

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

Christina Huber & Matthew Lieberman
Department of Psychology, UCLA



Background

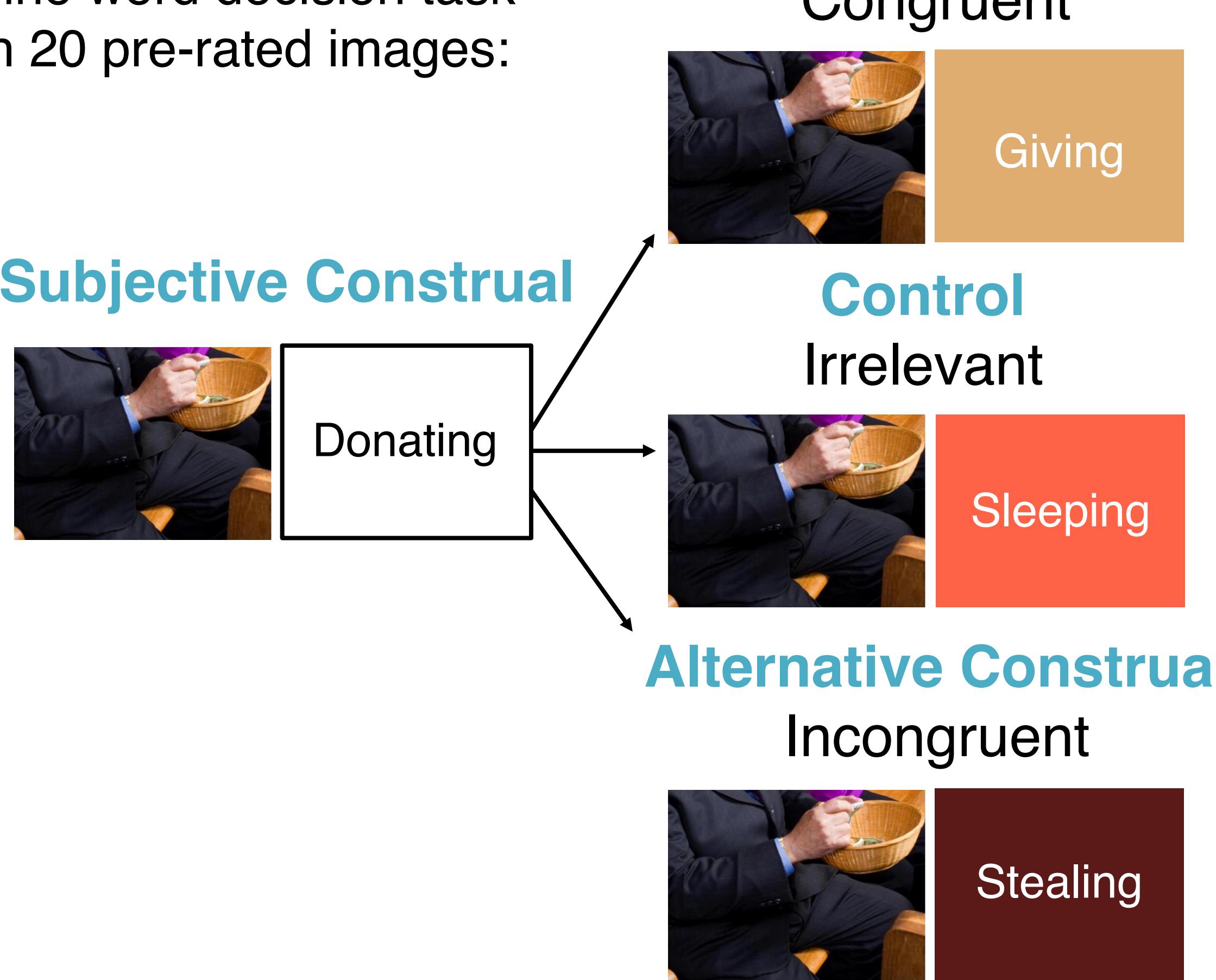
- **Naïve realism** – the conviction that our understanding of the world is objective, while those who disagree must be biased or uninformed – often contributes to individual cognitive biases and intergroup conflict¹⁻².
- Despite its importance, the mechanisms underlying naïve realism are poorly understood.
- **We propose that after a given subjective construal is generated, alternative interpretations may be suppressed³**, 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:

