Code-switching after language-specific syntax: Is there a cost?

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Background

• Cross Language Overlap/Ambiguity

	Dutch		English
Cognate Overlap in phonology, orthography and meaning	Hotel	=	Hotel
Homograph Overlap in phonology, orthography, not meaning	Room	=	Cream

If a bilingual can function as two monolinguals, word recognition in one language should not be influenced by overlap with another language.

Non-selectivity

•Parallel activity of words in the target language and also in the language not in use (e.g., Dijkstra, 2005)

•Yet bilinguals can read and speak in one language alone without random errors of language

•Bilinguals develop a mechanism of control that enables fluent performance and also code switching (e.g., Green, 1998; Myers-Scotton, 2002)

Role of Sentence Context

•**Readers still experience cross-language activation from the unintended language** (e.g., Duyck et al., 2007; Libben & Titone, 2009; Schwartz & Kroll, 2006)

• Semantic biases may eliminate such activity (e.g., Van Hell & De Groot, 2008)

Language-specific Syntax

• **Syntax differs across language** (semantics is largely shared)

•Language-specific syntax may provide cues to the reader

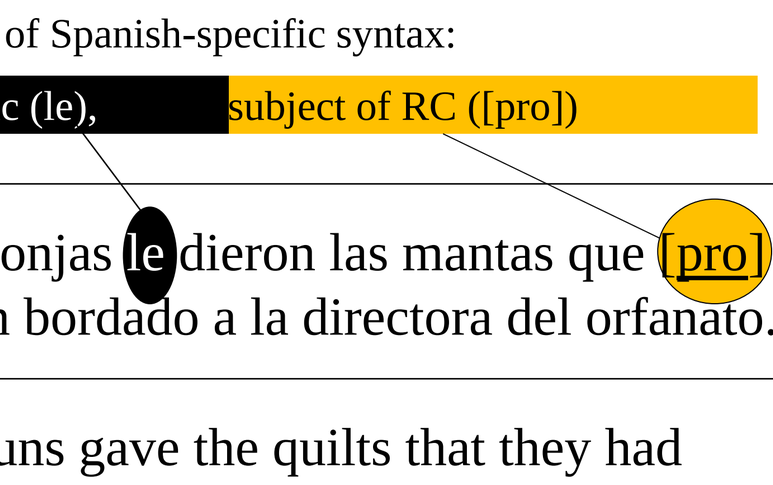
•An example of Spanish-specific syntax:

use of clitic (le), subject of RC ([pro])

Las monjas le dieron las mantas que [pro] habían bordado a la directora del orfanato.
The nuns gave the quilts that they had embroidered to the director of the orphanage.

Gullifer et al. (2010)

•Preliminary evidence that language-specific syntax modulates parallel activation



•Cognate facilitation only in the syntax non-specific condition:

•**Language-specific syntax eliminates the cognate effect**

Code-switching (CS)

•Fluent bilinguals can seamlessly switch between language

•Across and within sentences (inter- vs intra-sentential switching)

•CS may depend upon the degree of parallel activation

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Goal of the Current Study

• Further examine the role of language-specific syntactic constraints in modulating parallel activation of the bilingual's two languages

•Examine whether CS depends on non-selectivity

• **Determine whether a CS is more effortful following language specific syntactic constraints**

Materials

Switching: Switch, No Switch

Syntax: Specific, Non-Specific

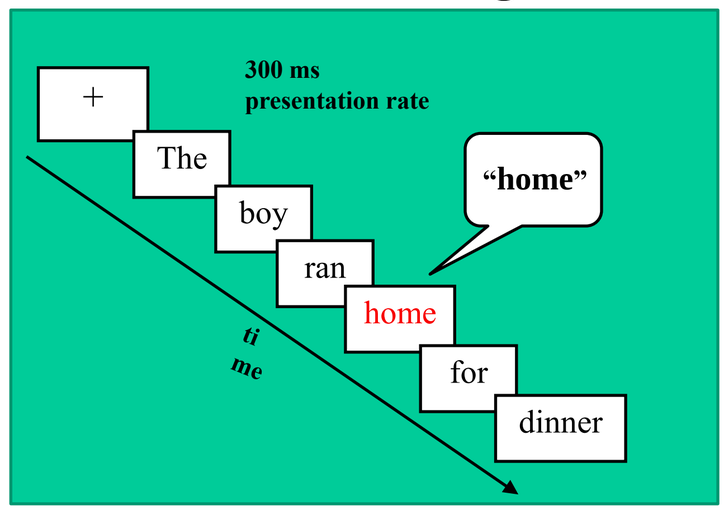
Cognate Status: Cognate, Noncognate

Examples (Cognates)	
Code-switched Syntax Non-Specific	El taxista que estaba estacionado en la esquina de la panadería llevó **the professor to her house.**
English Syntax Non-Specific	The taxi driver who was parked at the corner of the bakery took the professor to her house.
Spanish Syntax Non-Specific	El taxista que estaba estacionado en la esquina de la panadería llevó al profesor a su casa

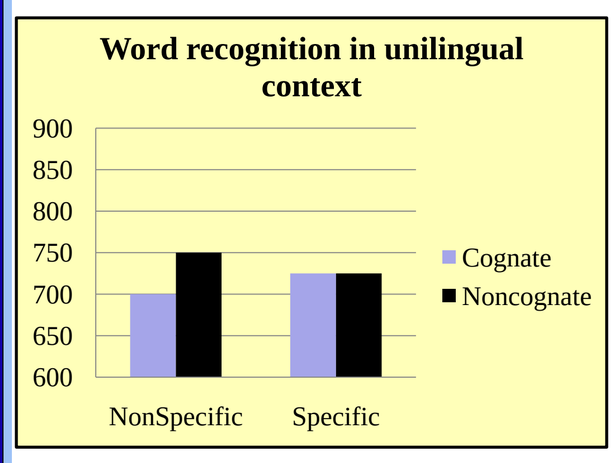
Participants

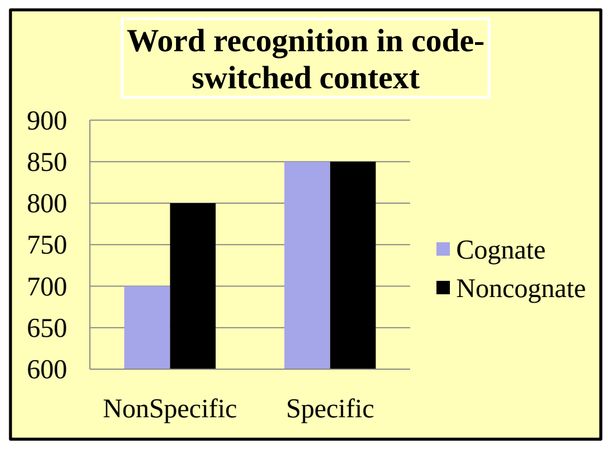
•Bilinguals living in Granada
  •L1 immersed, rarely code-switch
•Bilinguals living in the US (e.g., New York)
  •L2 immersed, frequently code-switch

RSVP Naming



Predicted Results





•Replicate results from Gullifer et al. (2010)
  •Cog facilitation in nonspecific
  •Eliminated after language-specific syntax

•If language-specific syntax causes selective access
  •No cognate effect
  •CS should be more effortful
•In non-specific
  •May get larger cognate effect
  •Recognition easier for cognates following CS

Discussion / Conclusions

•Elucidate the mechanisms underlying CS
  •Does CS depend on parallel activation?
•Investigate CS during reading
  •Is there a general cost? Is it modulated by cognates?