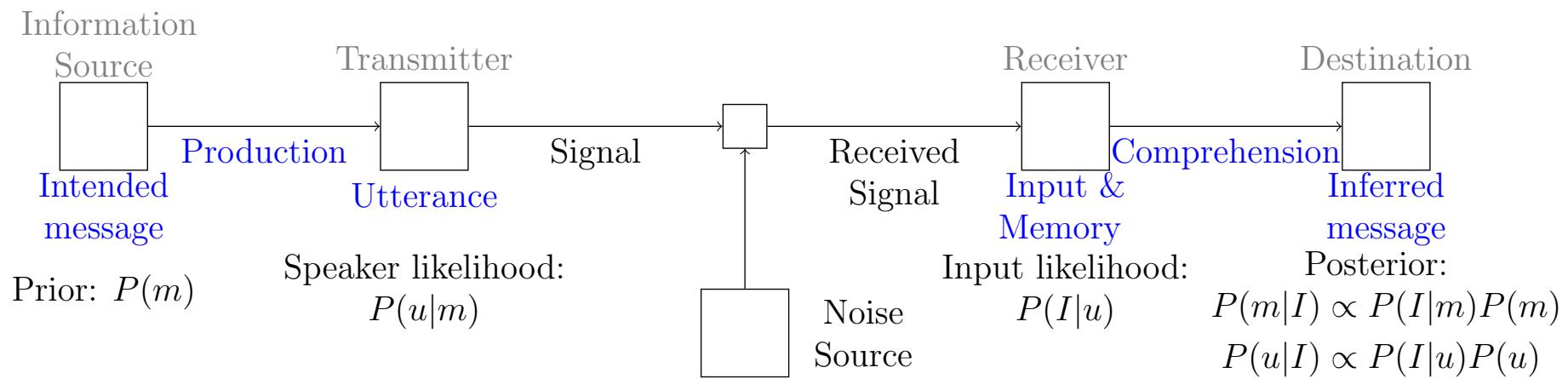


# Noisy-channel sentence comprehension theory II



Roger Levy

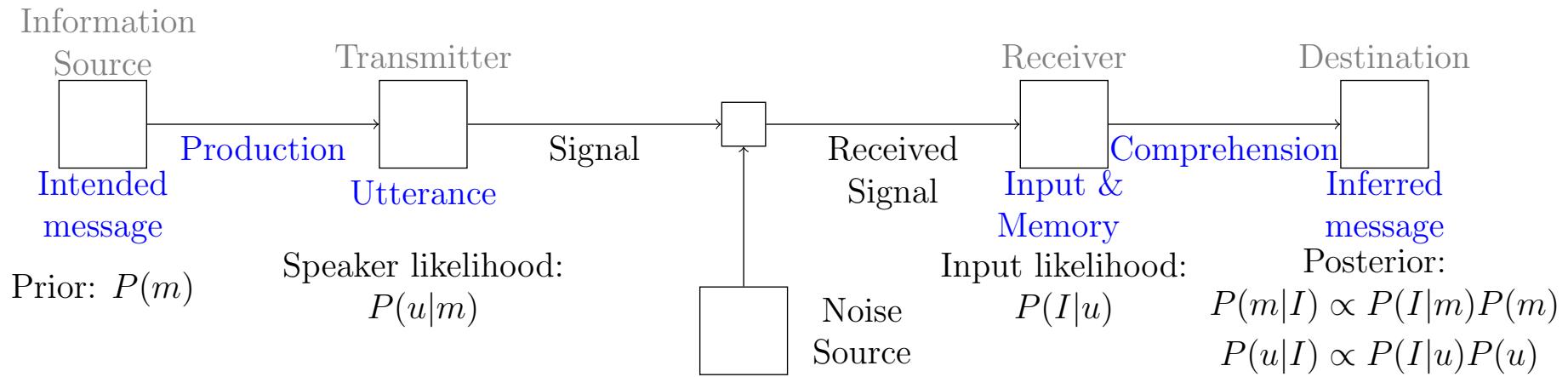
9.19: Computational Psycholinguistics

22 November 2021

# Today's agenda

- Explaining patterns of global utterance interpretation in the noisy-channel sentence processing theory
- Explaining "structural forgetting" effects by combining the noisy-channel theory with surprisal

# Noisy-channel theory of language processing



# Simple question-answering

---

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---

The woman lost the diamond.

*Did the woman lose something?*

# Simple question-answering

---

The woman lost the diamond.

*Did the woman lose something?*

Yes

# Simple question-answering

---

The woman lost the diamond.

*Did the woman lose something?*

Yes

The ball kicked the girl.

*Did the girl kick something?*

# Simple question-answering

---

The woman lost the diamond.

*Did the woman lose something?*

Yes

The ball kicked the girl.

*Did the girl kick something?*

No

# Simple question-answering

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The woman lost the diamond.

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Yes

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*Did the girl kick something?*

No

The businessman benefited from the tax law.

*Did the tax law benefit from anything?*

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*Was something baked for Lucy?*

No (Yes?)

# Simple question-answering

---

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No

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*Did the tax law benefit from anything?*

No

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

*Was something baked for Lucy?*

No

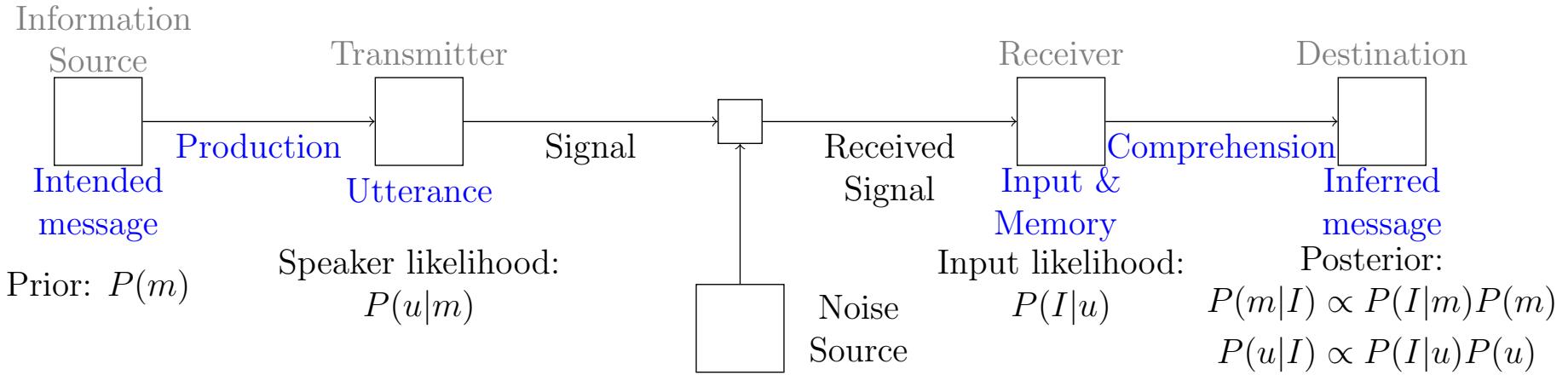
(Yes?)

Over 2/3 of answers!

# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

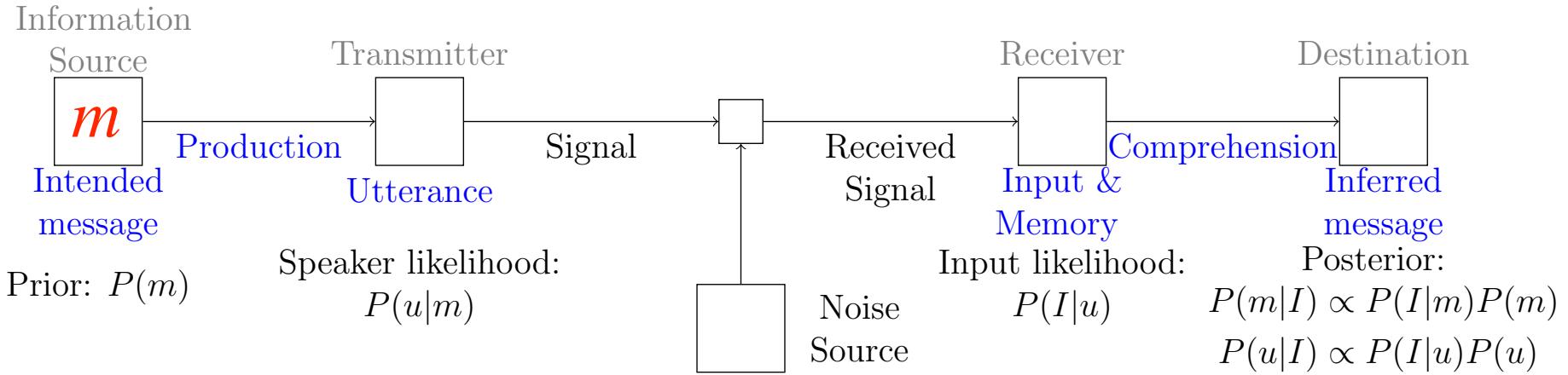
*Was something baked for Lucy?*



# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

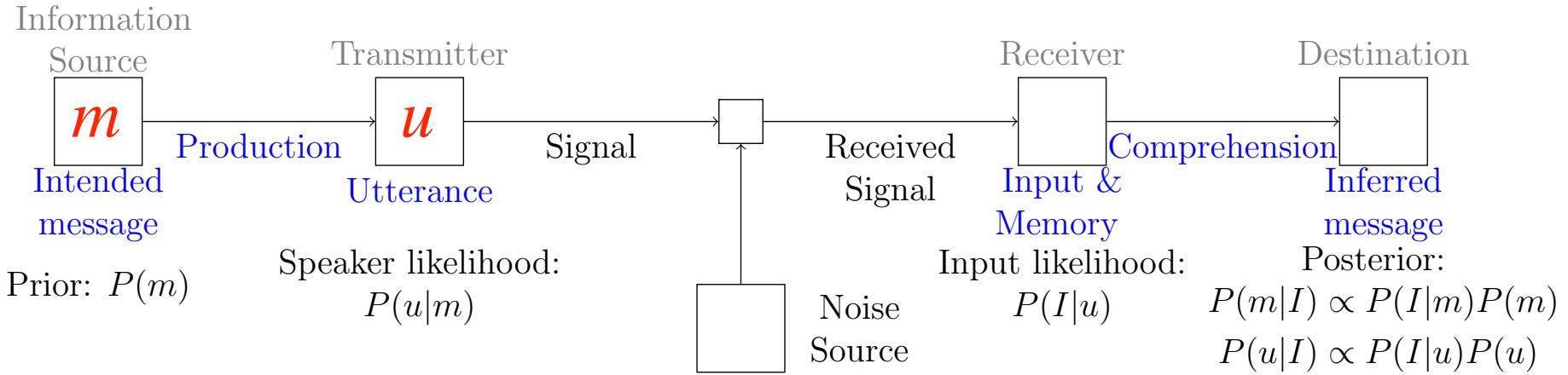
*Was something baked for Lucy?*



# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

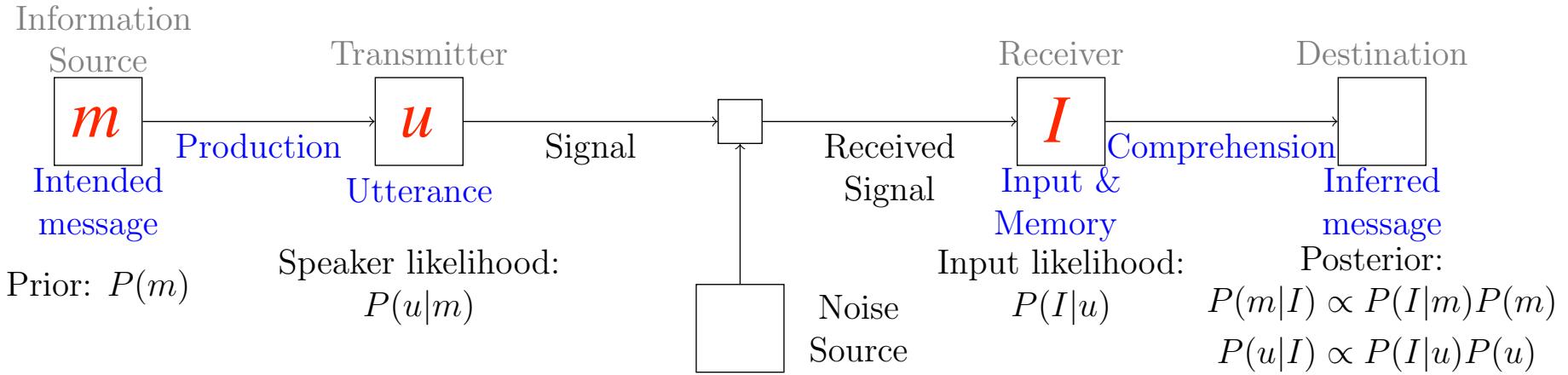
*Was something baked for Lucy?*



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The cook baked a cake Lucy.

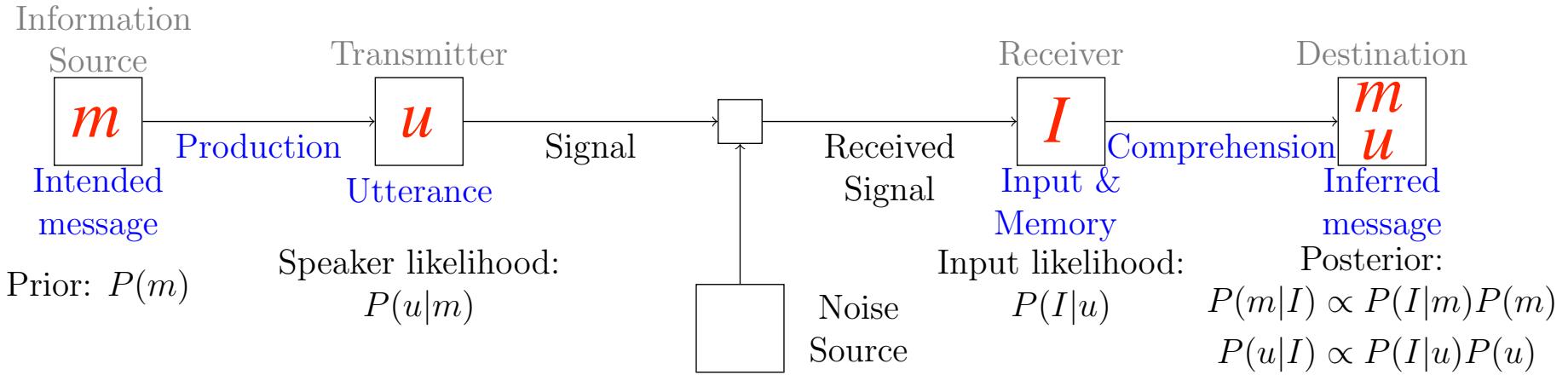
*Was something baked for Lucy?*



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The cook baked a cake Lucy.

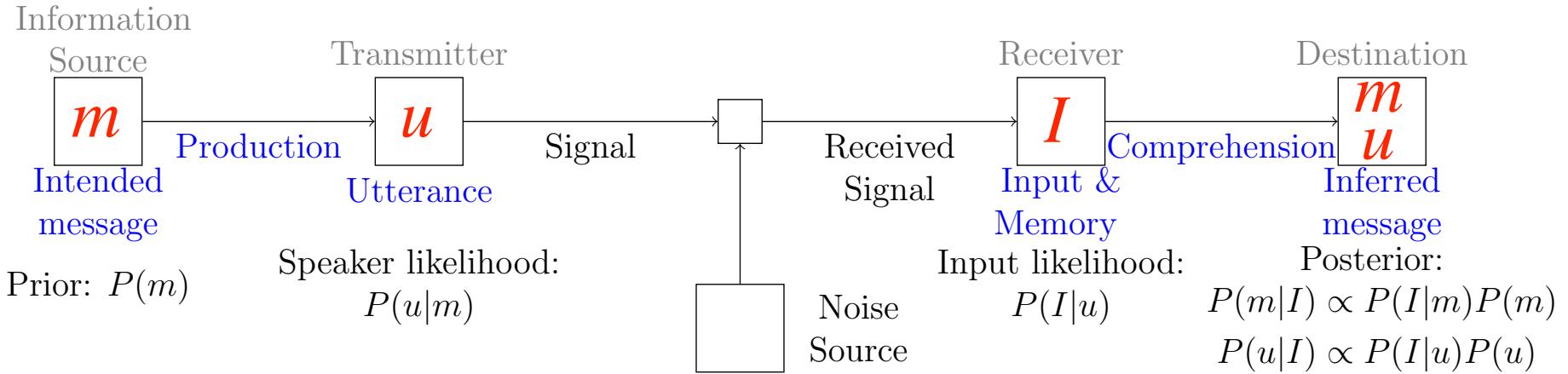
*Was something baked for Lucy?*



# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

I ← The cook baked a cake Lucy.

*Was something baked for Lucy?*

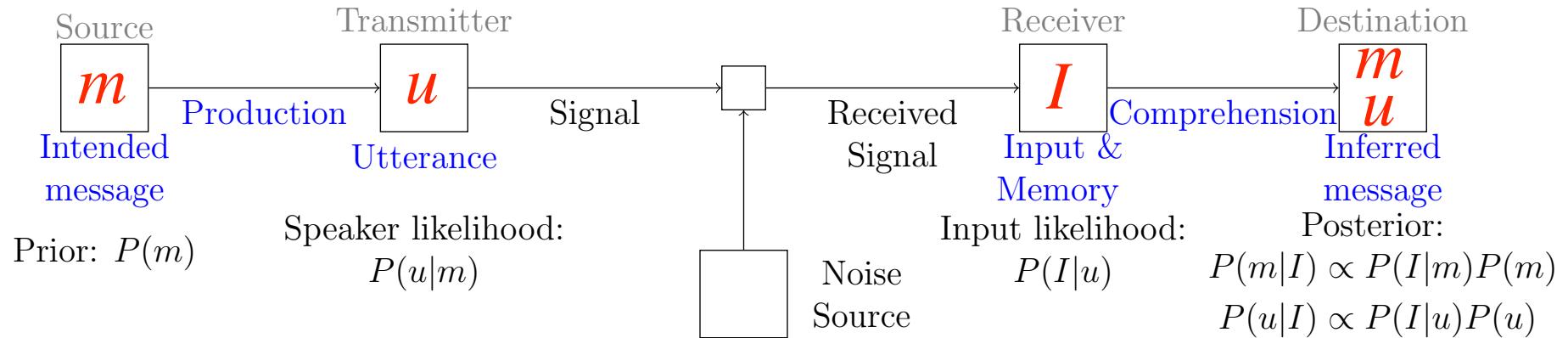


# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

I ← The cook baked a cake Lucy.

m? Was something baked for Lucy?

