Craig Williams

Michael Henry Tessler (4/29)

Despite being well outside of my own area in both content (language) and methodology (modeling), I really enjoyed this research! The accessible intro quickly pulled me in and its excellent organization helped me grasp the question at hand. Indeed, my feedback is mostly suggestions for making the entire manuscript read more like the intro. First, the intro uses commonplace language whereas the rest of the paper often felt mired in difficult jargon – particularly for us outsiders. One potential solution (which works quite well in the intro) is to frame the cognitive phenomena more in terms of what speakers and listeners do. Leading with actor-focused language could cut down jargon and help readers to intuit the cognition you model. Second, the rationale for your experiments—from the big idea to the study specifics—could use more set-up. For example, I wasn’t sure why you would manipulate perceived danger or why within-kinds properties are of interest. Leading paragraphs with the main point (as you do in intro paragraph 3) and efficient signposting could both really help. Along these lines, I’d also recommend recapping your findings at the start of discussion sections. Third, be totally explicit about every idea and detail you want readers to grasp (see my notes for examples re: methods and results). Oftentimes, I wasn’t sure what participants actually read (e.g. temporary, accidental, disease states) or what the key finding was (e.g. 5.1.3 and 5.2.3 results). To this end, you could include a table of example prompts for each of your studies and briefly recap the recycled study designs. Fourth, I’d recommend organizing your paper to lead with intuitive examples (e.g. “Birds are female?”) before presenting challenging cases (e.g. “Birds lay eggs?”). P.S. Figure 4 is a huge help!