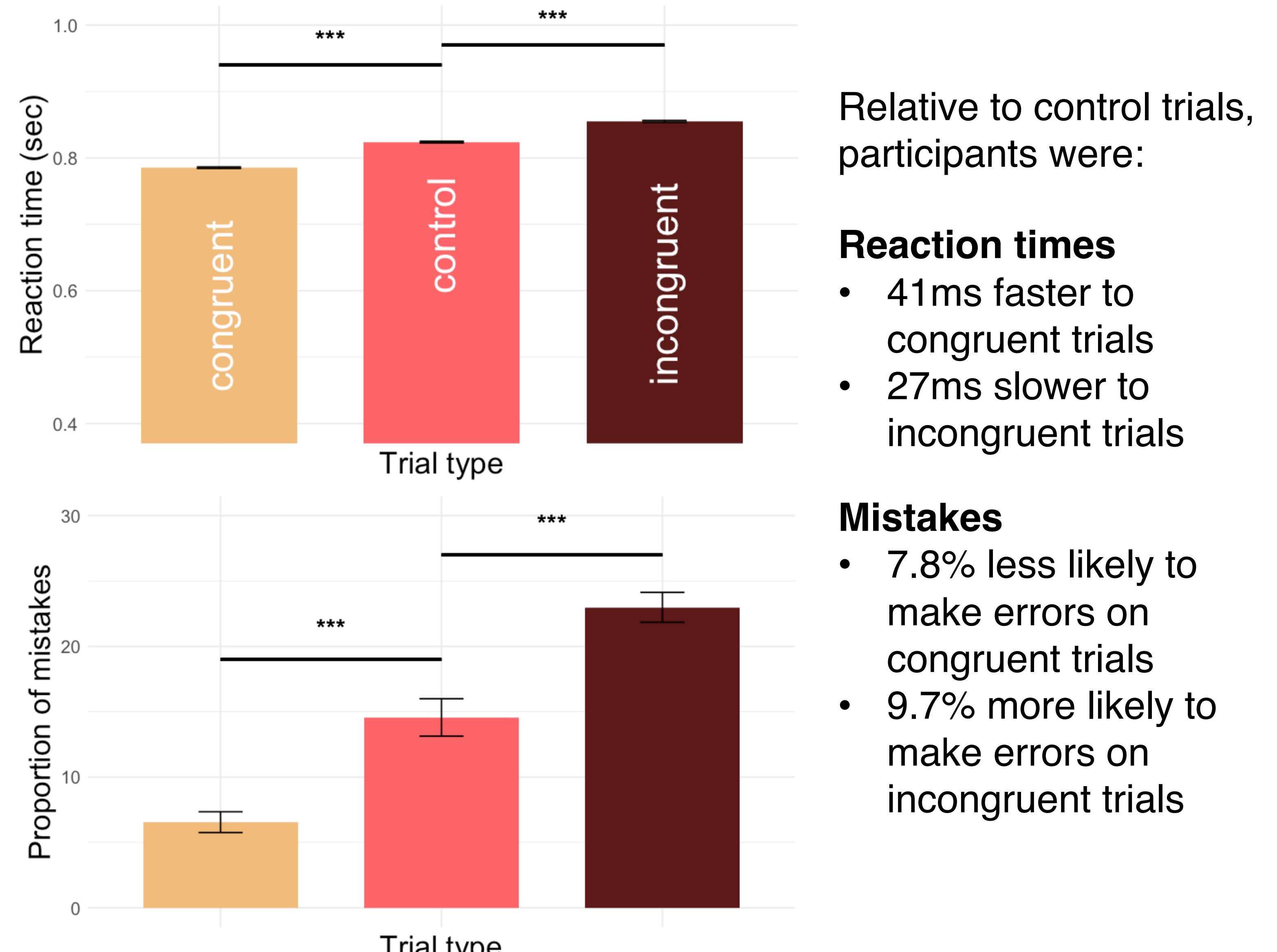


	Study 1	Study 2
Participants were asked:	Is the word a good or bad description of the image?	Is the word a real word or nonword?

