

# Naïve realism under the hood: Evidence for the inhibition of alternative subjective construals

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## Background

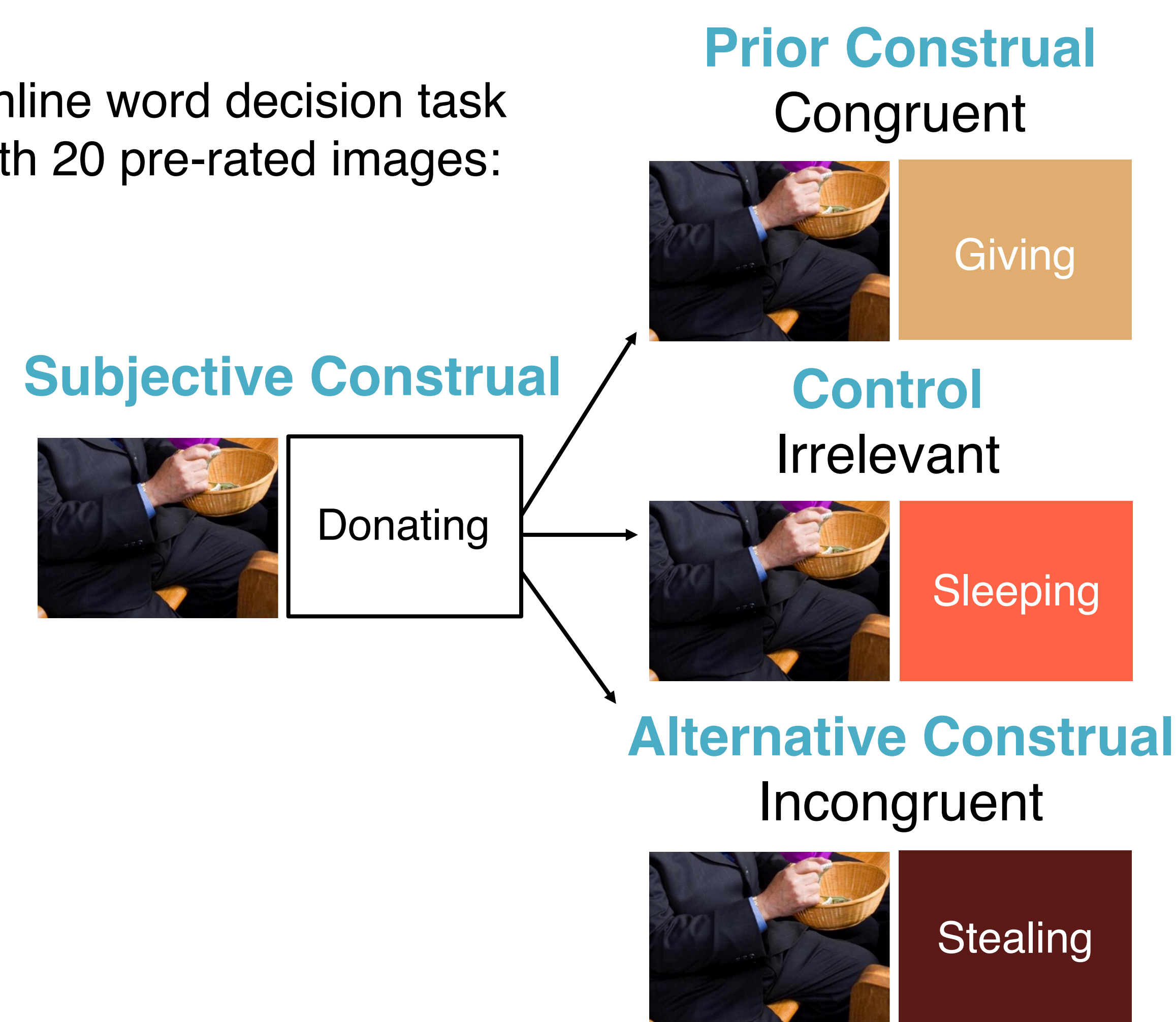
- **Naïve realism** – the conviction that our understanding of the world is objective, while those who disagree must be biased or uninformed – often contributes to individual cognitive biases and intergroup conflict<sup>1-2</sup>.
- Despite its importance, the mechanisms underlying naive realism are poorly understood.
- **We propose that after a given subjective construal is generated, alternative interpretations may be suppressed<sup>3</sup>**, a process that we call the “inhibition of alternatives”.

