Prepositional phrase attachment ambiguities in declarative and interrogative contexts: Oral reading data

Ph.D. dissertation defense

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## TODO

# Abstract

*Abstract is a work in progress.* This paper reports a study on the effect of interrogativity on the oral reading of temporarily ambiguous prepositional phrases (PPs). Specifically, it looks at sentences ending in a of two PPs, where the first is interpretable as the goal argument of the preceding verb, and the status of the second (PP2 Status) is manipulated to either necessarily be the goal argument of that verb (Arg), forcing reanalysis, or not (Mod), allowing the original parse to stand. No evidence is found that interrogativity impacts the difficulty of understanding the Arg-type sentences, despite an intuitive decrease in difficulty when those sentences are presented in an interrogative context. A double-reading protocol is employed, where participants are asked to read a sentence first without preview (Reading 1), and then after unlimited preview (Reading 2).A robust effect of PP2 Status is found for the prosodic phrasing of the target sentences, and an effect of interrogativity on the study time between Readings, Inter-Reading Time (IRT), is reported.

# Acknowledgements

TBD

## About this draft

This represents the document that will be defended on August 29th. The goal is to deposit before September 16, after incorporating whatever revisions are requested.

# Introduction and background

Placeholder

## Motivations for the current study

## Structural overview of the ambiguity relevant to this study

## Interrogativity

## Prosody of questions vs. declaratives

## Evidence that prosody can affect syntactic parsing

## Predictions for the current study

# Methodology

Placeholder

## Materials

### Experimental items

### Fillers

### Length

## Participants recruitment

## Location

## Equipment and software

## Versions of the experiment

## Procedure

### On look-ahead

## Measurements of utterance timing

## Prosodic judgments

### Reliability

# Results and discussion

Placeholder

## Data for analysis

## Prosodic break patterns

### Individual break patterns

### Combined break patterns

### Break Dominance

### Regression models of prosodic break patterns

#### Break occurrence

#### Break dominance

### On Reading 1 delay

## Discussion of prosodic break patterns

## Inter-reading time

### Data cleanup

### Analysis of IRT data

### On PP2 heads

### Discussion of IRT results

### The processing cost of interrogativity

# General discussion

Placeholder

## Behavioral correlate for the 2016 intuition and the current hypothesis?

## On possible explanations for the intuition

### A prosodic account

### A processing illusion

### A semantic/pragmatic explanation

## Conclusions and future directions

### Inter-item reading time (IRT) findings

### Hesitations vs. prosodic breaks

### Future work

#### Embedded questions

#### Event-related potentials

### Summary

# Appendices

# Experimental items

Placeholder

# References

# Introduction

## Parsing