Information

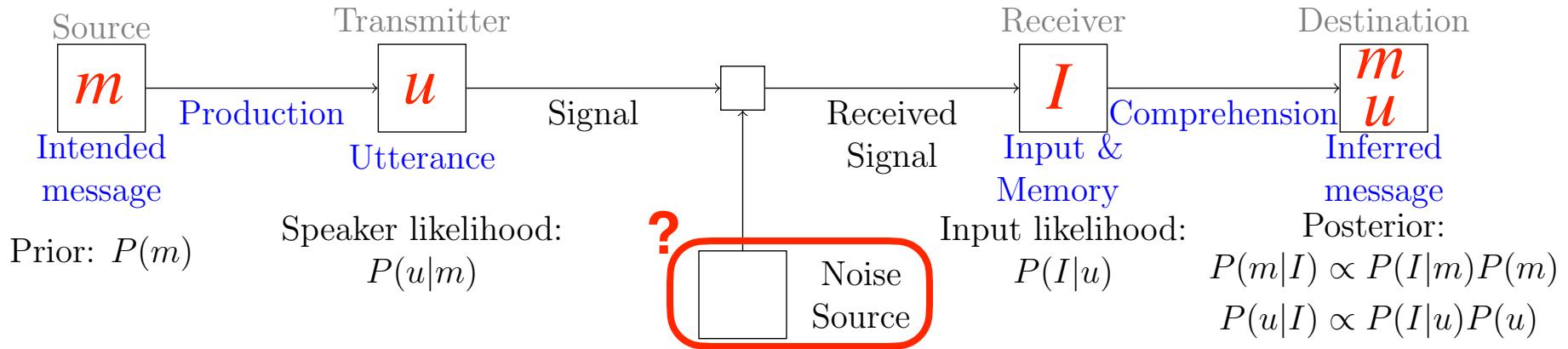


# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

*I←The cook baked a cake Lucy.*

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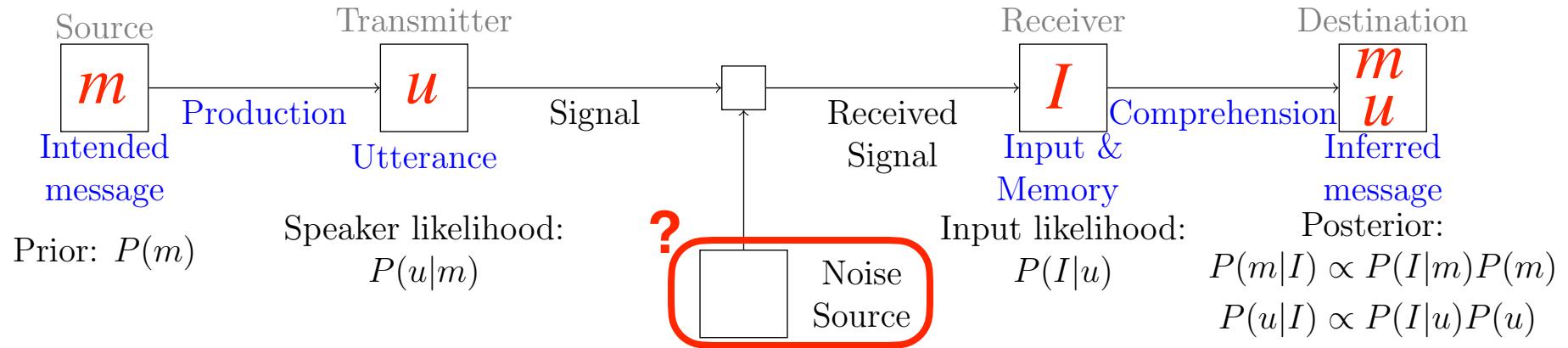


# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

*I←The cook baked a cake Lucy.*

*m? Was something baked for Lucy?*

Information



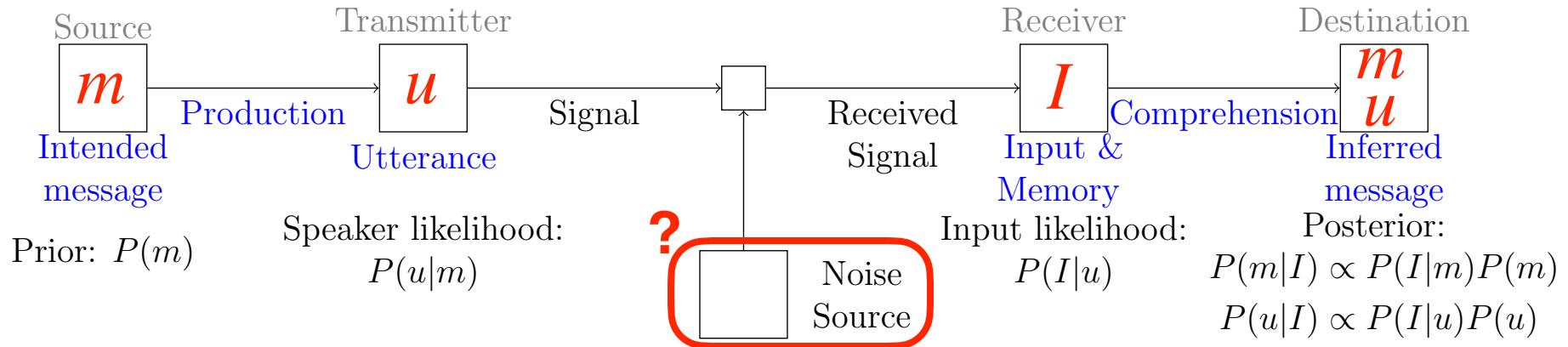
In two semantically plausible "neighbor" sentences, the answer is "yes":

# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

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*m?* Was something baked for Lucy?

Information



In two semantically plausible "neighbor" sentences, the answer is "yes":

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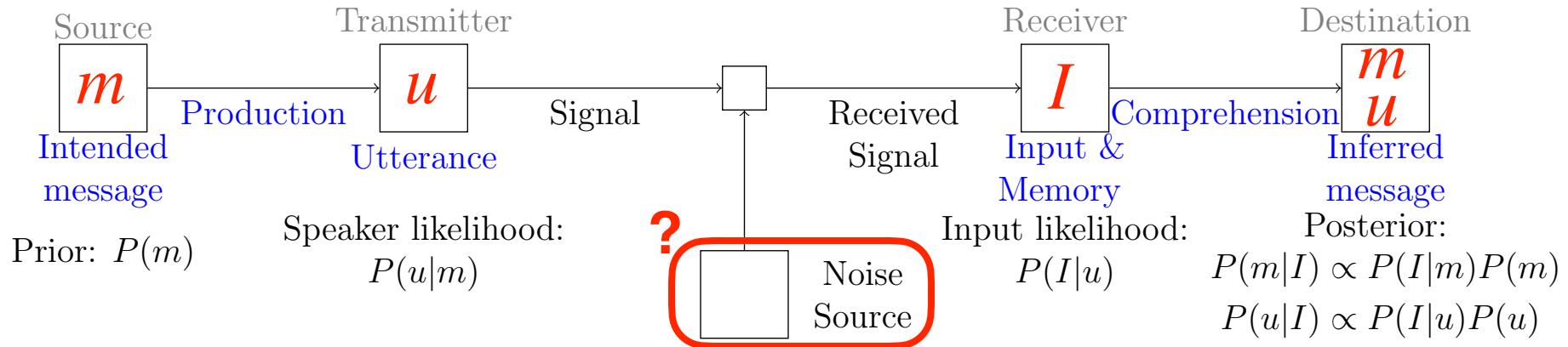
*for*

# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

I ← The cook baked a cake Lucy.

m? Was something baked for Lucy?

Information



In two semantically plausible "neighbor" sentences, the answer is "yes":

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Hypothesized noise operation: deletion

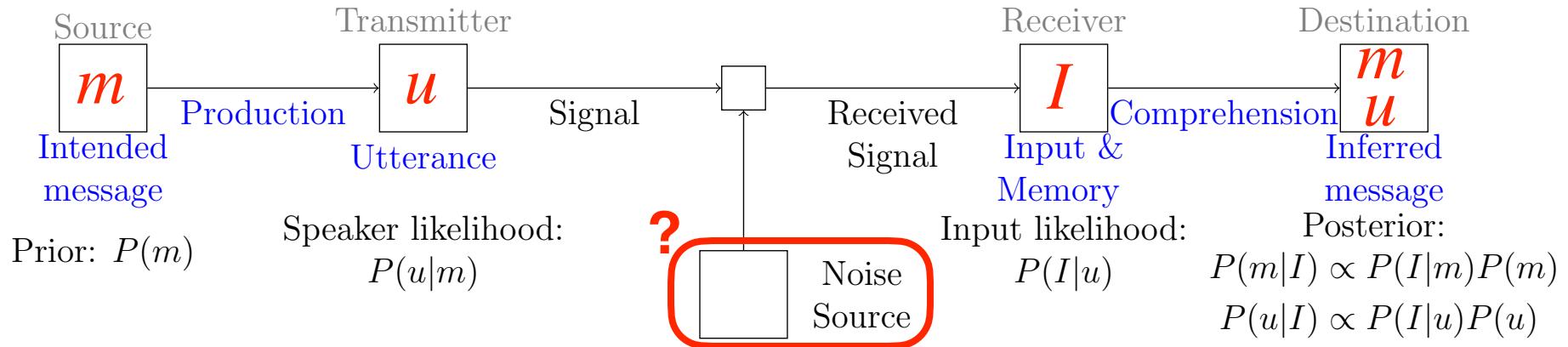
for

# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

*I*←The cook baked a cake Lucy.

*m?* Was something baked for Lucy?

Information



In two semantically plausible "neighbor" sentences, the answer is "yes":

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Hypothesized noise operation: deletion

for

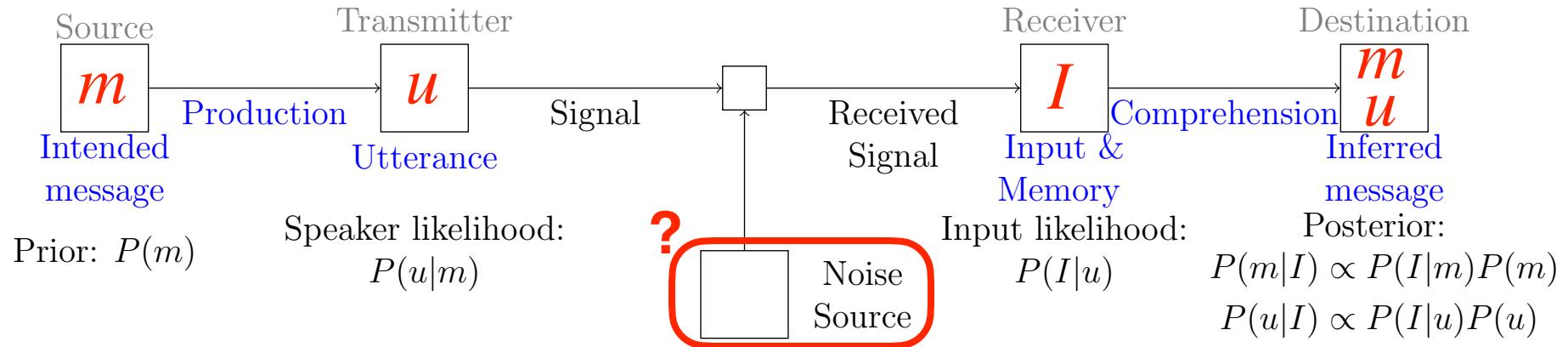
The cook baked a cake Lucy.  
Lucy a cake

# Noisy-channel semantic interpretation?

*I*←The cook baked a cake Lucy.

*m?* Was something baked for Lucy?

Information



In two semantically plausible "neighbor" sentences, the answer is "yes":

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

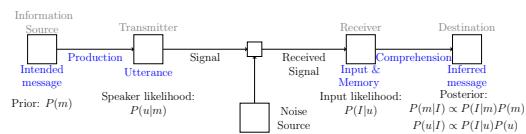
Hypothesized noise operation: deletion

for

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Hypothesized noise operation: exchange Lucy a cake

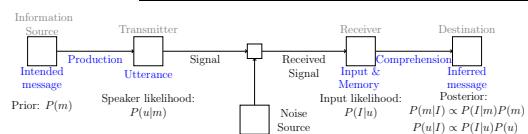
# Predictions for implausible sentences



$$P(m | I) \propto P(I | m)P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

# Predictions for implausible sentences



$$P(m | I) \propto P(I | m)P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

*Non-literal interpretation?*

Double Object/Benefactive-for alternation

*Deletion/  
insertion Exchange*

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

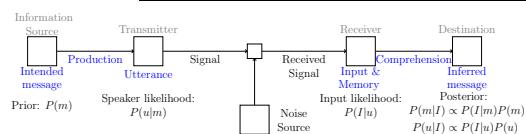
Yes Yes

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

Yes Yes

Implausible

# Predictions for implausible sentences



$$P(m | I) \propto P(I | m)P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

*Non-literal interpretation?*

Implausible

Double Object/Benefactive-for alternation

*Deletion/  
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The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Yes Yes

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

Yes Yes

Plausible

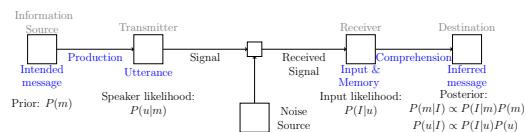
The cook baked Lucy a cake.

No No

The cook baked a cake for Lucy.

No No

# Predictions for implausible sentences



$$P(m | I) \propto P(I | m)P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

*Non-literal interpretation?*

Implausible

Double Object/Benefactive-for alternation

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Yes Yes

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

Yes Yes

Plausible

The cook baked Lucy a cake.

No No

The cook baked a cake for Lucy.

No No

*Deletion/  
insertion Exchange*

Implausible

Active/Passive alternation

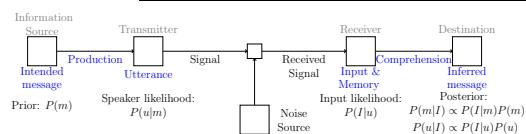
The ball kicked the girl.

No Yes

The girl was kicked by the ball.

No Yes

# Predictions for implausible sentences



$$P(m | I) \propto P(I | m)P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

*Non-literal interpretation?*

Implausible

Double Object/Benefactive-for alternation

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

Yes Yes

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

Yes Yes

Plausible

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No No

The cook baked a cake for Lucy.

No No

*Deletion/  
insertion Exchange*

Implausible

Active/Passive alternation

The ball kicked the girl.

No Yes

The girl was kicked by the ball.

No Yes

Plausible

The girl kicked the ball.

No Yes

The ball was kicked by the girl.