Study 1: Interpretation Decision

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

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



Mistakes

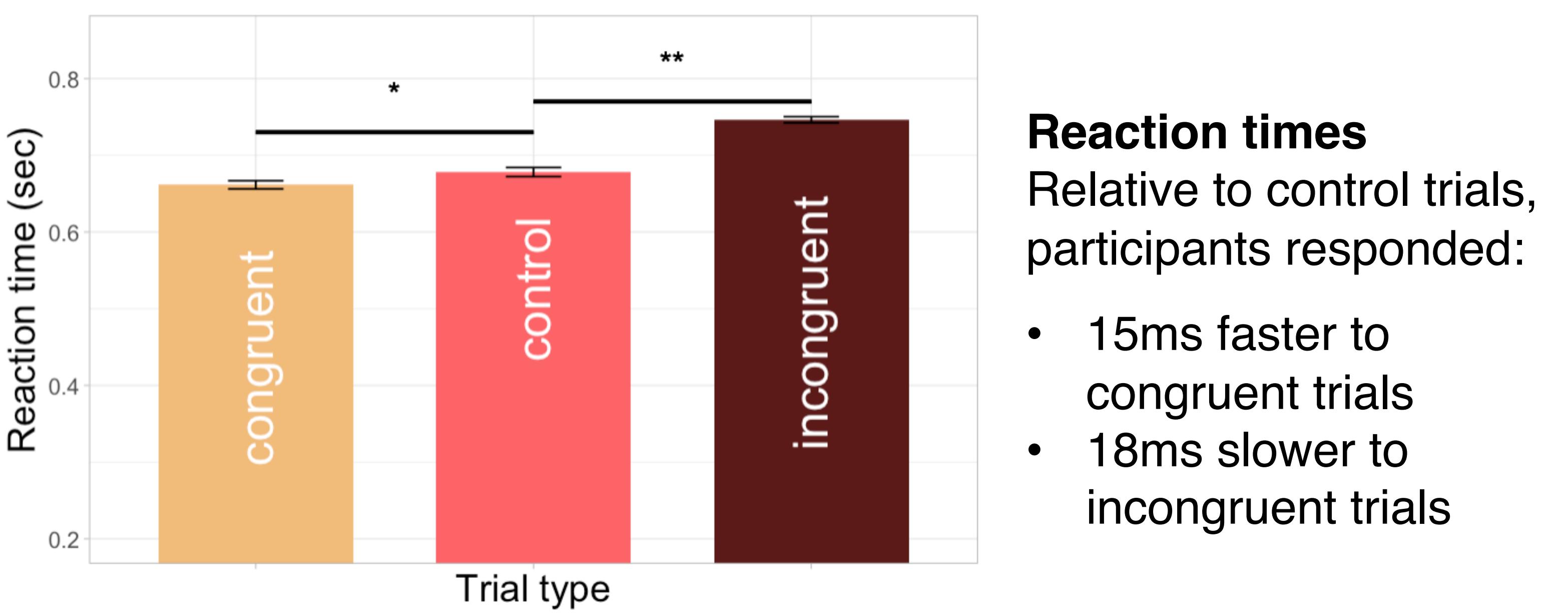
- 7.8% less likely to make errors on congruent trials
- 9.7% more likely to make errors on incongruent trials

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).



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



NSF GRFP for funding and the UCLA Social Cognitive Neuroscience Lab for feedback.

References

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2. Ross, L., & Ward, A. (1996). Naïve 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*.