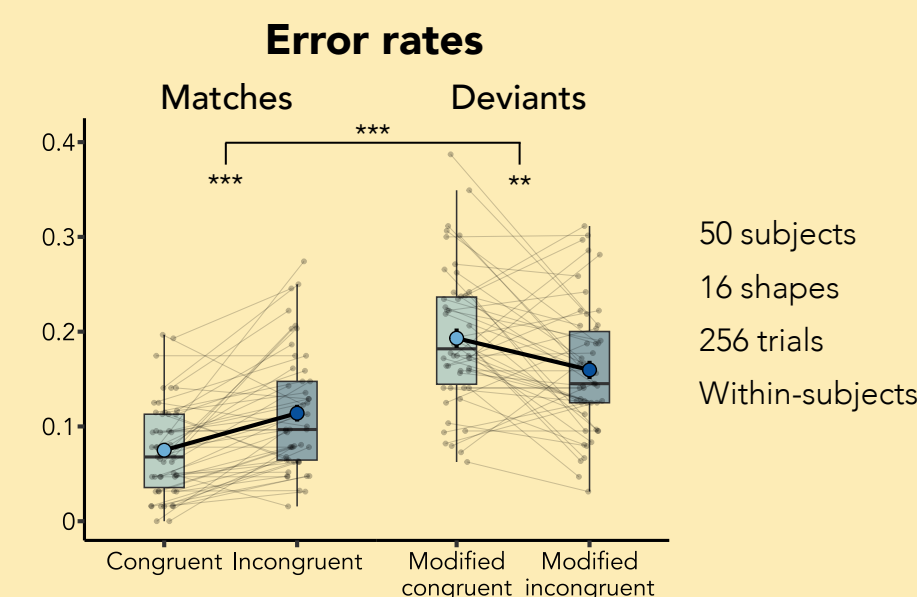
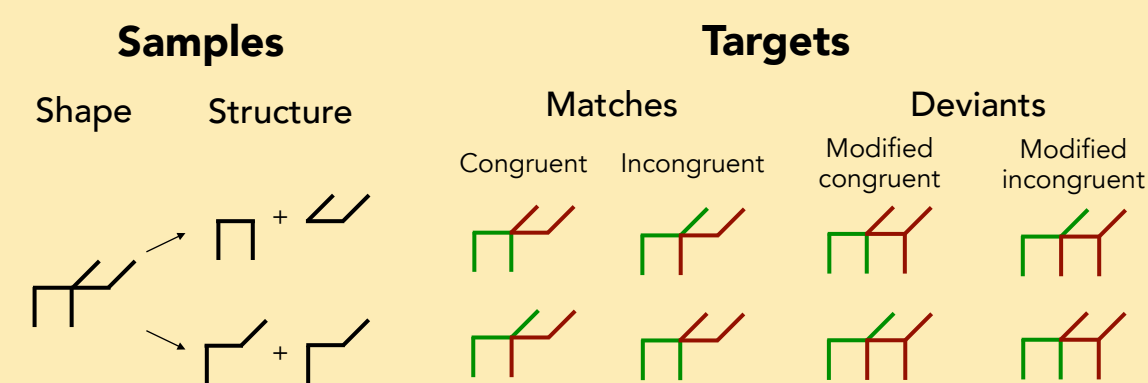
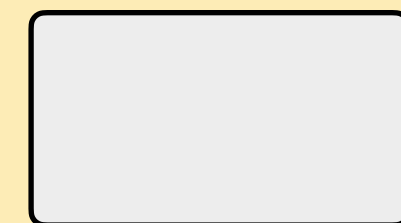
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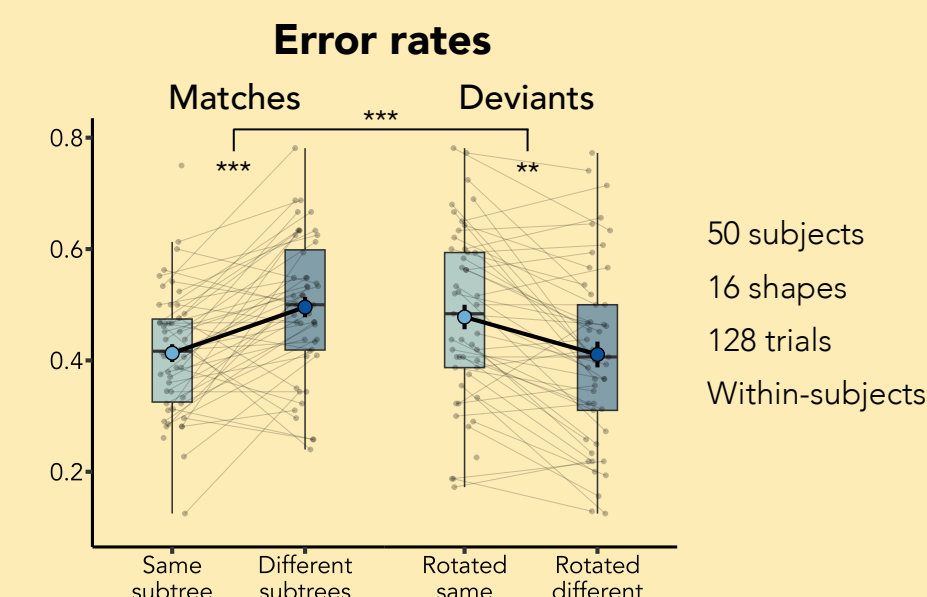
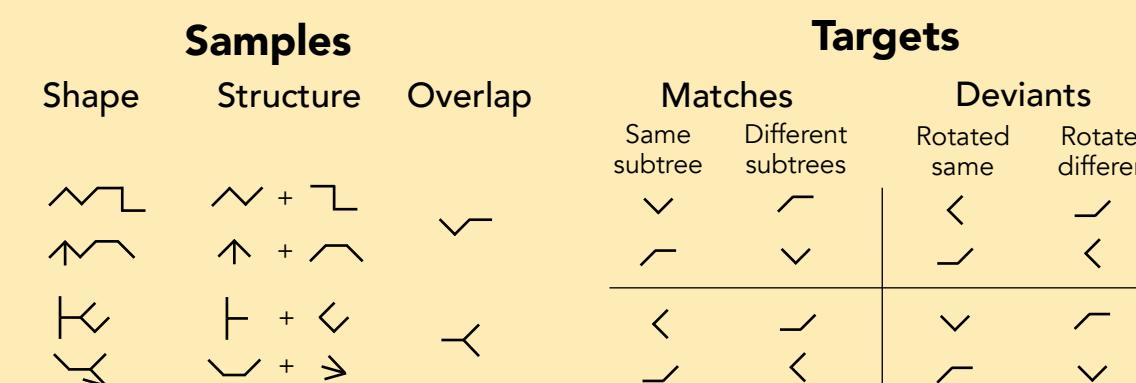
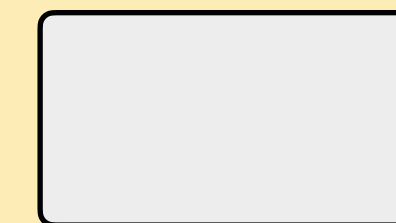
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