No Yes

# Literal vs. non-literal interpretation rates

*Non-literal interpretations for implausible sentences?*

*Insertion/Deletion*

Yes

*Exchange*

Yes

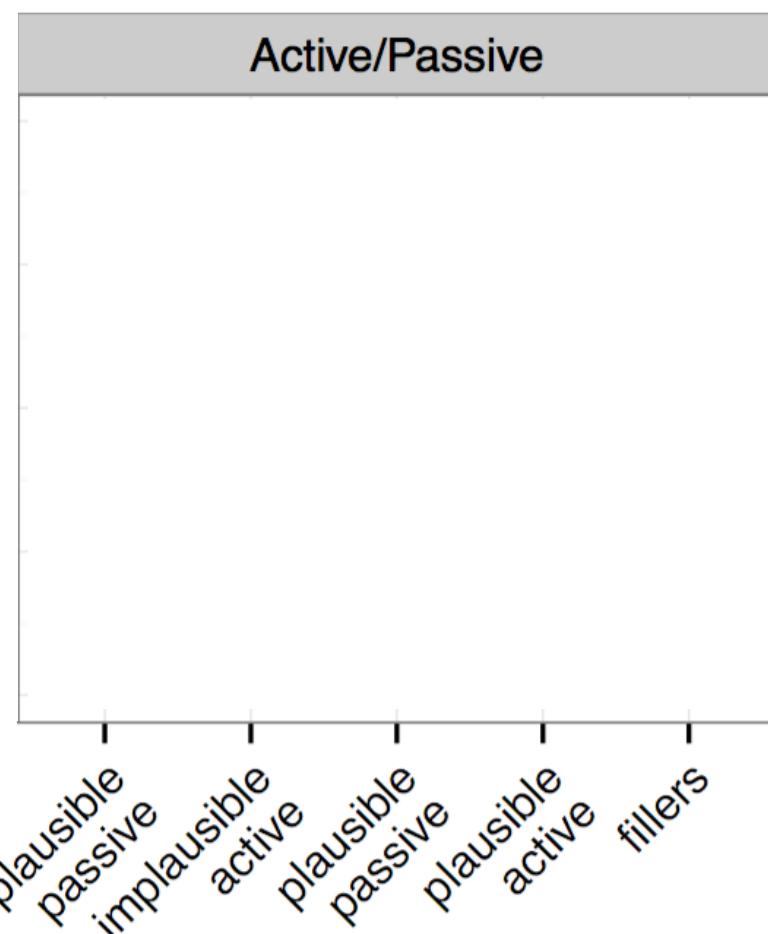
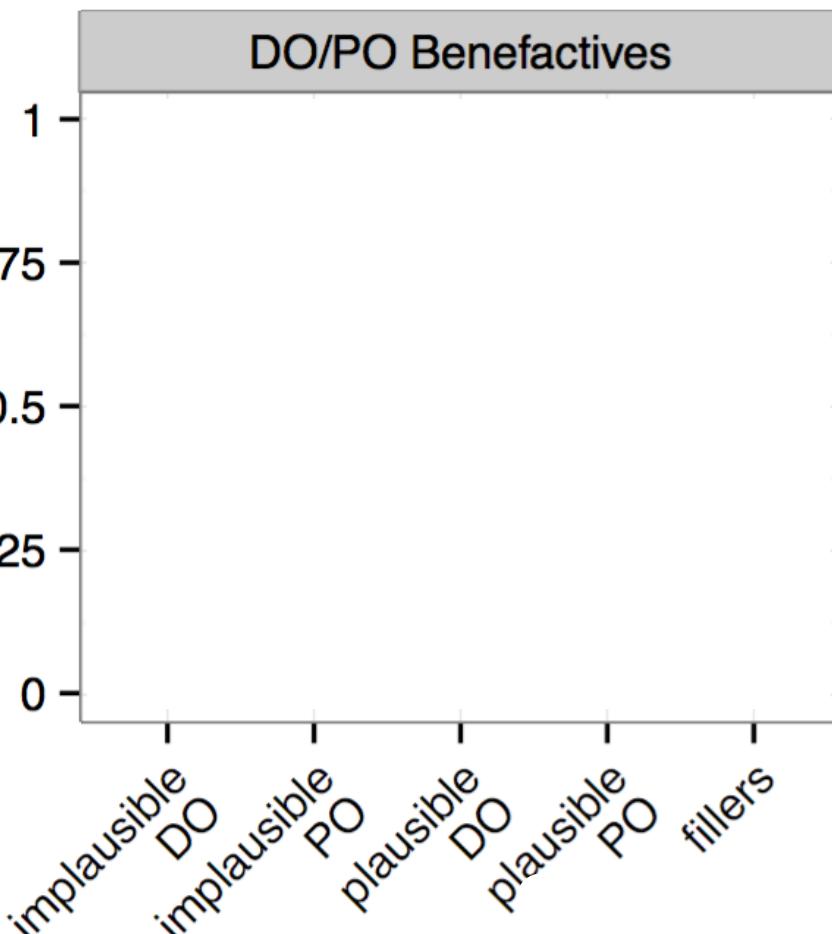
*Insertion/Deletion*

No

*Exchange*

Yes

Proportion of literal responses



# Literal vs. non-literal interpretation rates

*Non-literal interpretations for implausible sentences?*

*Insertion/Deletion*

Yes

*Exchange*

Yes

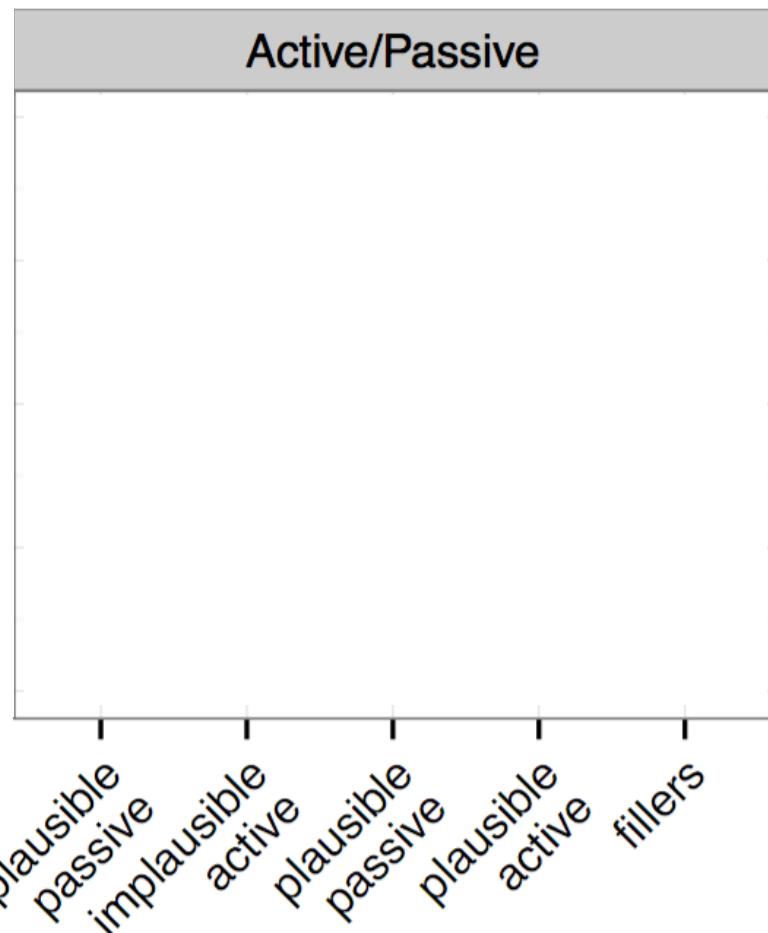
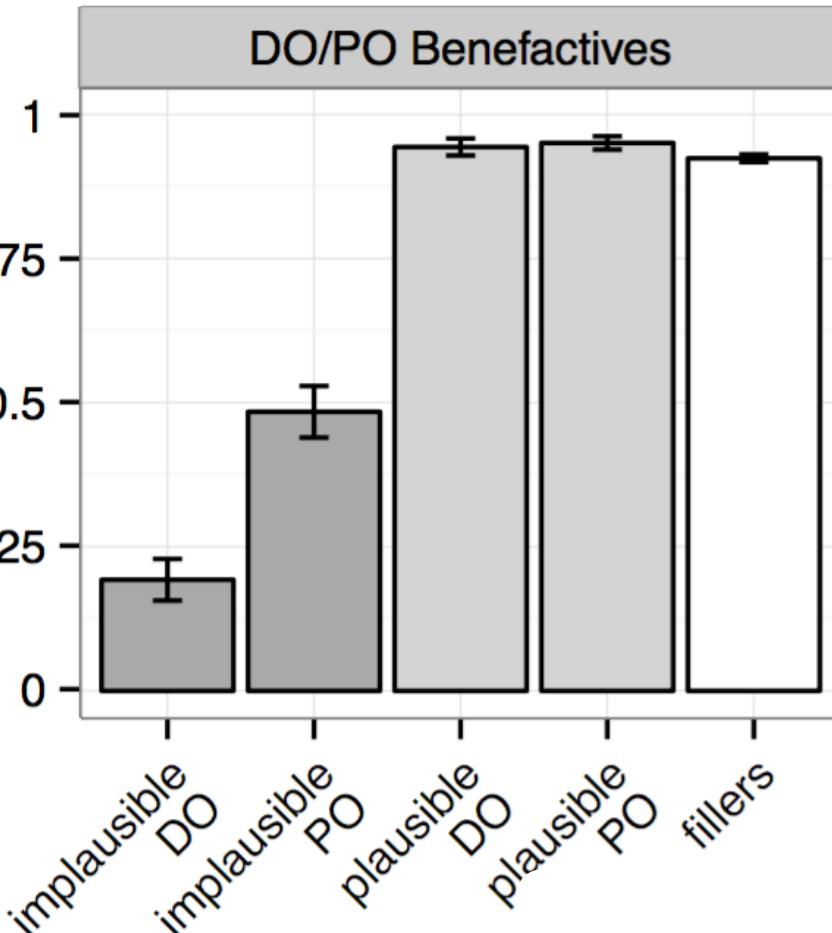
*Insertion/Deletion*

No

*Exchange*

Yes

Proportion of literal responses



# Literal vs. non-literal interpretation rates

*Non-literal interpretations for implausible sentences?*

*Insertion/Deletion*

Yes

*Exchange*

Yes

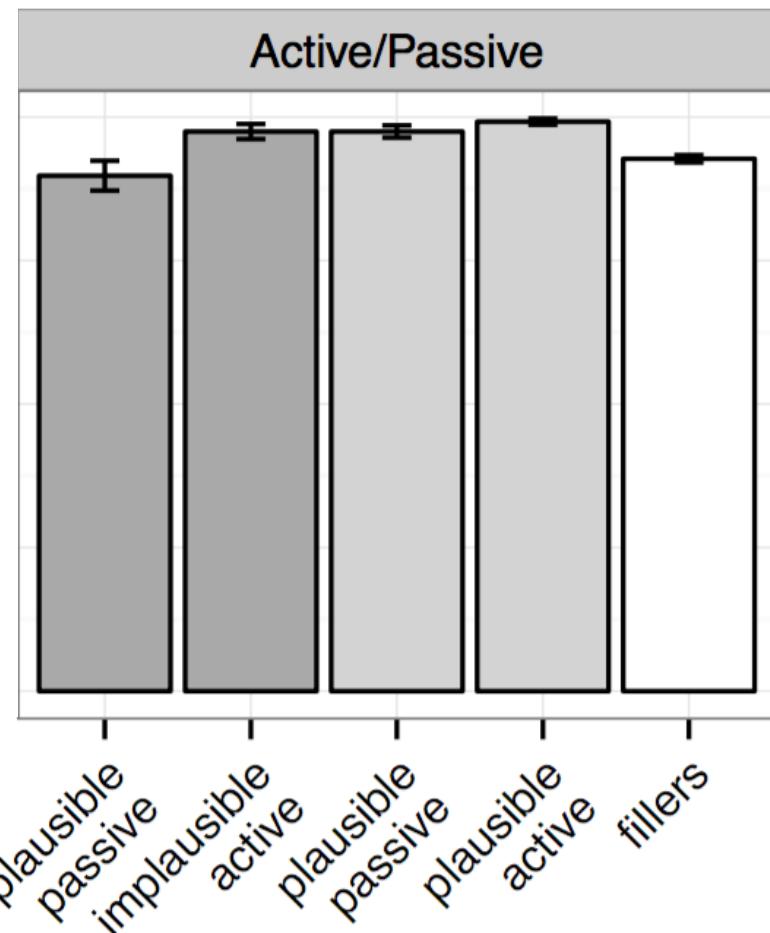
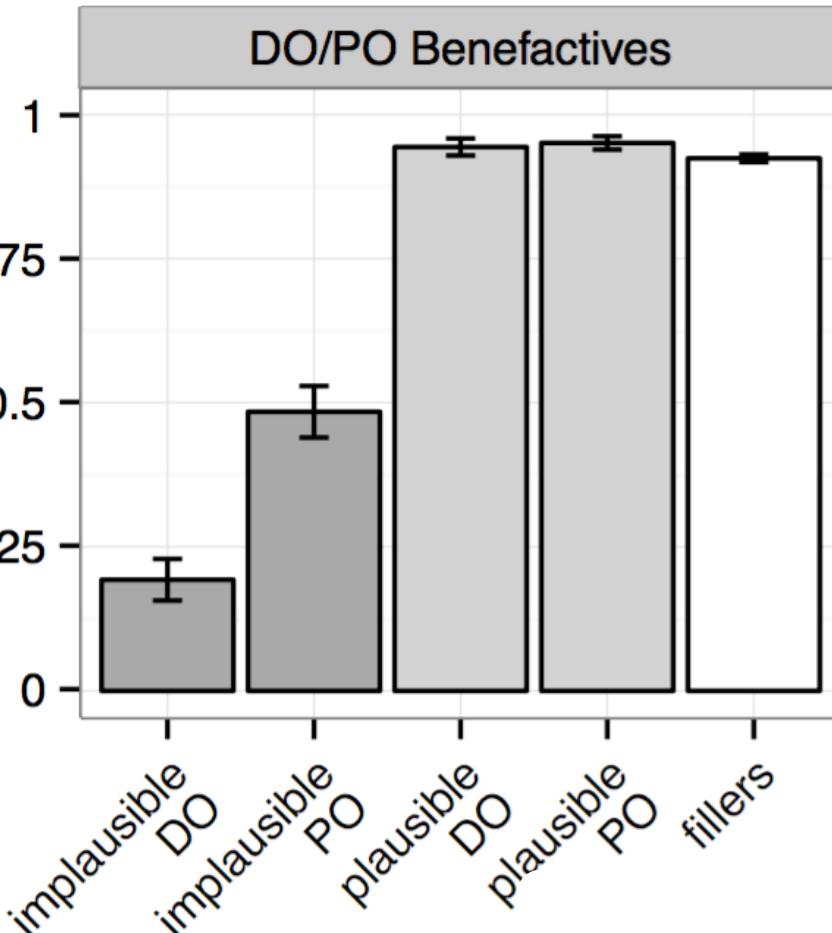
*Insertion/Deletion*

No

*Exchange*

Yes

Proportion of literal responses



# Five alternations in an insertion/deletion model

---

English constructions	Change	Implausible version
1. Active/passive	Two insertions Two deletions	c. The girl <u>was</u> kicked <u>by</u> the ball. (passive) d. The ball kicked the girl. (active)
2. Subject-locative/ object-locative	One deletion, one insertion  One insertion, one deletion	c. The table jumped <u>onto</u> a cat. (object-locative)  d. <u>Onto</u> the cat jumped a table. (subject-locative)
3. Transitive/intransitive	One insertion  One deletion	c. The tax law benefited <u>from</u> the businessman. (intransitive) d. The businessman benefited the tax law. (transitive)
4. DO/PO goal	One insertion  One deletion	c. The mother gave the daughter <u>to</u> the candle. (PO-goal) d. The mother gave the candle the daughter. (DO-goal)
5. DO/PO benefactive	One insertion One deletion	c. The cook baked Lucy <u>for</u> a cake. (PO-benef) d. The cook baked a cake Lucy. (DO-benef)

**c=inferred insertion d=inferred deletion**

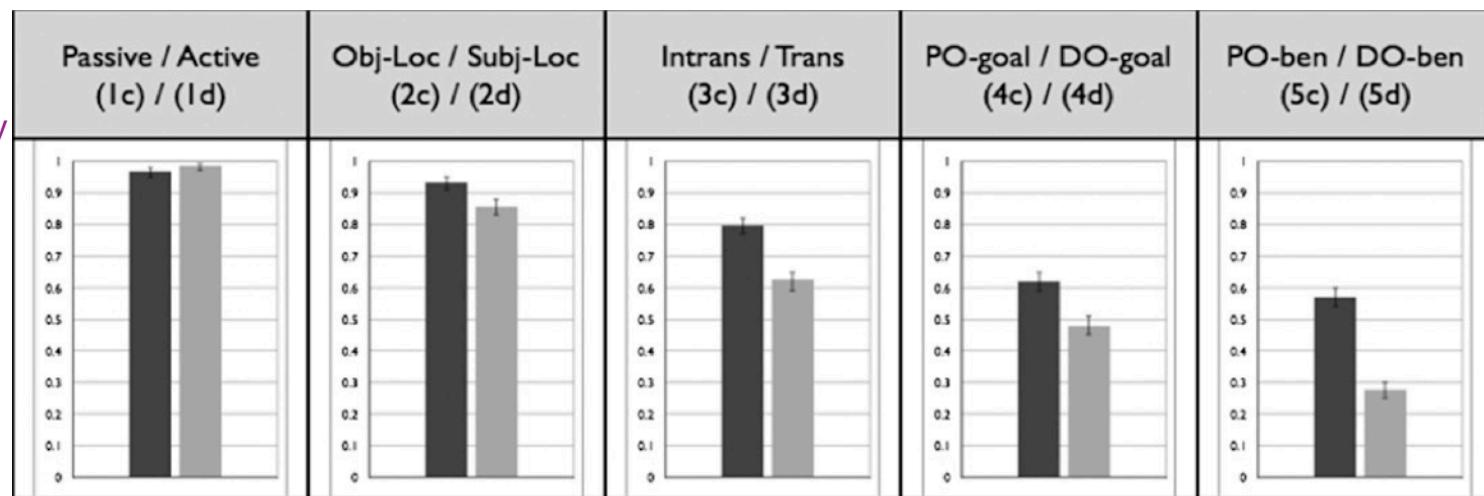
# Five alternations in an insertion/deletion model

$$P(m|I) \propto P(I|m)P(m)$$

Noise operation      Plausibility

## Base experiment

20 experimental items,  
60 plausible &  
grammatically normal  
fillers  $\rightarrow$  10/80  
implausible trials



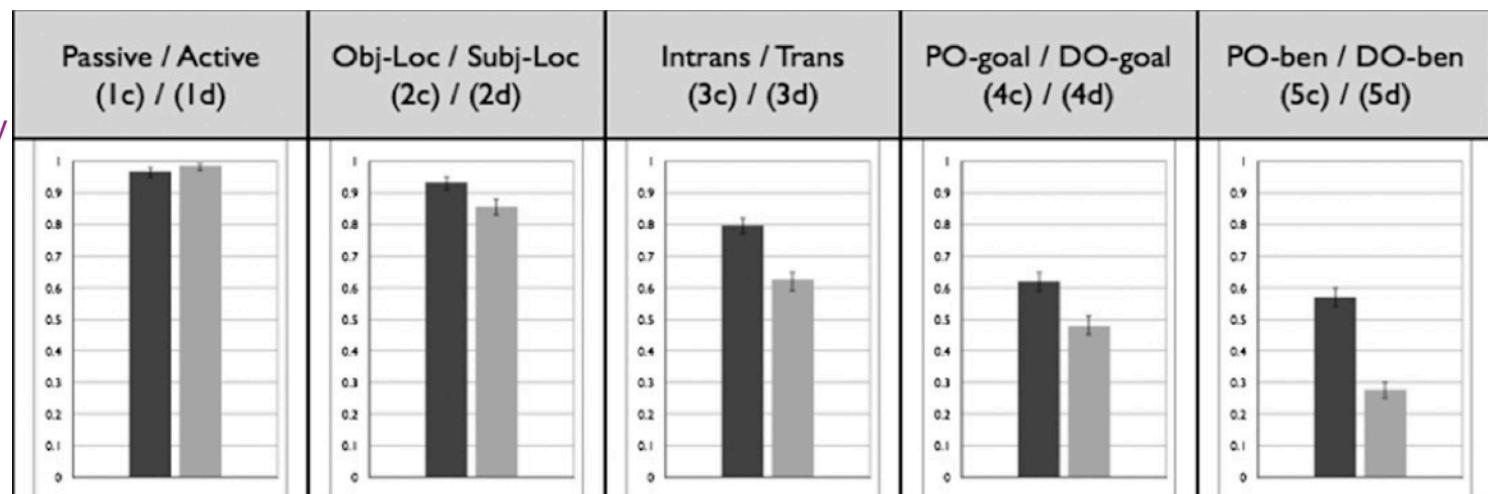
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## Fillers with syntactic errors

