## Introduction

The scope of unconscious processing is highly controversial [REF]. Although unconsciously processed stimuli have been repeatedly shown to evoke both behavioral and neural changes [REF], some of these findings have been criticized on different grounds [REF], and are generally not easy to detect given the typically weak signals [REF]. A prominent complication stemming from this difficulty to detect unconscious effects relates to the most appropriate interpretation for such findings. For example, small positive effects can be attributed to the use of a non-exhaustive awareness measure (i.e., contamination by aware processes) [REF], while null results can be attributed to the use of a non-sensitive performance measure [REF]. Such contradicting interpretations make the field highly debated [REF].

The goal of our research is accordingly to look for ways to enhance the measured signals and obtain stronger effect sizes. We thus examine the usage of motion tracking as a performance measure, and ask if it is superior to the widely-used keyboard response and response time (RT) measure. Continuous motion tracking allows to capture fluctuations in the decision as it formulates [REF] and hence is used in studies to uncover cognitive conflicts stemming from an unconsciously processed stimulus [REF]. However, the only direct comparison made between motion tracking and keyboard response could have benefited from more strict awareness measures and a more natural response method [REF]. Our experiment will keep a rigorous awareness test as well as utilize the intuitive nature of reaching responses. Intuitive response methods demand less cognitive and motor control, and therefor increase the propensity for involutional movements that are evoked by unconscious stimuli. Ergo, the probability for the expression of unconscious effects is increased. In previous motion tracking pilots, we found an effect size larger than those found in similar experiments conducted with a keyboard. Accordingly, in this direct comparison, we expect to find an advantage for motion tracking over keyboard responses.

### Hypothesis

We hypothesis motion tracking will be more sensitive to cognitive conflicts than a keyboard response. Therefore, we expect the congruency effects found when using motion tracking to be larger than those found while using a keyboard response.

## Methods

### Design

IV:

1. Congruency – A within subject variable of two levels.
   1. Congruent: prime and target are the same word.
   2. Incongruent: Prime and target are a different word from a different semantic category that do not share letters in common locations.
2. Response measure – A within subject variable of two levels.
   1. Motion tracking: The participant chooses an answer by reaching and touching it on the screen.
   2. Keyboard response: The participant chooses an answer by pressing "F" / "J" accordingly.
3. Item type – A within subject variable of two levels (manipulated for the task, though it is not a variable of interest for the analysis).
   1. Natural: target and / or prime describe a natural item (e.g., "Plant", "Cloud").
   2. Artificial: target and / or prime describe an artificial product (e.g., "Radio", "Phone").

DV:

1. *Reach area:* Area between the average path to the left target and the average path to the right target in a single condition (congruent / incongruent). The path will be averaged across trials in each condition.

Chart, funnel chart

Description automatically generated

1. *Response time:* The time it takes a participant to classify the target as natural / artificial. This will be used as an exploratory DV in the "Reaching" condition. In the "Keyboard" condition it will be measured from target presentation up until "F" / "J" are pressed. In the "Reaching" condition it will be given by the sum of reaction and movement times.

Exploratory DV:

1. *Reaction time:* From stimulus presentation up to movement initiation. Movement initiation is detected once the Euclidean distance from the starting point is greater than 1cm.
2. *Movement time:* From movement initiation up to a screen touch.
3. *Maximal absolute deviation:* the point along the trajectory that is furthest away from the optimal path for that trial.

Diagram

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1. *Deviation from center:* Distance of every point along the average trajectory from the center line (a line connecting the starting point and the middle of the screen).
2. *Movement variation:* Standard deviation of the distance of every point along the average trajectory from the center line. STD will be computed for each participant over all the trials in each condition.
3. *Changes of mind (COM):* The frequency of goal changes during a movement. Will be measured by

Number of direction changes between sub-movements (Friedman, J., & Finkbeiner, M. (2010). Temporal dynamics of masked congruence priming: evidence from reaching trajectories.),

Number of changes in implied goal (the side, left/right, where the current tangent to the trajectory meets the screen).

1. *Total distance traveled:* The sum of Euclidean distances between samples along the trajectory of a single trial.

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### Planned sample

All participants will be right-handed, native Hebrew speakers who aren't color blind and have normal vision or corrected-to-normal vision using contact lenses. Only participants declaring that they have no neurological, attentional, or mental disorders, and are not taking psychiatric medicines, will be included.

Data will be collected at Prof. Liad Mudrik's lab for high level cognition in Tel-Aviv University, from students or other young adults at the ages of 18-35, in [TBD] minutes session.

Participants will be reimbursed with course credit or cash payment.

### Sample size estimation

Two pilots were conducted in our lab to estimate the semantic priming effect when participants respond by reaching. Averaging the effect sizes of both pilots produces Cohen's dz = 0.88. In accordance with our hypothesis, we postulate an effect size smaller by 30% in the keyboard session (Cohen's dz = 0.61). To discover such effect with a power = 95% and we require a sample of 30 participants [ref].