## Aim

- **Determine whether alternative subjective construals are inhibited by prior subjective construals.**

## Task Design

Online word decision task with 20 pre-rated images:

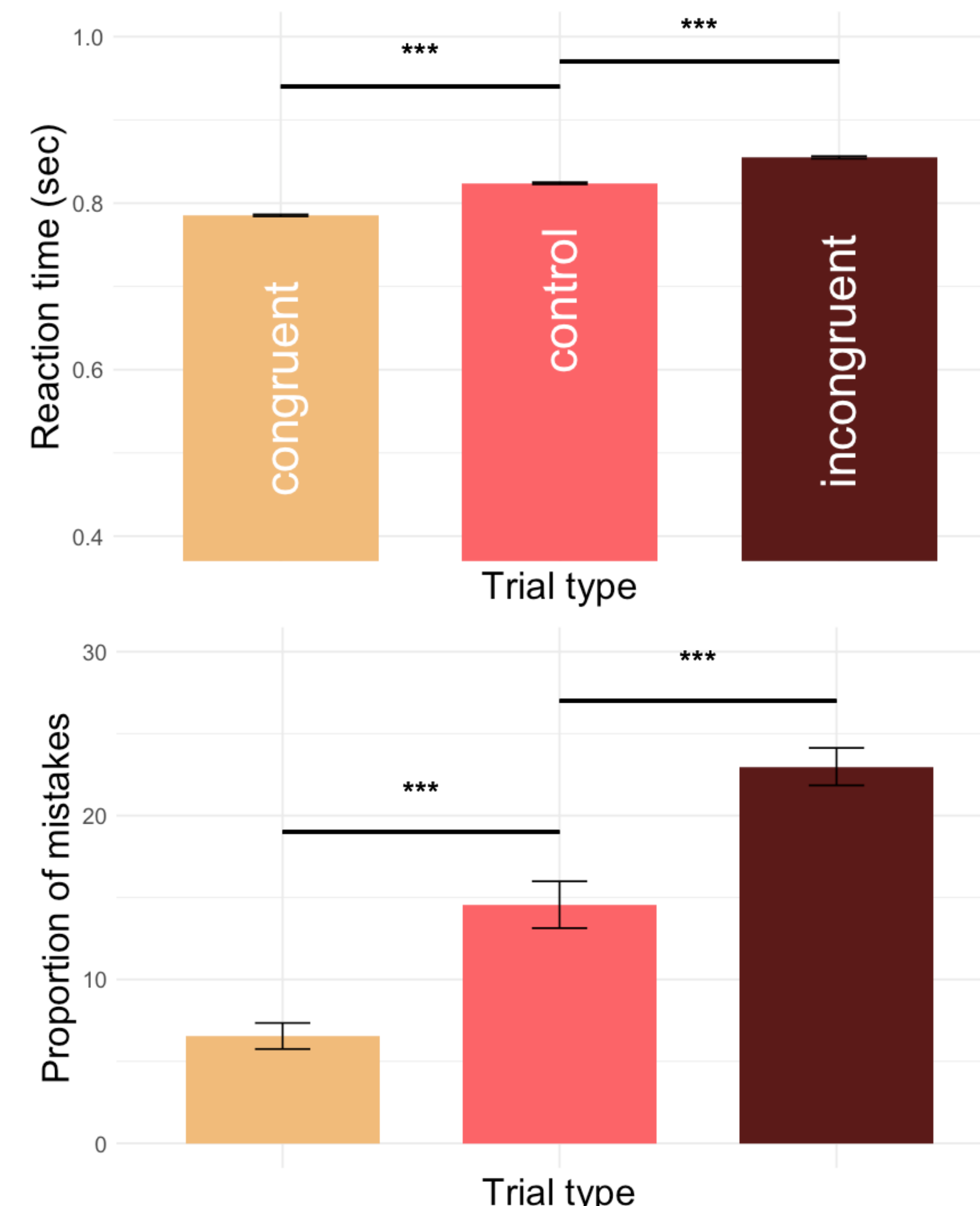


	Study 1	Study 2
<b>Participants were asked:</b>	Is the word a good or bad description of the image?	Is the word a real word or nonword?

## Study 1: Interpretation Decision

Is the word a good or bad description of the image?

N = 88 UCLA undergraduates participated online (180 trials).