"A legislator lied to the  
consultant a new bill"

"A bystander was the  
fireman by rescued in  
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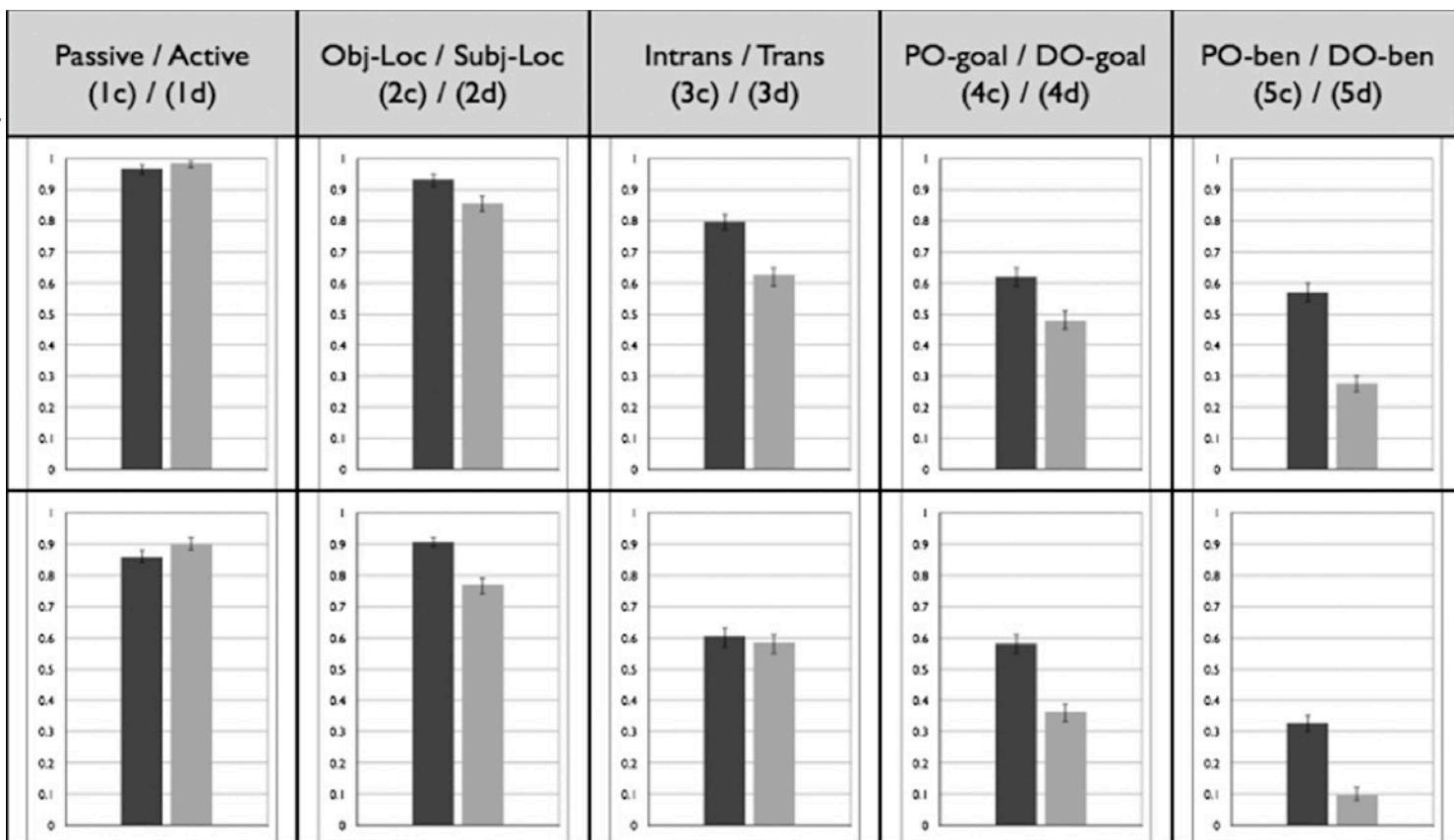
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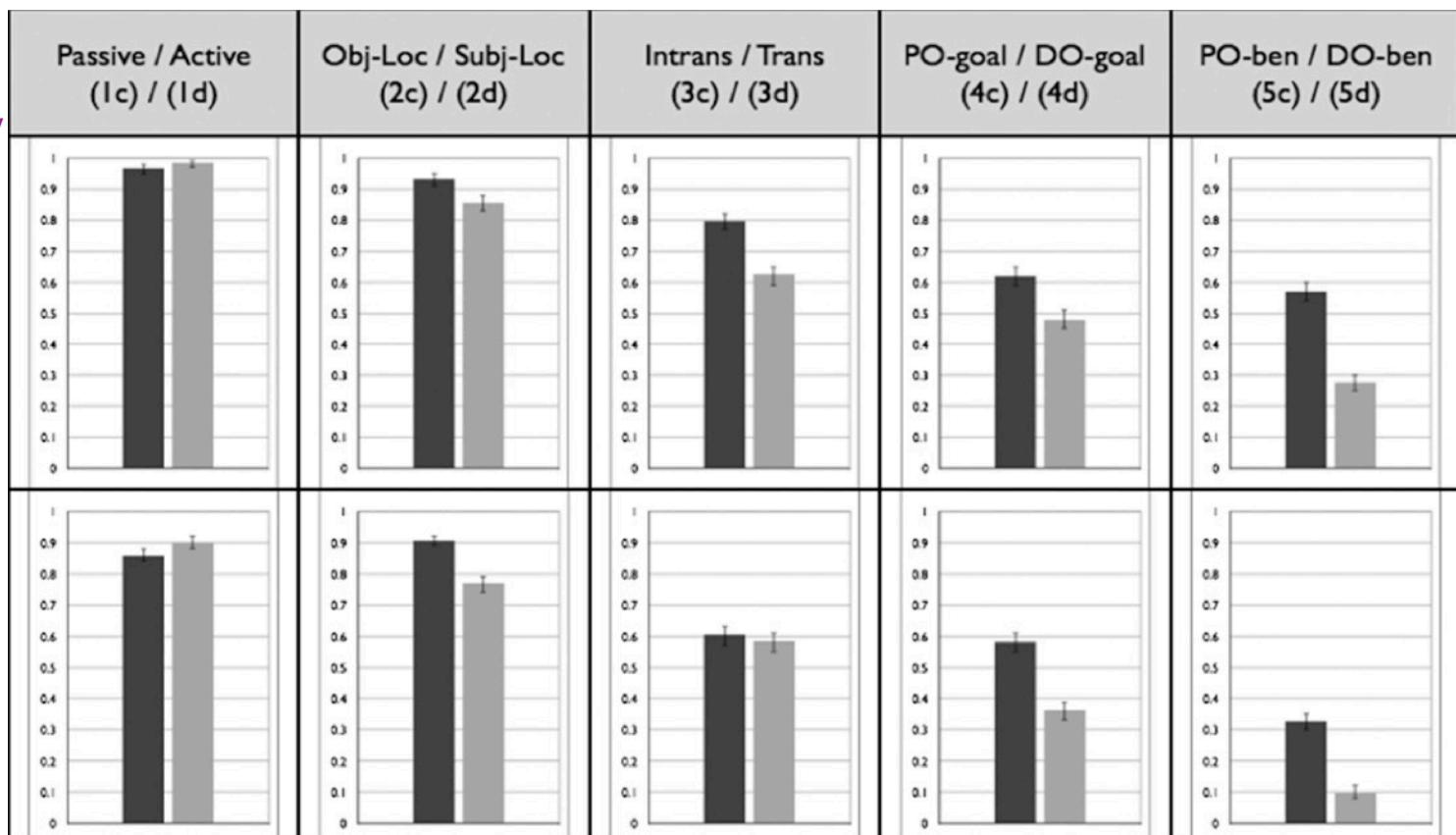
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"A legislator lied to the  
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"A bystander was the  
fireman by rescued in  
the nick of time"



## Many implausible trials

100 experimental  
items, 60 plausible &  
grammatically normal  
fillers → 50/160  
implausible trials

# Five alternations in an insertion/deletion model

$$P(m|I) \propto P(I|m)P(m)$$

Noise operation      Plausibility

## Base experiment

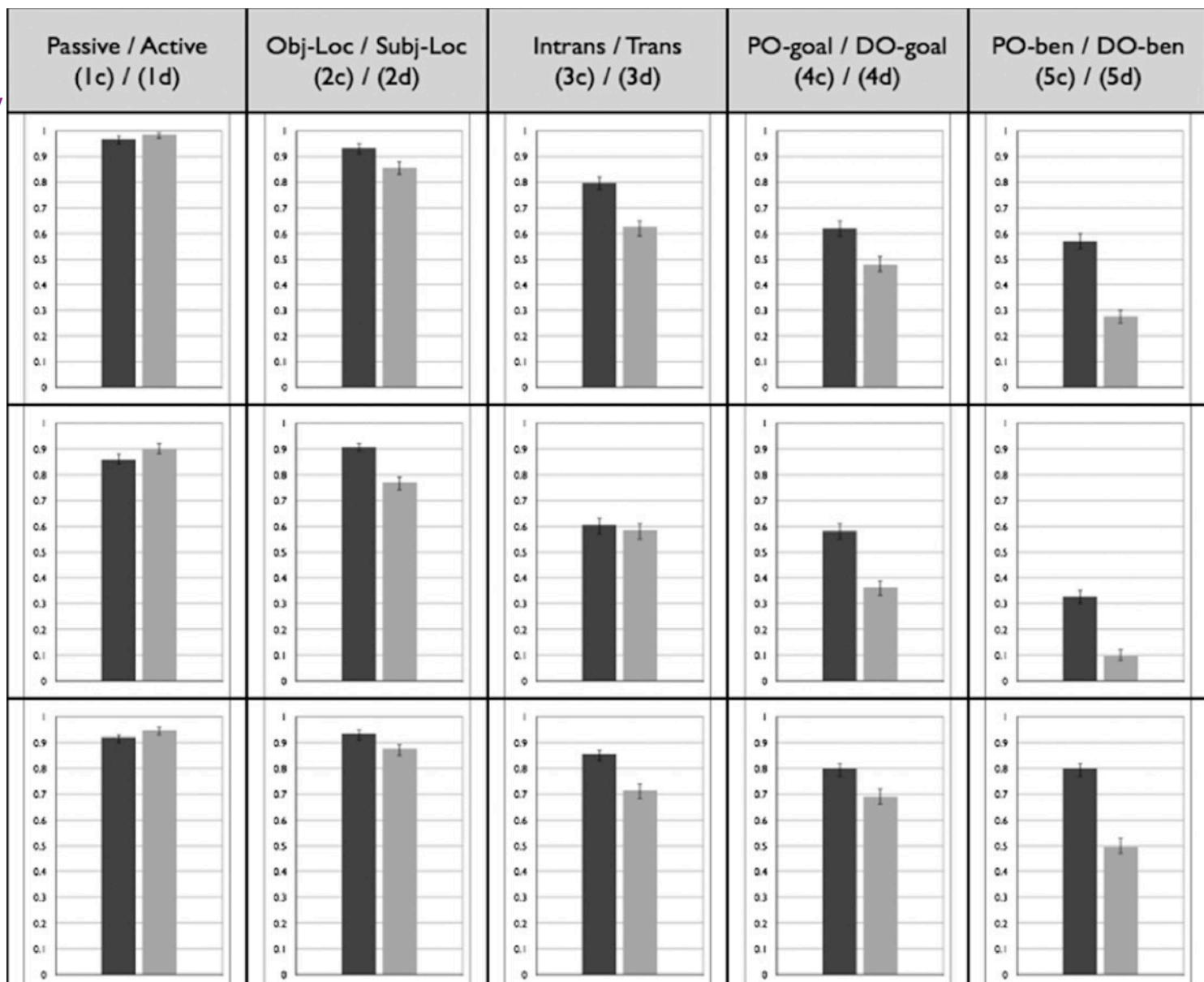
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implausible trials



# Inferring deletions versus insertions

---

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} \frac{P(m)}{\text{Plausibility}}$$

The cook baked a cake for Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

---

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility

1 Delete

The cook baked a cake for Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility



Delete



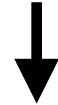
Choose deletion location

The cook baked a cake ~~for~~ Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility



Delete



Choose deletion location

The cook baked a cake ~~for~~ Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.



Insert

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility



Delete



Choose deletion location

The cook baked a cake ~~for~~ Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.



Insert



Choose insertion location

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility



Delete



Choose deletion location

The cook baked a cake ~~for~~ Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.



Insert



Choose insertion location

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



Choose what to insert



*for*

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

# Inferring deletions versus insertions

$$P(m | I) \propto \frac{P(I | m)}{\text{Noise operation}} P(m)$$

Noise operation Plausibility



Delete



Choose deletion location

The cook baked a cake ~~for~~ Lucy.



The cook baked a cake Lucy.



Insert



Choose insertion location

The cook baked Lucy a cake.



Choose what to insert



*for*

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

Noisy-channel prediction: inferring deletions should be intrinsically easier than inferring insertions!

# Five alternations in an insertion/deletion model

$$P(m|I) \propto P(I|m)P(m)$$

Noise operation ↑      Plausibility ↑

## Base experiment

20 experimental items,  
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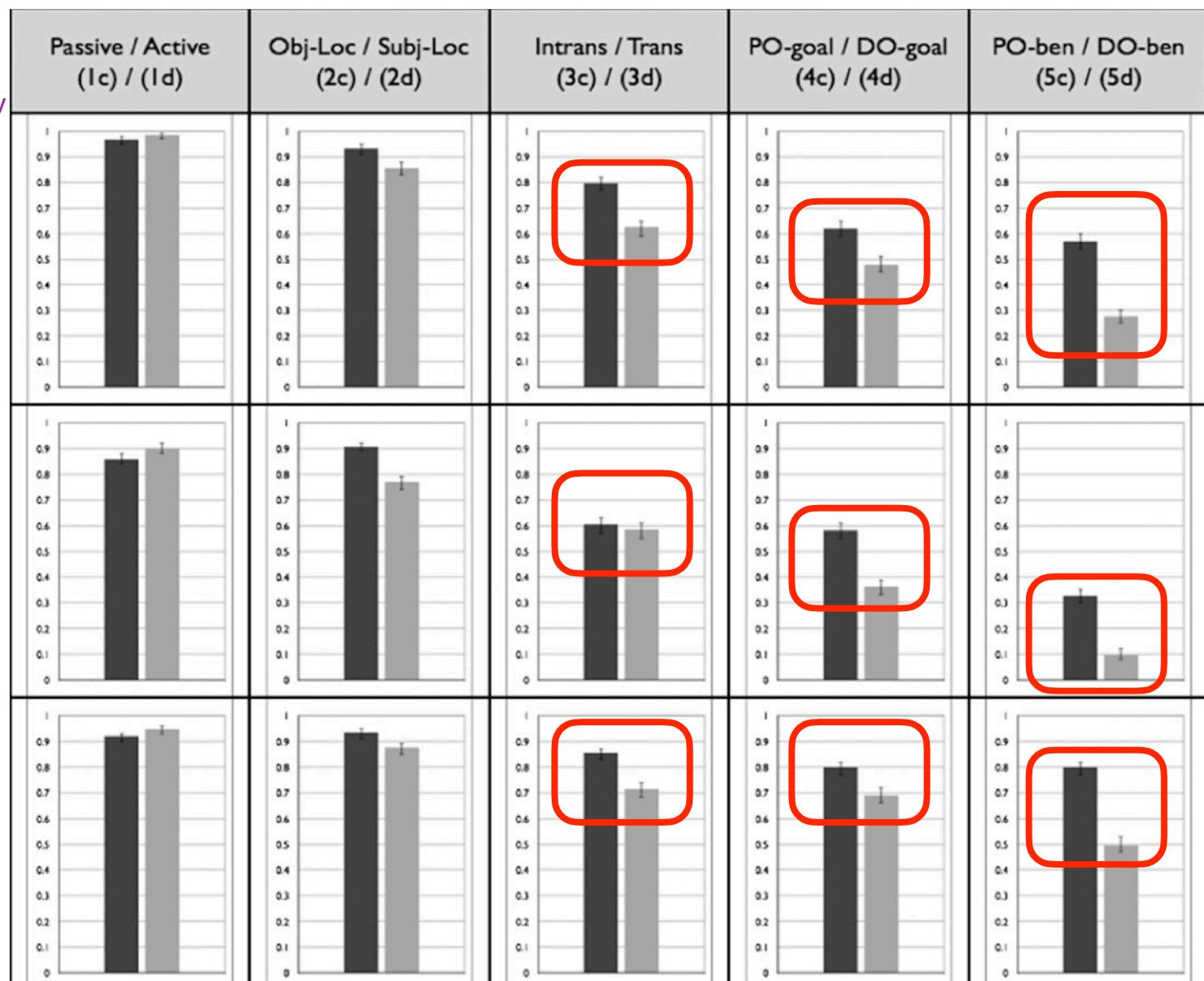
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# In the real world (2008)

---



I'm not going to solely  
blame all of man's activities  
on changes in climate.