### Exclusion criteria

The following trials will be excluded from the main analysis:

1. Trials with visibility rating higher than 1.
2. Trials in which there was a technical malfunction with the setup or recording:
   1. Over 100ms of missing samples in the trajectory.
   2. Less than 100ms of existing samples in the trajectory.
   3. Stimulus presentation duration deviated from the desired by more than 2ms.
3. Trials in which the participant provided a problematic response:
   1. Short reach distance: The length of the processed trajectory as measured on the *Z* axis was shorter than:

"Marker gap" accounts for the variating distance of the marker from the edge of each participant's finger and its value is 0.7cm.

* 1. Missed targets: Touching point on screen is more than 12cm away from both targets.
  2. Bad timing: When using a keyboard, key press was too early (less than 200ms after target), or too late (more than 4000ms after target). When reaching, movement started too early (less than 100ms after target display, implying a planned response) or too late (more than 320ms after target display).

Slow reaching movements (reaching duration was longer than 420ms) will be included in the analysis if they are within 3 STD from the average reaching time of the participant.

* 1. Wrong answer when classifying the target.
  2. No response given via the keyboard.

Participants will be excluded according to the following criteria:

1. Less than 30 valid trials in each condition (congruent / incongruent).

"Valid" trails are those that have a PAS rating of 1 and weren't excluded due to any of the above reasons.

1. Failed to classify the target correctly on at least 70% of the trials.
2. Recognized the prime on more than 50% of all incongruent.

### Apparatus

The stimulus will be displayed on a VPIXX monitor (VIEWPixx /3D Lite LCD display and data acquisition system, version 3.7.6287) using Matlab 2018b and Psychtoolbox. The monitor will be set to full brightness at a resolution of 1920 x 1080 and refresh rate of 100Hz with VPIXX's "Scanning backlight" feature turned on, which synchronizes the stimulus display to the screen's refresh rate. A Perspex cover will be placed over the screen to protect it. The cover will be spray painted with a light layer of transparent matte lacquer to avoid reflections. The participants will sit approximately 60cm away from the screen and place their index finger on a marked starting point which will be located on the table 35cm away from the screen, in line with its center. The stimulus will be displayed 24cm above the table and the classification answers will be displayed on each side of it, 20cm apart. Participants will wear a Velcro ring with a marker at the tip of their index finger. "Marker gap" defines the maximal distance of the ring from the fingertip and will be set to 0.7cm. A system of 6 OptiTrack Flex 13 cameras @@ cite @@ will track the marker's location using Motive 2.2.0 software @@ cite @@ at a sampling rate of 120Hz. The coordinates will be broadcasted online to a NatNet client @@ cite @@ and recorded with Matlab.

Diagram

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### Materials and stimuli

**Stimuli Selection**

One hundred 5-letter words will be used as primes and targets. All words will be imageable nouns with a frequency of at least 10 per million (Cite: <http://word-freq.mscc.huji.ac.il/>). One half will describe artificial products (e.g., radio, train) and the other natural items (e.g., fruit). Target words will be written in typescript while prime words will be written in handwriting font. Masks will be composed of a semi-random combination of squares and diamonds whose line thickness is equal to the word's font size and which covers the central area of the screen where words can appear (approximately ).

40 words will be used for the practice blocks and the remaining 60 for the test blocks.

### Procedure

Each participant will perform a "Reaching" session and a "Keyboard" session, and their order will be counterbalanced across participants.

Each session will include two practice blocks and six test blocks of 40 trials each (i.e., 80 practice trials and 240 test trials per session, 640 trials total). Breaks will be allowed between blocks. Throughout the experiment, half the trials will be congruent and half incongruent, and half the targets will be natural and half artificial. Trial order will be determined per participant, using two randomly sampled (without replacement) lists out of twenty pre-prepared lists of trial types and stimuli. One list will be assigned to the "Reaching" condition and the other to the "Keyboard" condition. Two fixed practice lists will be used for all participants . In each list, the order of words is pseudorandom, with the following constraints: (a) Each word is equally frequent as a target at the congruent and incongruent conditions; (b) All words are used as targets the same number of times; (c) A target never repeats in the same block; (d) In the congruent condition the prime is identical to the target word; (e) In the incongruent condition, a prime which doesn't share letters in common locations with the target is selected from the alternative category (artificial/natural). For example, in the congruent condition "phone" would be preceded by "PHONE", while in the incongruent condition it will be preceded by "GRASS". Each prime is further paired with a random distractor from the same category (artificial/natural) to be used in the prime recognition task. The distractor shares no letters in common locations with the prime, so seeing one letter only would suffice for correct discrimination.