Relative to control trials, participants were:

### Reaction times

- 41ms faster to congruent trials
- 27ms slower to incongruent trials

### Mistakes

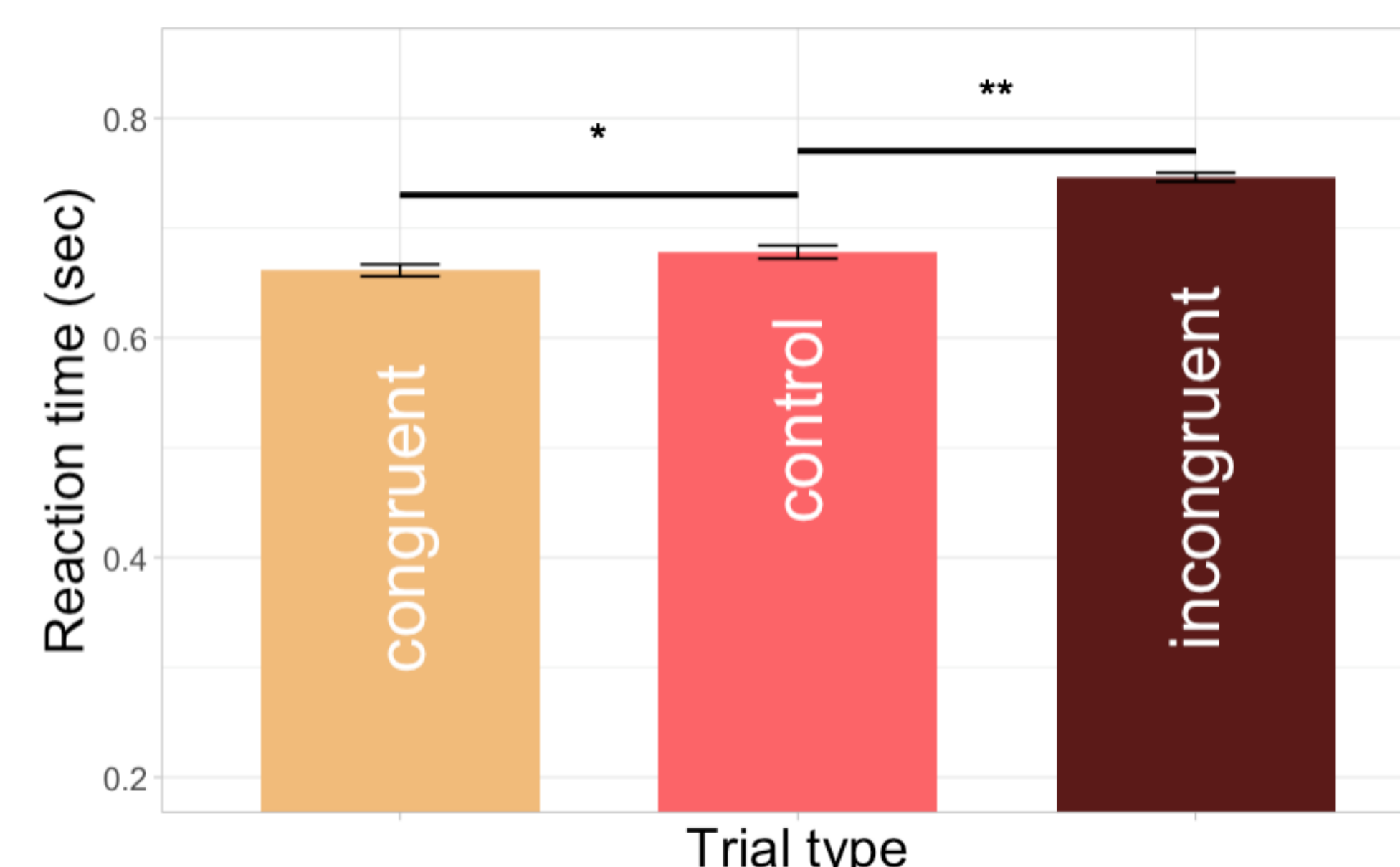
- 7.8% less likely to make errors on congruent trials
- 9.7% more likely to make errors on incongruent trials

Participants were slower and more error prone when processing if alternative construals were applicable to scenes.

## Study 2: Lexical Decision

Is the word a real word or nonword?

N = 98 UCLA undergraduates participated online (144 trials).



### Reaction times

Relative to control trials, participants responded:

- 15ms faster to congruent trials
- 18ms slower to incongruent trials

Participants were slower to process alternative construals as real words.

## Conclusions

- Incongruent subjective construals are processed more slowly and are more likely not to be processed relative to control words, **indicating that their meaning is being suppressed.**
- **Our findings provide support for the inhibition of alternatives hypothesis**, shedding light on the cognitive bases of naïve realism and providing a promising avenue for further research.

## Future Directions

- Computationally model processes underlying construal formation and inhibition.
- Link behavioral data to a novel trait measure of naïve realism.
- Determine whether the inhibition of alternative construals on a scene level relates to the inhibition of alternative interpretations on a narrative level.

## Acknowledgements



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## References

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2. Ross, L., & Ward, A. (1996). Naive realism in everyday life: Implications for social conflict and misunderstanding. *Values and Knowledge*, 113-146.
3. Lieberman (2022). Seeing minds, matter, and meaning: The CEEing model of pre-reflective subjective construal. *Psychological Review*.