*Sarah Palin (images credit Gage Skidmore)*



# In the real world (2008)

---



I'm not going to solely  
blame all of man's activities  
on changes in climate.

*Sarah Palin (images credit Gage Skidmore)*



I'm not one to attribute every activity  
of man to climate change.

# Corpora of speech errors

---

## Anticipations

John dropped his cuff of coffee

reek long race

## Perseverations

John gave the goy (=gave the boy)

Spanish speaping people

teep a cape (=keep a tape)

## Exchanges

the nipper is zarrow

Fancy getting your model renosed (=nose remodeled)

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

---

*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

---

*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

- An occasional speech error of mine that I've noticed for years, but that no one ever notices me make

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

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*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

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- Extraordinarily unlikely under an insertions/deletions noise model

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

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*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

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- Extraordinarily unlikely under an insertions/deletions noise model
- But reasonably likely if word **exchanges** are admitted

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

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*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

- An occasional speech error of mine that I've noticed for years, but that no one ever notices me make
- Extraordinarily unlikely under an insertions/deletions noise model
- But reasonably likely if word **exchanges** are admitted

The package fell from the table to the floor. [plausible; canonical]

The package fell to the floor from the table. [plausible; non-canonical]

The package fell from the floor to the table. [implausible; canonical]

The package fell to the table from the floor. [implausible; non-canonical]

# Revisiting the possibility of exchanges

---

*This is a problem that I need to talk about Joe with.*

- An occasional speech error of mine that I've noticed for years, but that no one ever notices me make
- Extraordinarily unlikely under an insertions/deletions noise model
- But reasonably likely if word **exchanges** are admitted

The package fell from the table to the floor. [plausible; canonical]

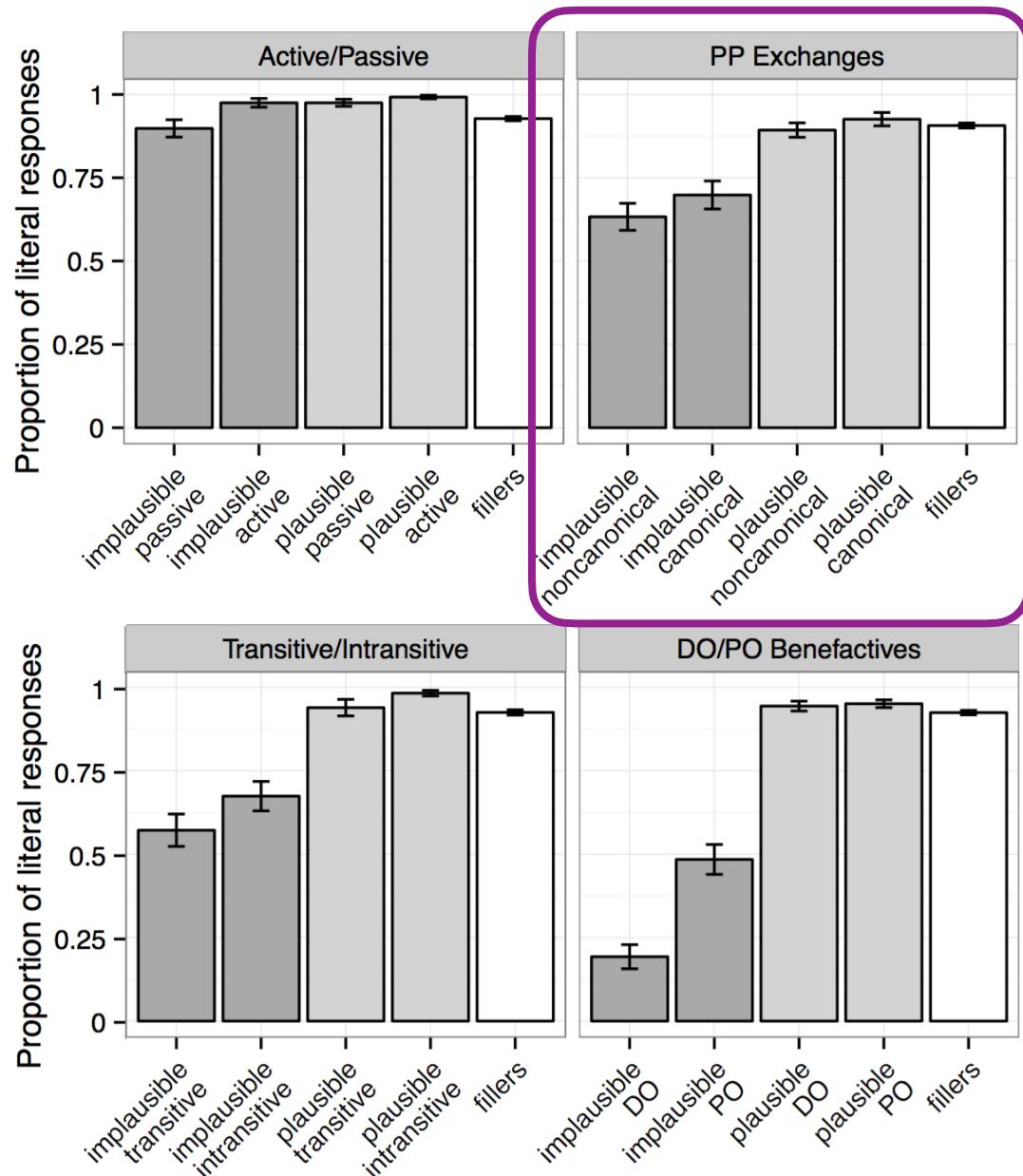
The package fell to the floor from the table. [plausible; non-canonical]

The package fell from the floor to the table. [implausible; canonical]

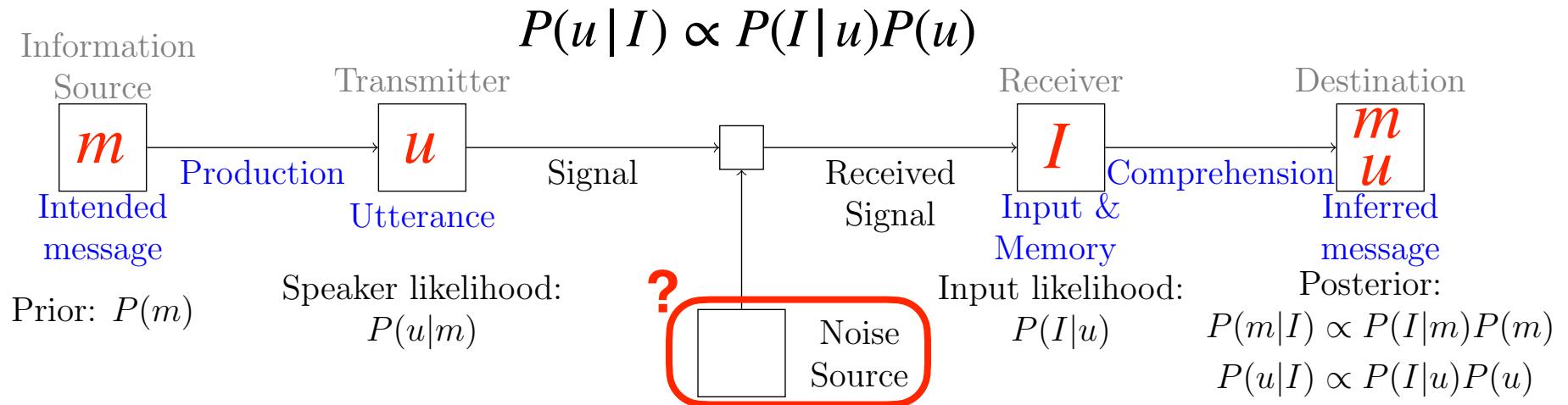
The package fell to the table from the floor. [implausible; non-canonical]

*Did something fall to the floor?*

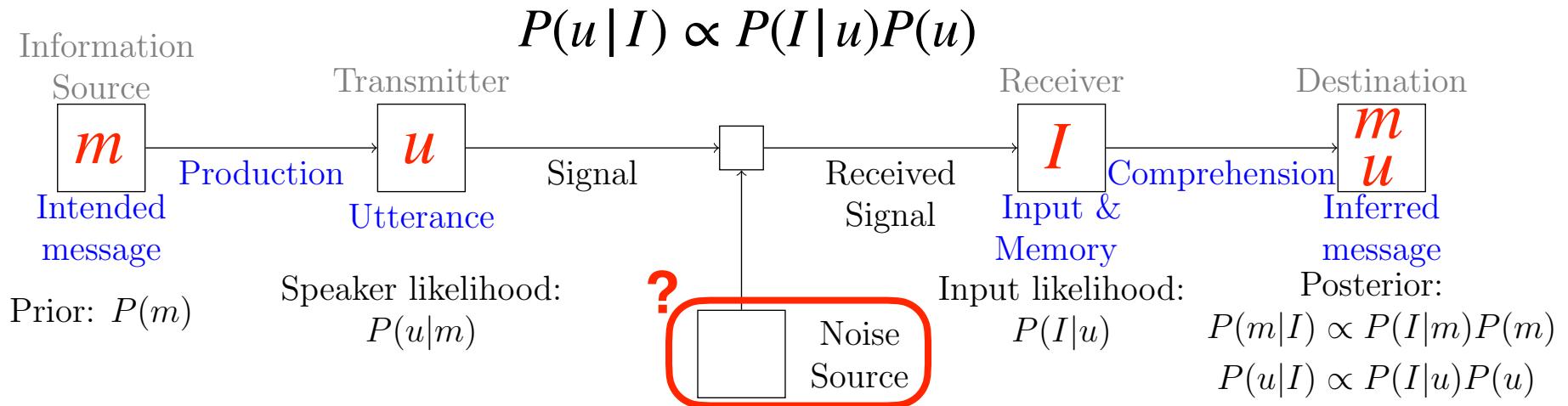
# Exchanges in the noise model



# Probing inferred intended utterances

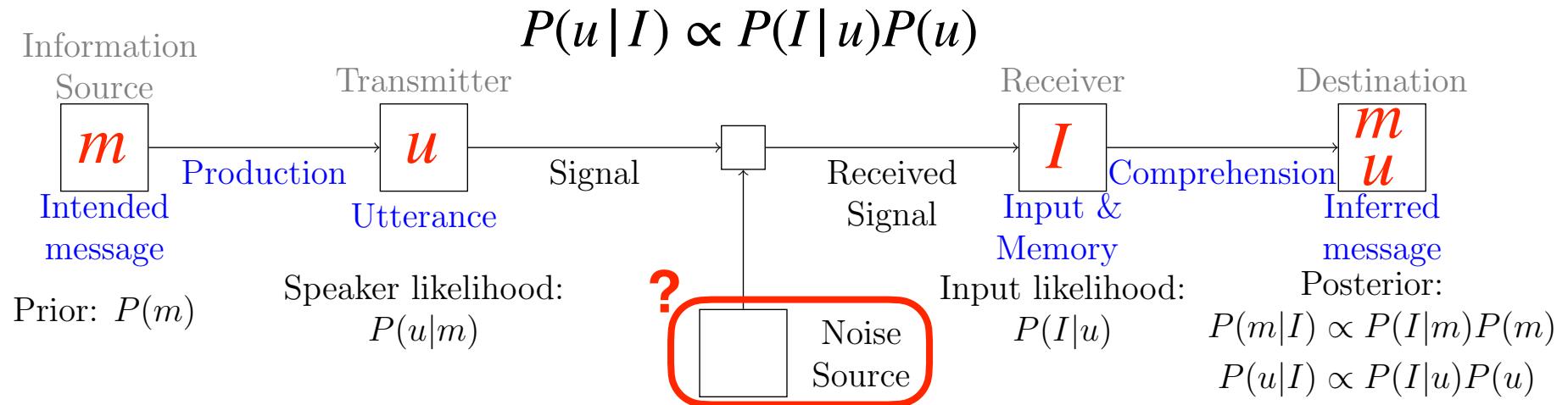


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Experiment "cover story": read transcriptions of speech that might have errors, retype with edits if they think the speaker might have meant something else