The procedure closely follows the one used in Dehaene et al., [REF]. Every trial will consist of a fixation cross (1000ms), a first mask (270ms), a second mask (30ms), a prime word (30ms), a third mask (30ms) and a target (500ms). Once the target is displayed, participants will classify the target word as describing a natural / artificial item by selecting the side of the screen that contains the appropriate category. In the "Reaching" condition the participants will touch the appropriate side of the screen. Here, responses are bound to onset time and movement time constraints; Onset is the time from target presentation until the participant's finger is 1cm away from the starting point (Euclidean distance). It must be longer than 100ms to prevent predictive movements but shorter than 320ms to prevent prime dilution. Inaccurate timing will be immediately replied with a "Too Early" / "Too Late" feedback accordingly. Movement time starts once the finger leaves the starting point and ends when the participant is 0.7cm away from the screen (on the Z axis). Movements longer than 420ms will be replied with a "Too Slow" feedback once they are completed. In the "Keyboard" condition they will use "F"/"J" keys to select the left / right side accordingly, and response must be given within a time window of 250-4000ms from target display; otherwise "Too Early" / "Too Late" feedback is given. After Classifying the targets, the participant will be asked to recognize the prime, as an objective measure of prime awareness. Participants will be presented with two words – the prime and another word from the same category. Response will be given in an identical fashion to the target classification task, withing a 7 seconds response window. Finally, a Subjective measure of prime awareness will be taken, using the Perceptual Awareness Scale (PAS; REF). Participants will use the keyboard numbers 1-4 to rate how well did they see the prime (1 - "Didn't see anything", 2 – "Saw something vaguely, but can't say what it is", 3 – "Saw part of the prime clearly", 4 – "Saw the whole prime clearly"). Finally, in the "Reaching" session participants will have to return their finger to the starting point after each response.

## Analysis plan

### Trajectory preprocessing

Preprocessing will follow @@ Cite @@ Gallivan, J. P., & Chapman, C. S. (2014). Three-dimensional reach trajectories

Missing values will be interpolated with the inpaint\_nans [REF] function to fill gaps in the trajectory, and will then be filtered with a low pass butterworth filter (2nd order with cutoff at 8Hz) to reduce noise. The axis' origin will be set at the first sample of each trial. To locate movement onset, a low pass butterworth filter (2nd order with a 10Hz cutoff) will first be applied to the velocity. Onset will be indicated by four consecutive samples having a velocity greater than 2mm/s and a total acceleration of at least 2mm/s^2. Offset will be determined as the point along the trajectory that is closest to the screen.

The movements will be normalized to the length of the trajectory along the axis perpendicular to the screen (Z axis). To do so, a B-spline of the 6th order with a roughness penalty to the 4th derivative will be fitted to each axis with a spline at every data point. The fitted function will be used to produce a high-resolution representation of the trajectory (1000 samples) from which 200 points equally spaced along the total distance traveled on the Z axis will be extracted (e.g., if the participant moved 2 forward, 1 backward, the total distance is 3). These points will represent the proportion of path traveled.

### Dependent variables extraction

#### Reach area calculation

The area will be calculated in three stages. First, we will establish a line perpendicular to the screen at the lowest X value. Then we will compute the area between each average trajectory and that line. The results will be subtracted from each other, and their absolute value will be used as the reach area. To avoid negative area values, the trajectories will be split at their intersections and the area will be calculated separately for each section.

### Confirmatory analysis

We will compute each participant's DV separately over congruent and incongruent trials, which will be compared using a paired t-test . The p-values will be corrected with Benjamini-Hochberg FDR correction. Cohen's dz and its Confidence Intervals (CIs) will be examined for overlap between the "Reaching" and "Keyboard" conditions. No overlap will indicate an advantage for one measure over the other.

The difference score of each DV will be tested for normality via a qq-plot. A DV that will fail to keep normality will be tested instead with a non-parametric test of difference in the means using a t-test with permutation.

The maximal reach area is 0.14m2 as seen in [ref], therefore participants with reach area larger than that will not be included in the analysis. Outlying values of the reach area will be identified as those further away from the average reach area than the "inter quartile range" \* 1.5. In case of outliers a robust t-test will be computed using R's WRS2 package and its effect size will be estimated with R's WRS2 package "AKP" effect size.

Computing effect sizes for robust t-test:

### Expected results

In the reaching condition, we expect to find a bias for the incorrect answer in the incongruent condition. A tendency to move toward the side opposite to the final correct answer will increase the total distance traveled, the AUC and the maximal absolute deviation from the optimal path. Conversely, it will decrease the deviation from the center. The bias will also curve the average path towards the center which will make the reach area smaller.

In addition, an incongruent prime will evoke a cognitive conflict which is expected to increase the time it takes to reach a final decision. This will be manifested in the movement time as well as in higher movement variation.

In the "Keyboard" condition, we expect longer reaction times in the incongruent condition compared with the congruent one.

Finally, we expect effect sizes to be bigger in the reaching condition compared with the keyboard one.

### Project data collection

Start and end dates @TBD@