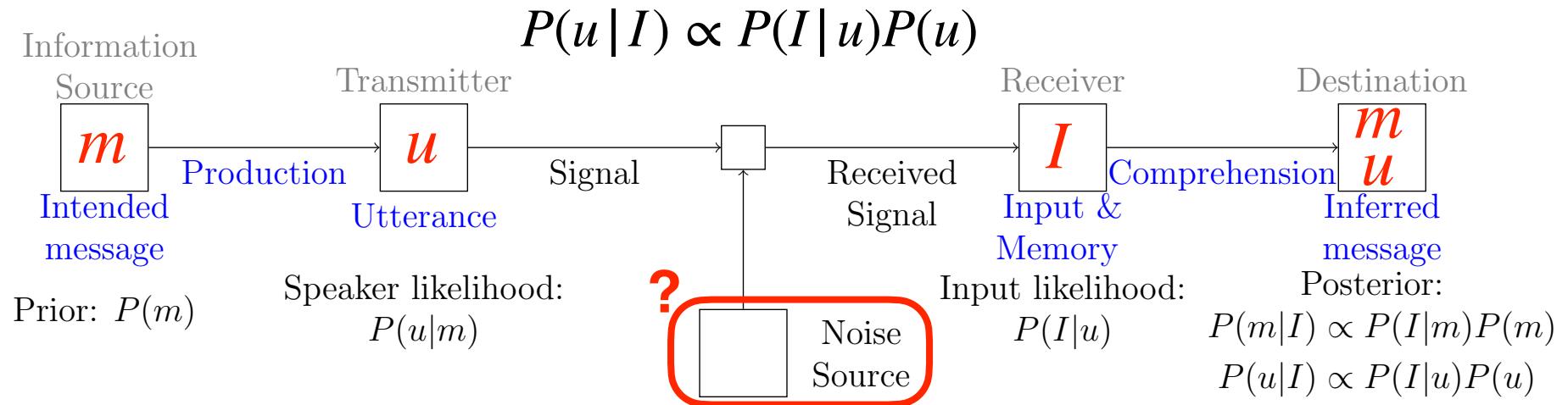
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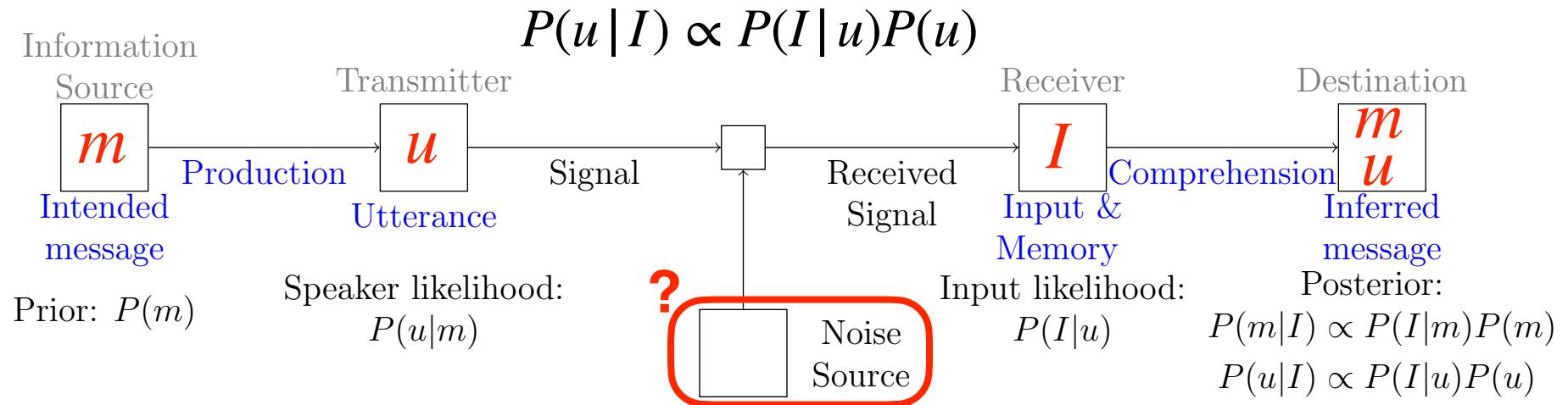
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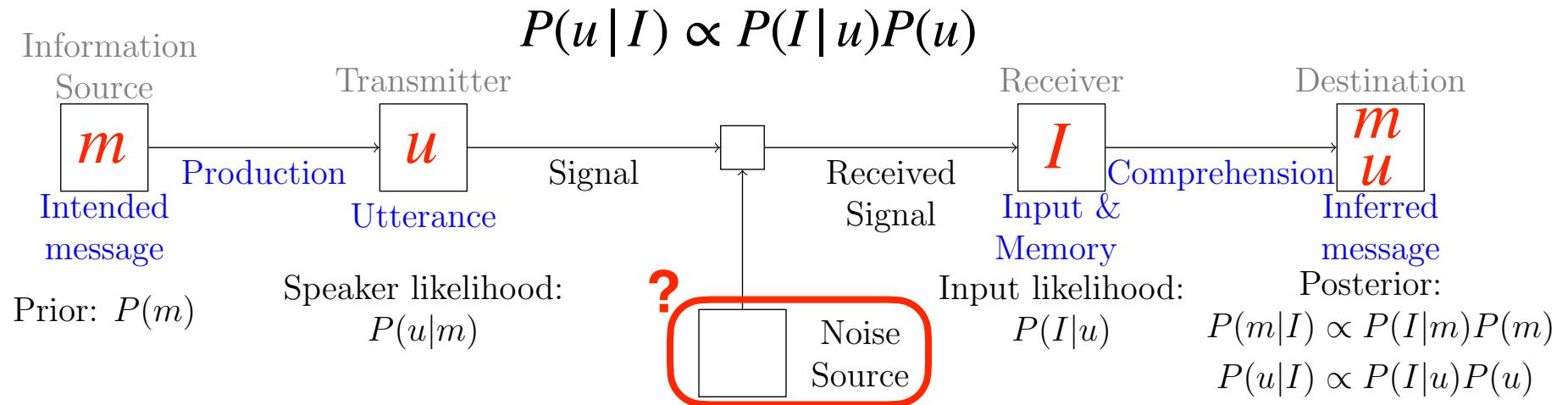
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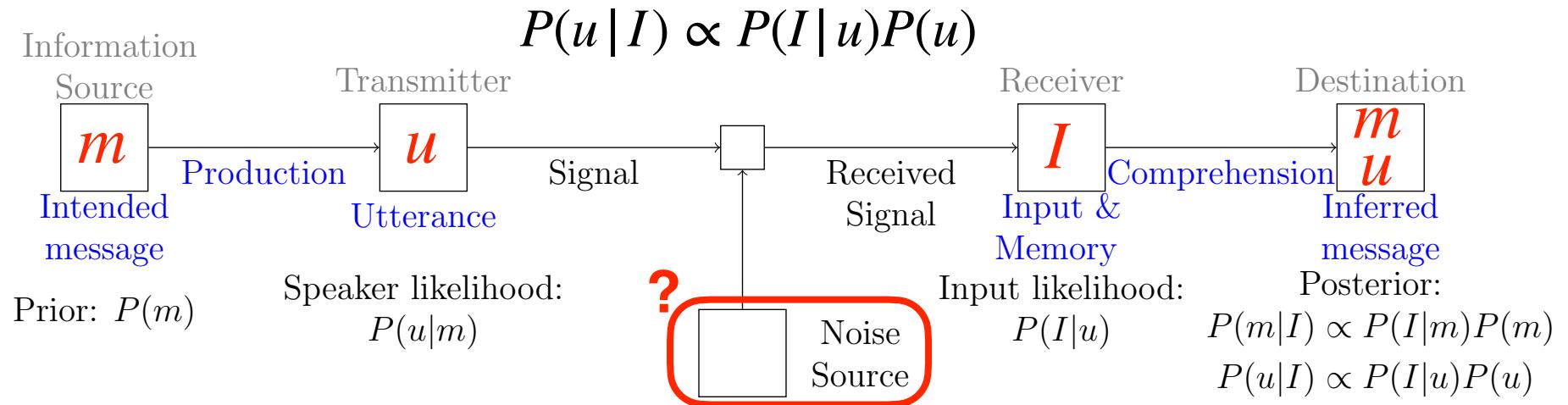
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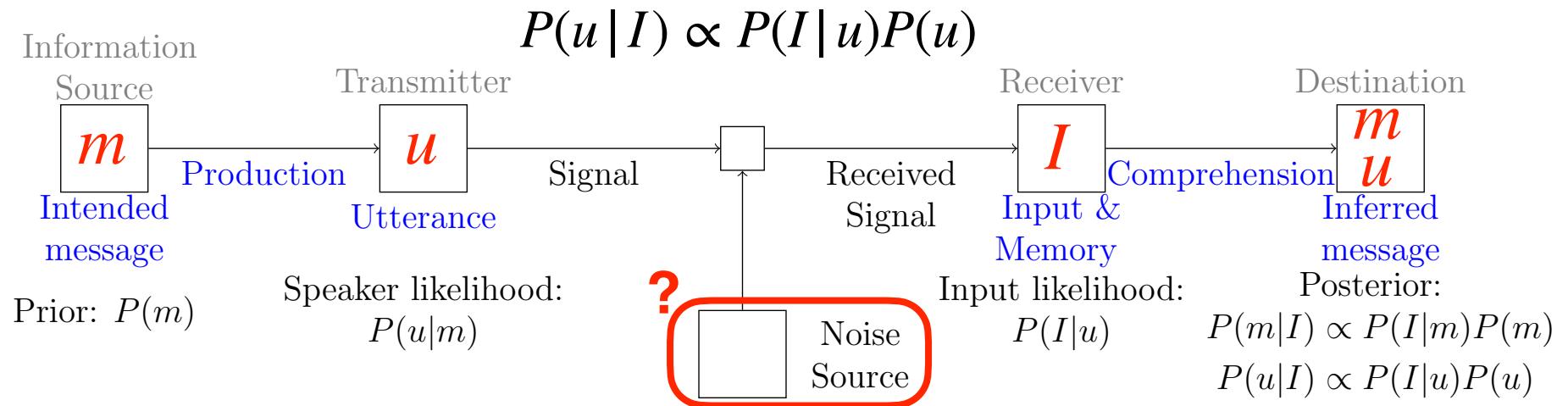
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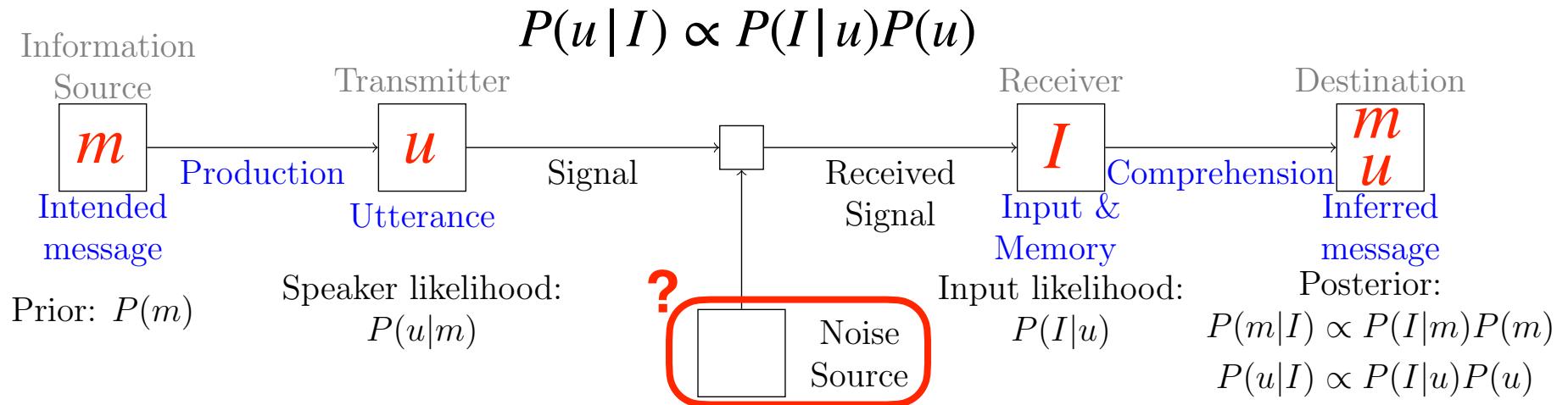
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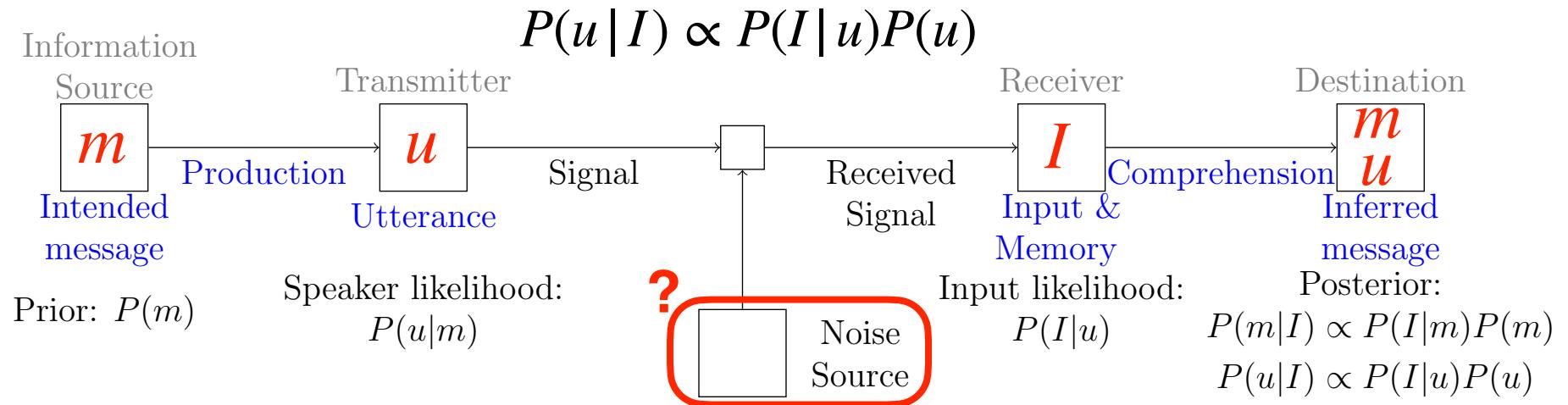
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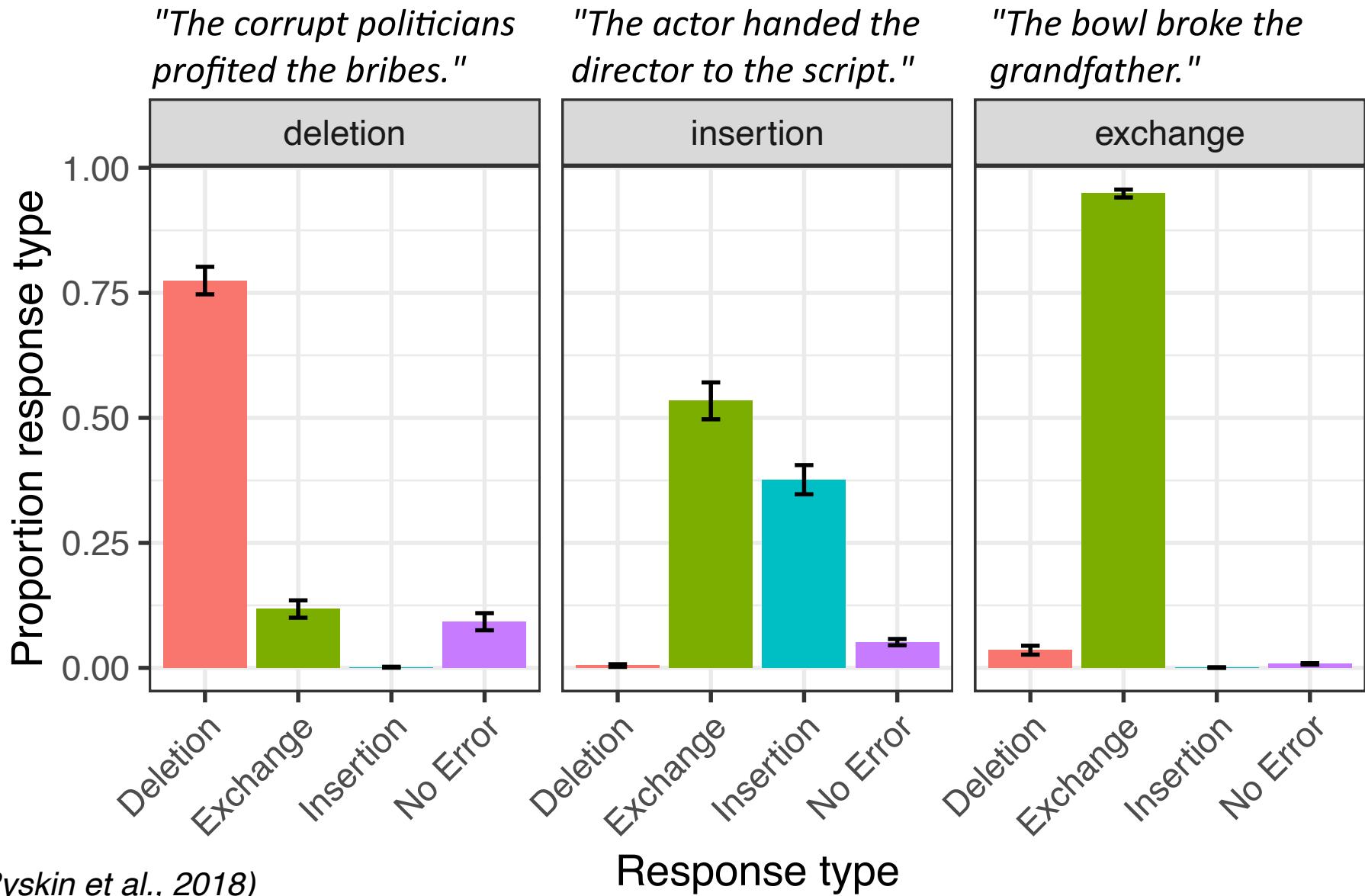
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- *However*, status of exchange errors in the noise model remains a mystery

# Structural Forgetting and the Noisy Channel

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1. The apartment that the maid who the cleaning service sent over was well-decorated.

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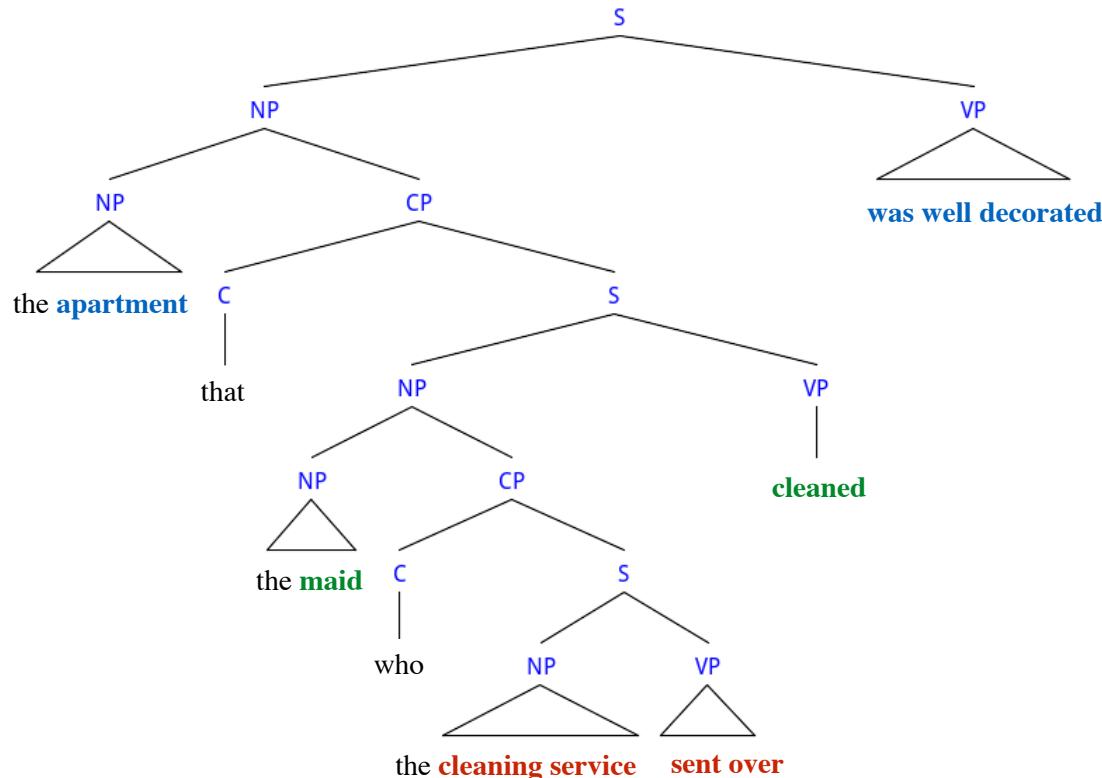
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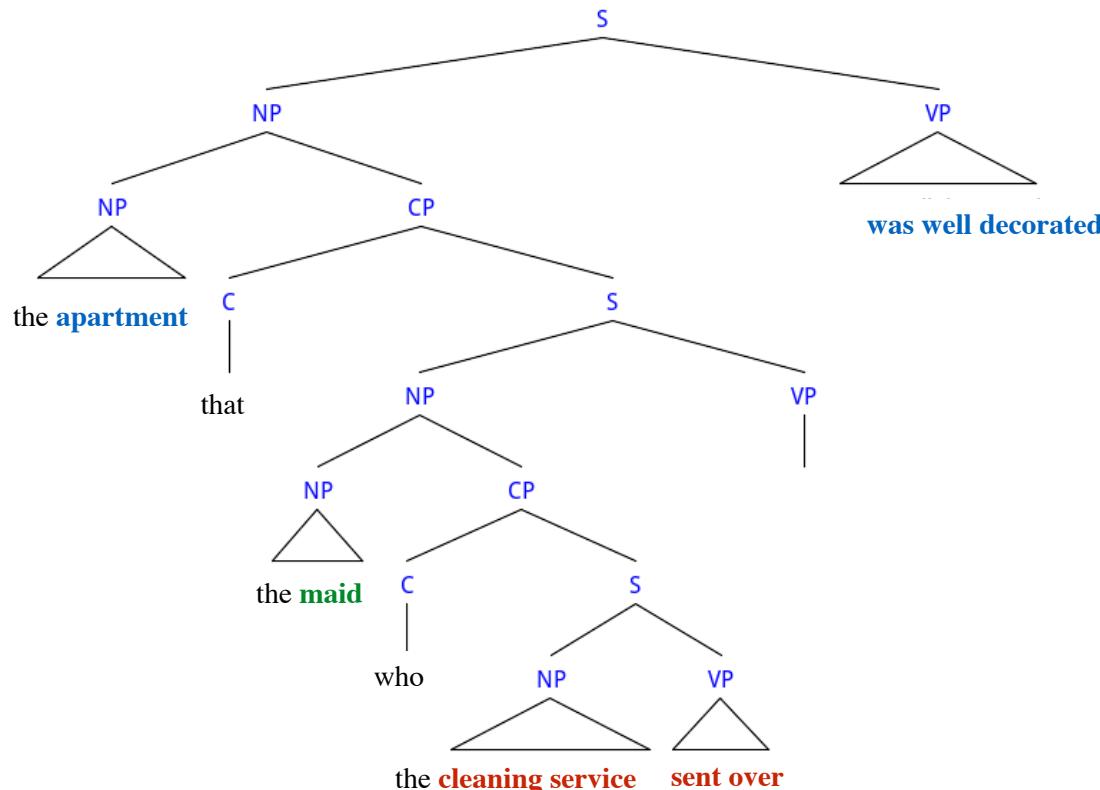
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*(Slide courtesy Richard Futrell)*

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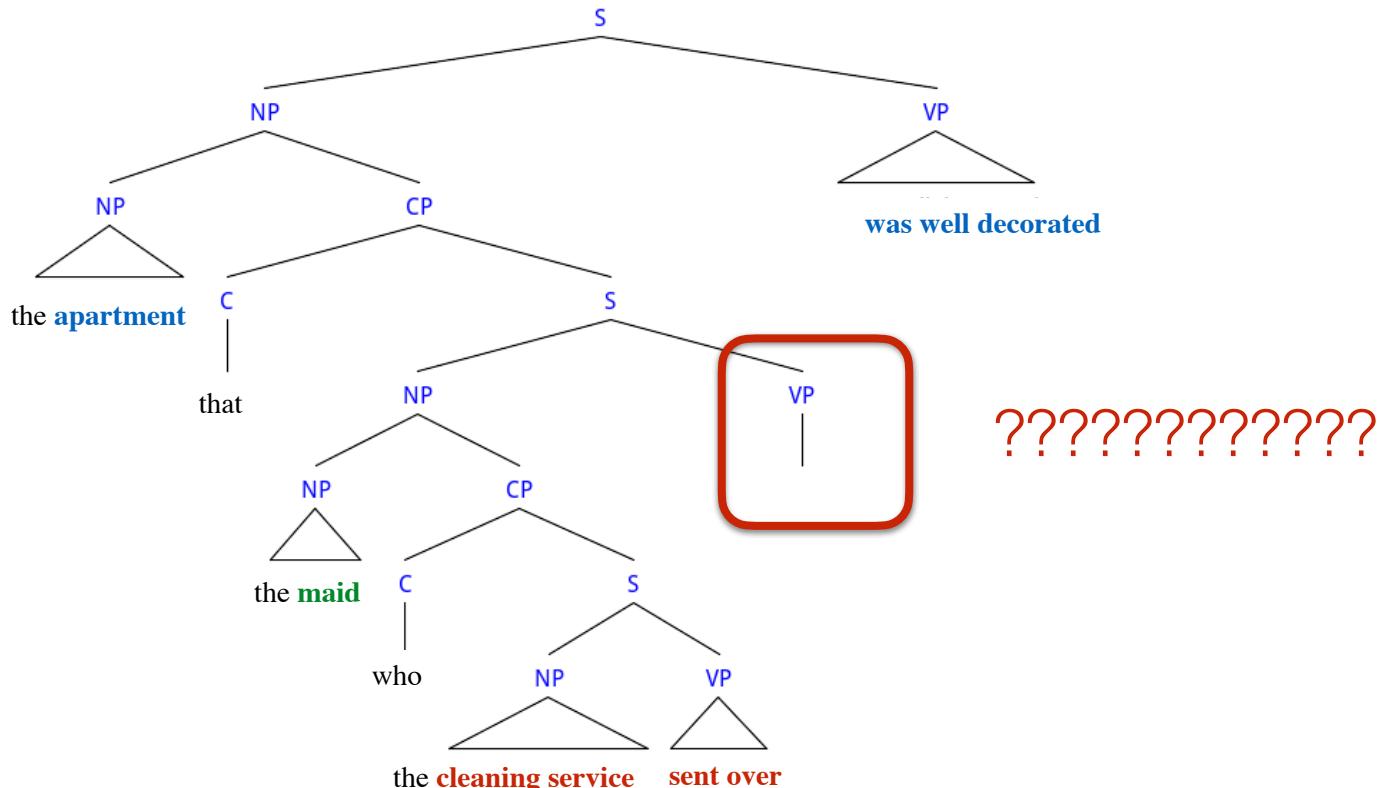


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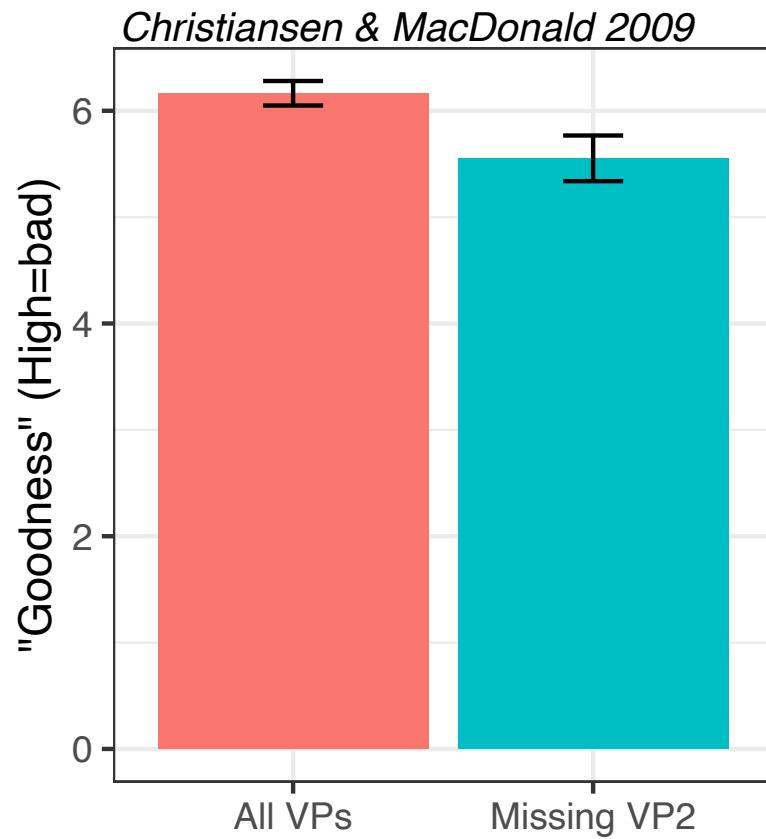
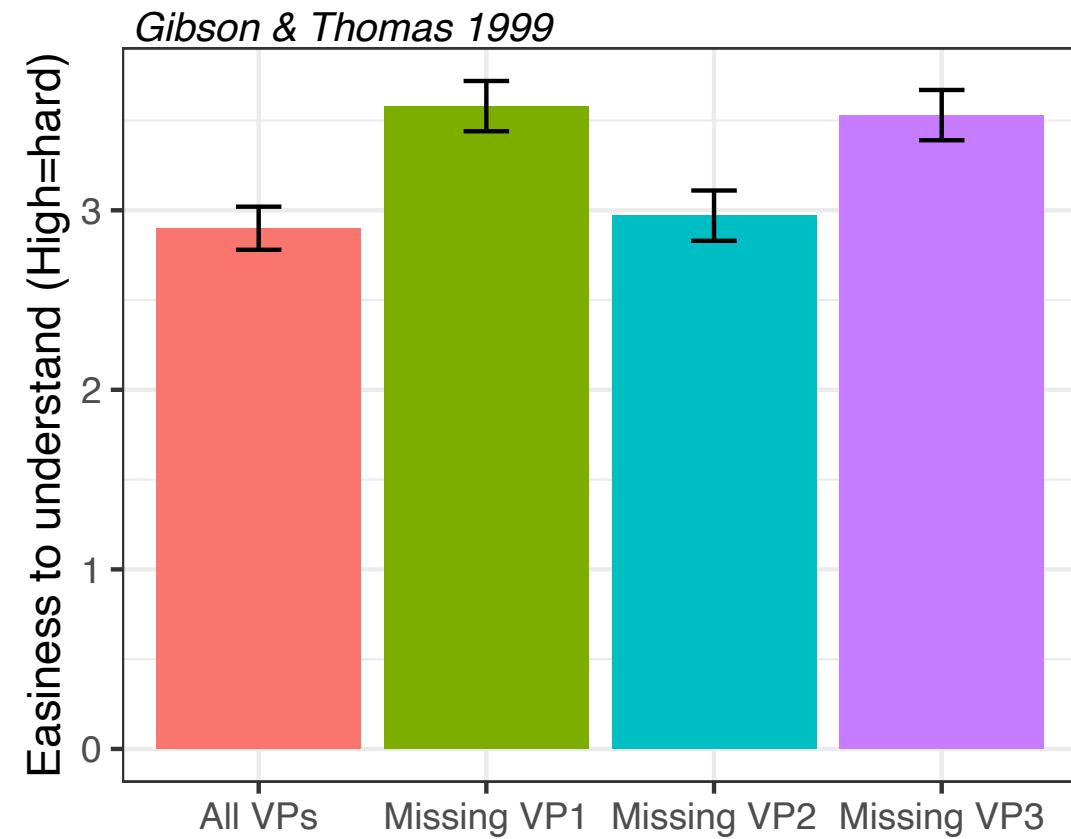
- **Structural forgetting effect:** part of the sentence is forgotten by the time you get to the end (Gibson & Thomas, 1999; Frazier, 1985; Fodor, p.c.)
- The ungrammatical sentence seems better than the grammatical one.
  - A "**grammaticality illusion**": how could we define grammaticality in this case?

Gibson & Thomas 1999: whole-sentence reading

*The ancient manuscript that the graduate student who the new card catalog had confused a great deal was studying in the library was missing a page.*

Christiansen & MacDonald 2009: word-by-word self-paced reading, follows by rating

*The chef who the waiter who the busboy offended appreciated admired the musicians.*



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context

key word

NOUN THAT NOUN THAT VERB VERB

VERB  
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Rule	Probability
S -> NP VERB	1
NP -> NOUN	$1-m$
NP -> NOUN RC	$mr$
NP -> NOUN PP	$m(1-r)$
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$PP \rightarrow PREP\ NP$	1		NOUN	THAT	NOUN	THAT	NOUN...
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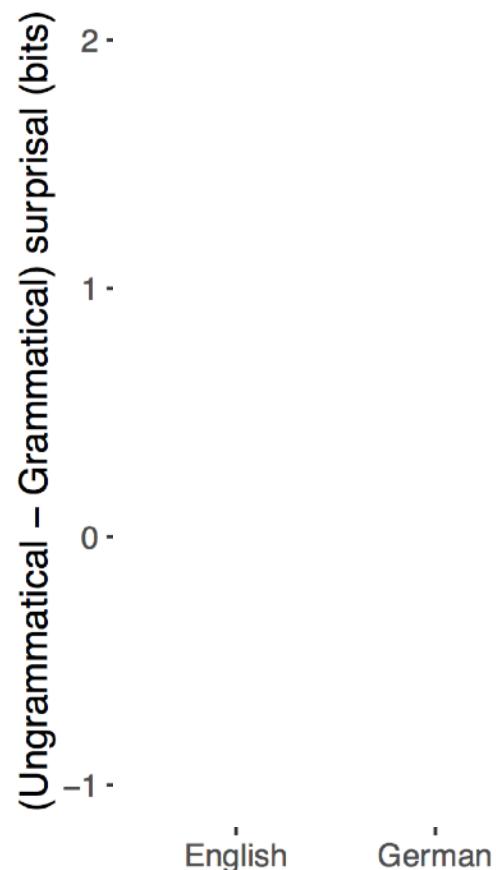
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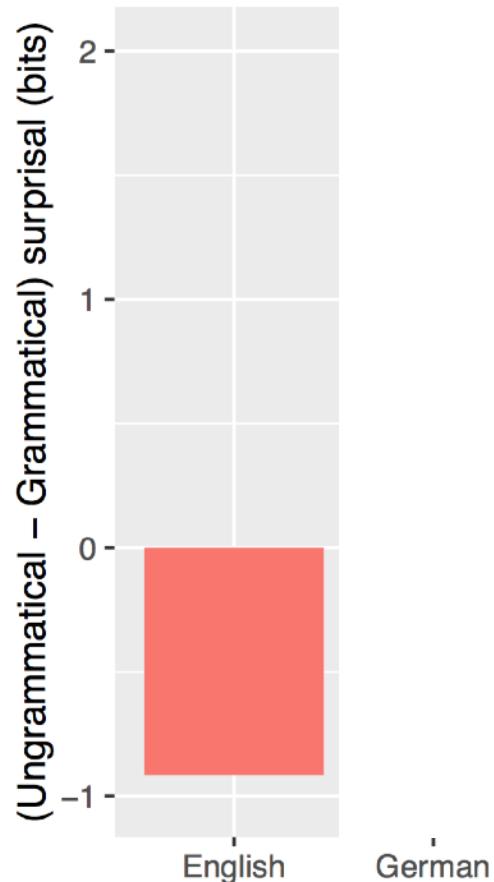
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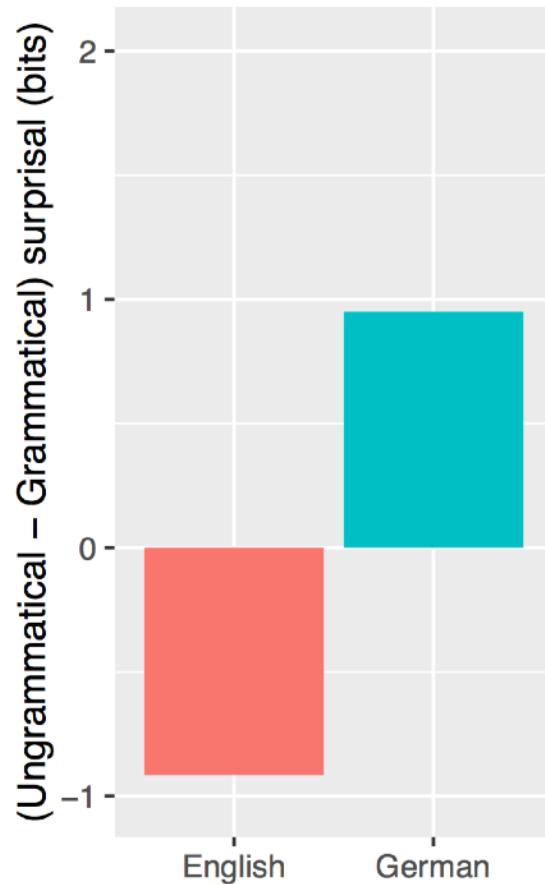
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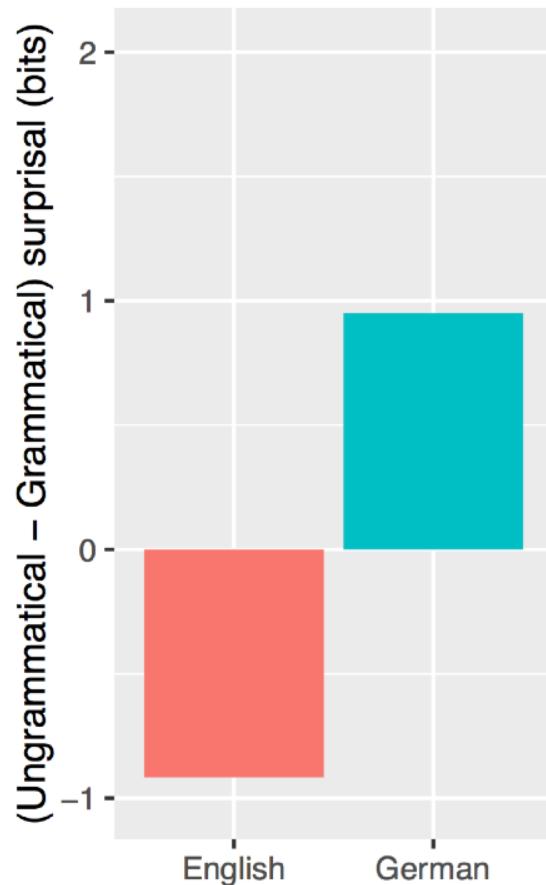


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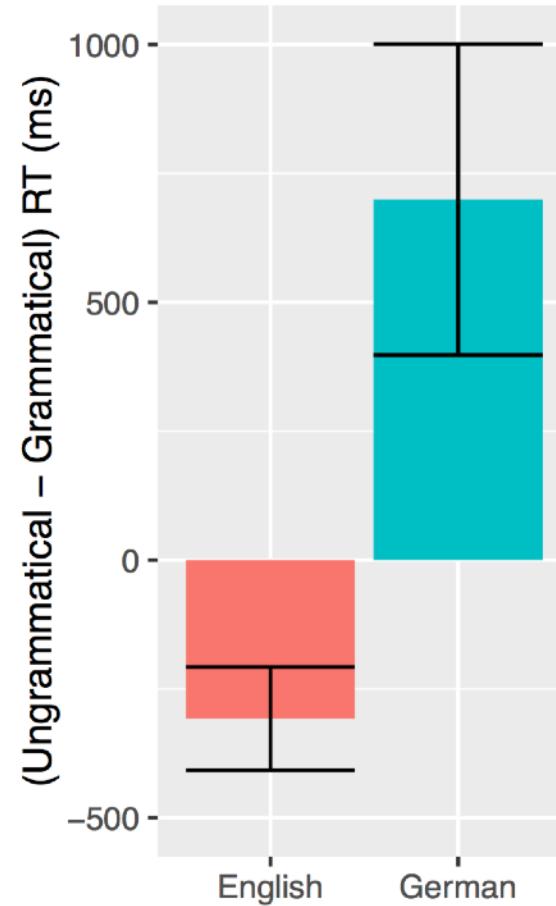
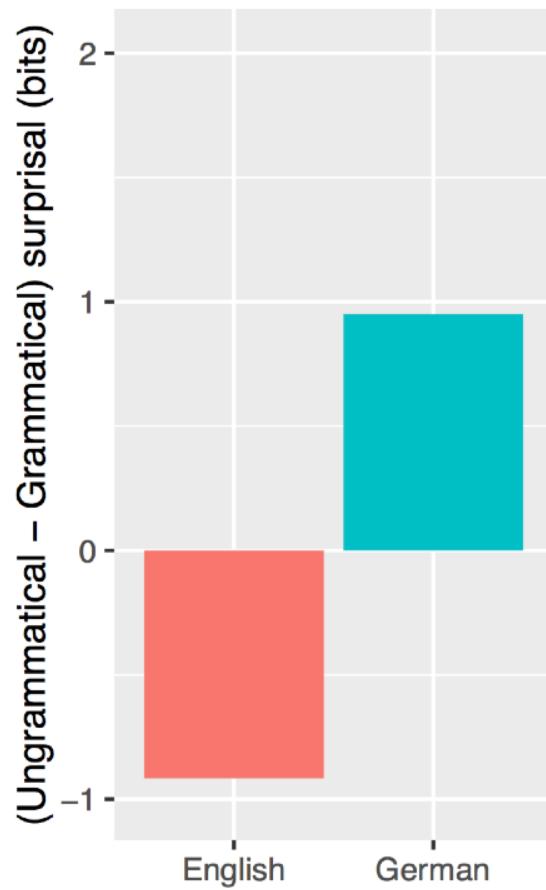
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Vasishth et al. (2010)

# Robustness to choice of model parameters

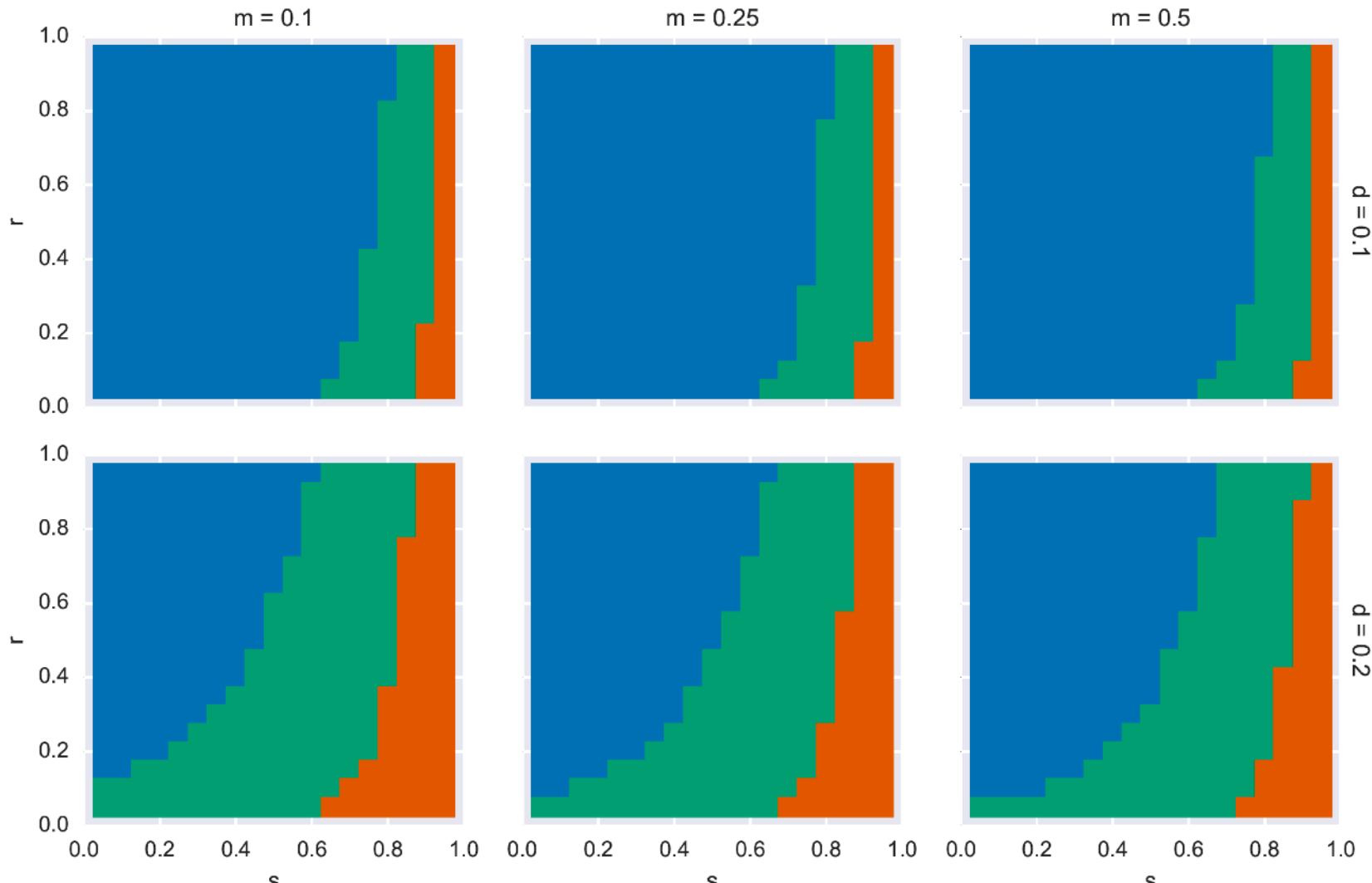
$m$  Modifier probability

$s$  Probability of English RC being verb-final

$d$  Probability of context token deletion



= English+German-like pattern



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  - Noisy-context surprisal *explains* the behavior of the RNN in Frank et al. (2016): the RNN is using a lossily compressed / noisy representation of context.
- The model has an explicit grammar (competence), but cannot apply it correctly (performance).

# Summary for today

- Applied noisy-channel sentence processing theory to global utterance interpretation
  - Broad support for noisy-channel predictions in patterns of "non-literal" utterance interpretation
  - A puzzle remains regarding the role of *exchange errors* in comprehenders' noise model
- Examined cross-linguistic pattern of "structural forgetting" effects, offered an account by combining noisy-channel theory + surprisal theory

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# Prediction 2: hallucinated garden paths

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While the clouds crackled, above the glider soared a magnificent eagle.

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# Prediction 2: hallucinated garden paths

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- Readers are ordinarily very good at using commas to guide syntactic analysis:

*While the man hunted, the deer ran into the woods*

*While Mary was mending the sock fell off her lap*

- “With a comma after *mending* there would be no syntactic garden path left to be studied.” (Fodor, 2002)

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- “With a comma after *mending* there would be no syntactic garden path left to be studied.” (Fodor, 2002)
- We'll see that the story is slightly more complicated.

# Prediction 2: hallucinated garden paths

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# Prediction 2: hallucinated garden paths

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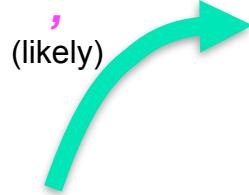
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- ...but doing that *would require the comma to be ignored*.
- Inferences through ...*glider* should thus involve a tradeoff between perceptual input and prior expectations

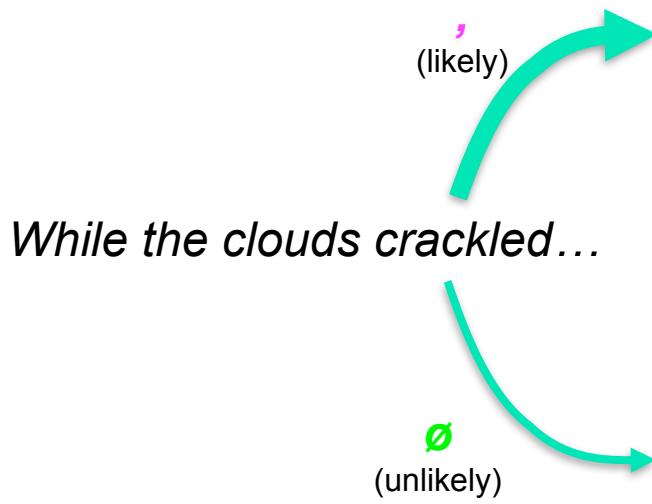
*While the clouds crackled...*

- Inferences as probabilistic paths through the sentence:
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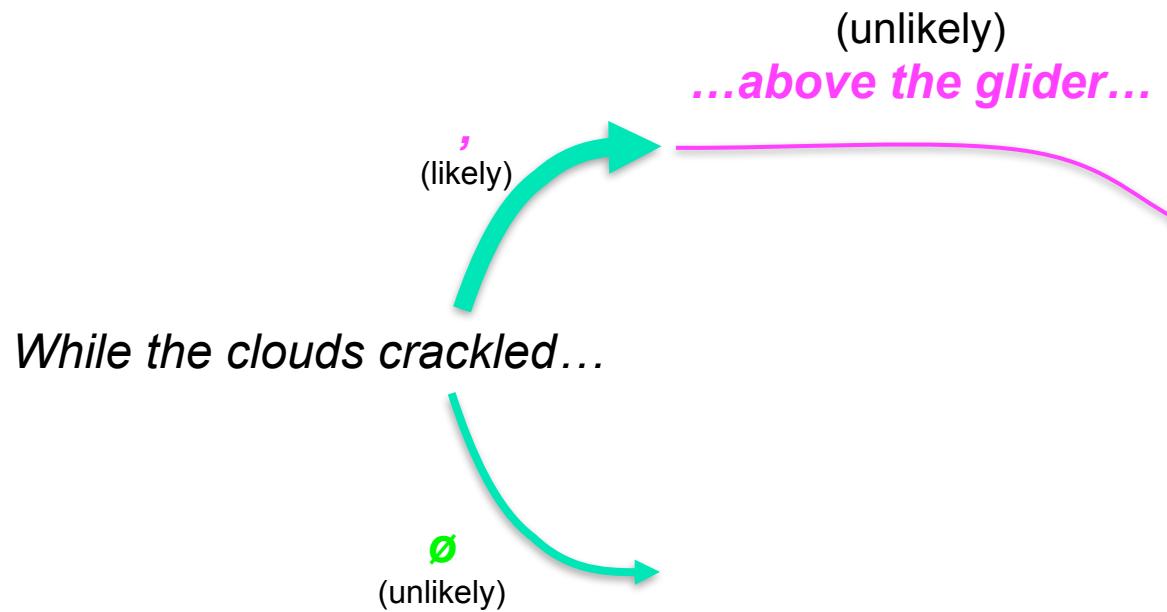


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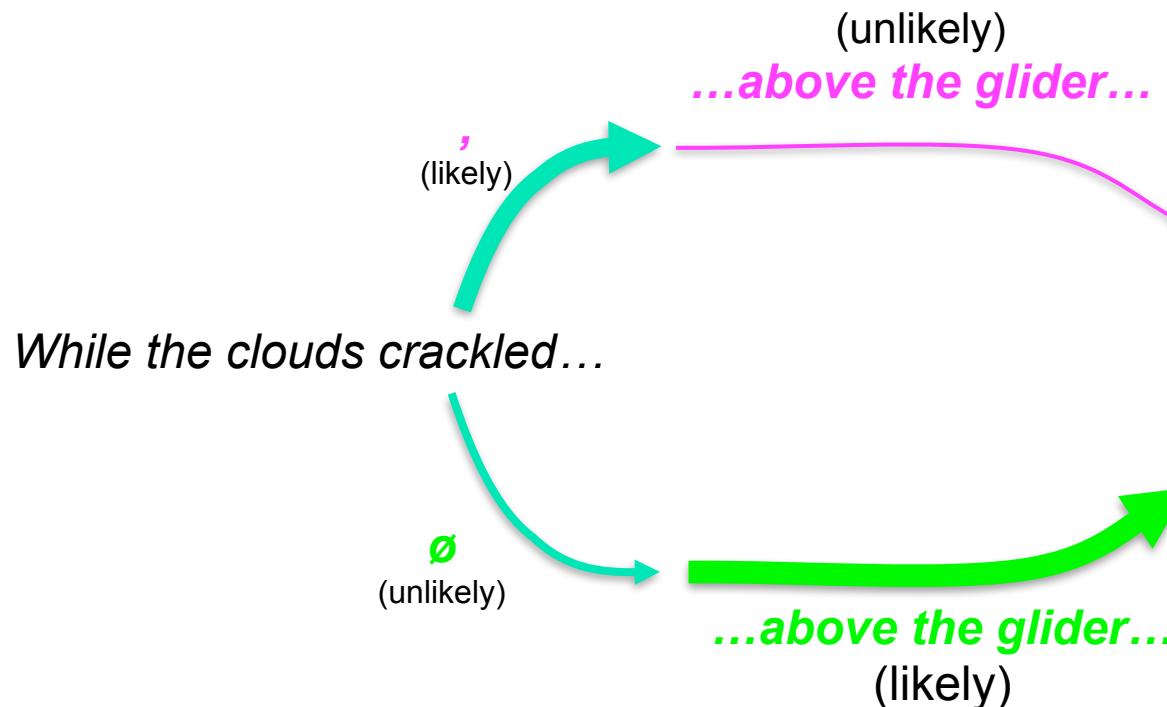
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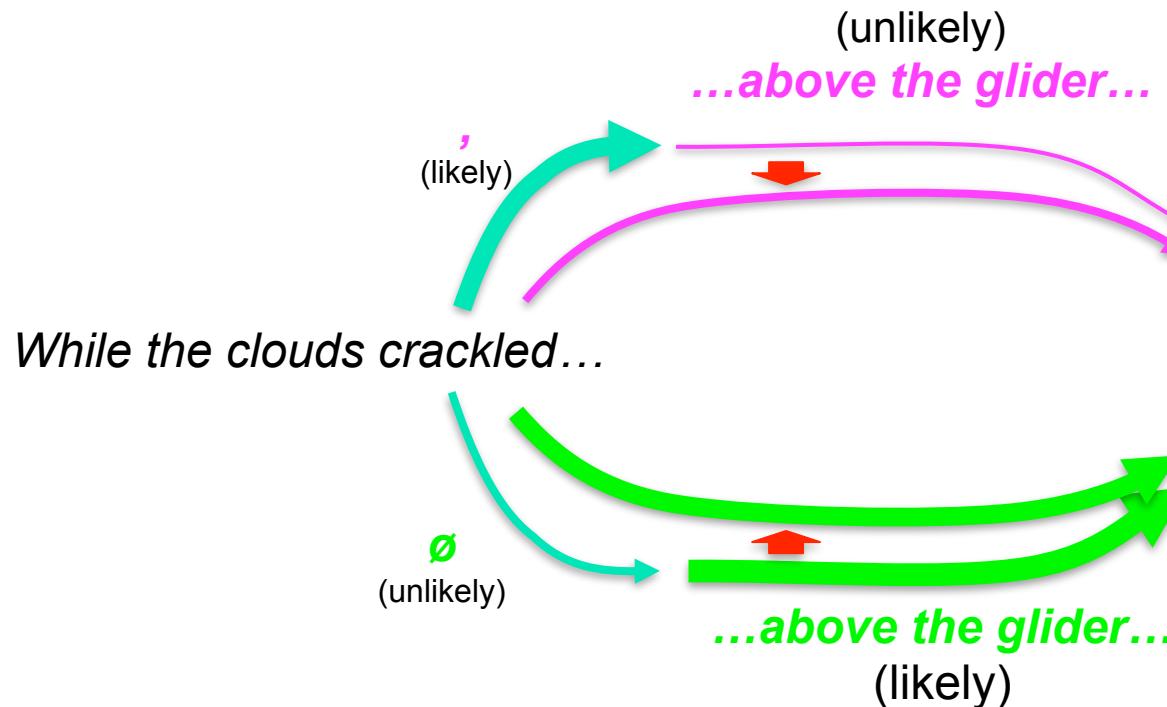
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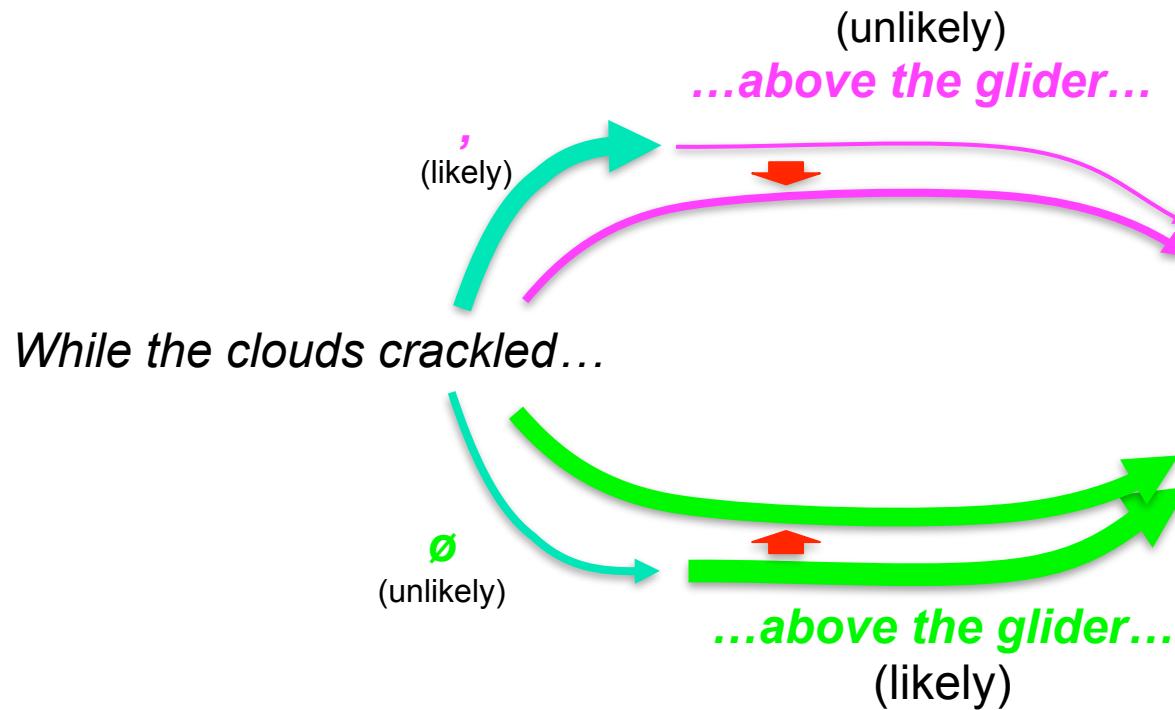
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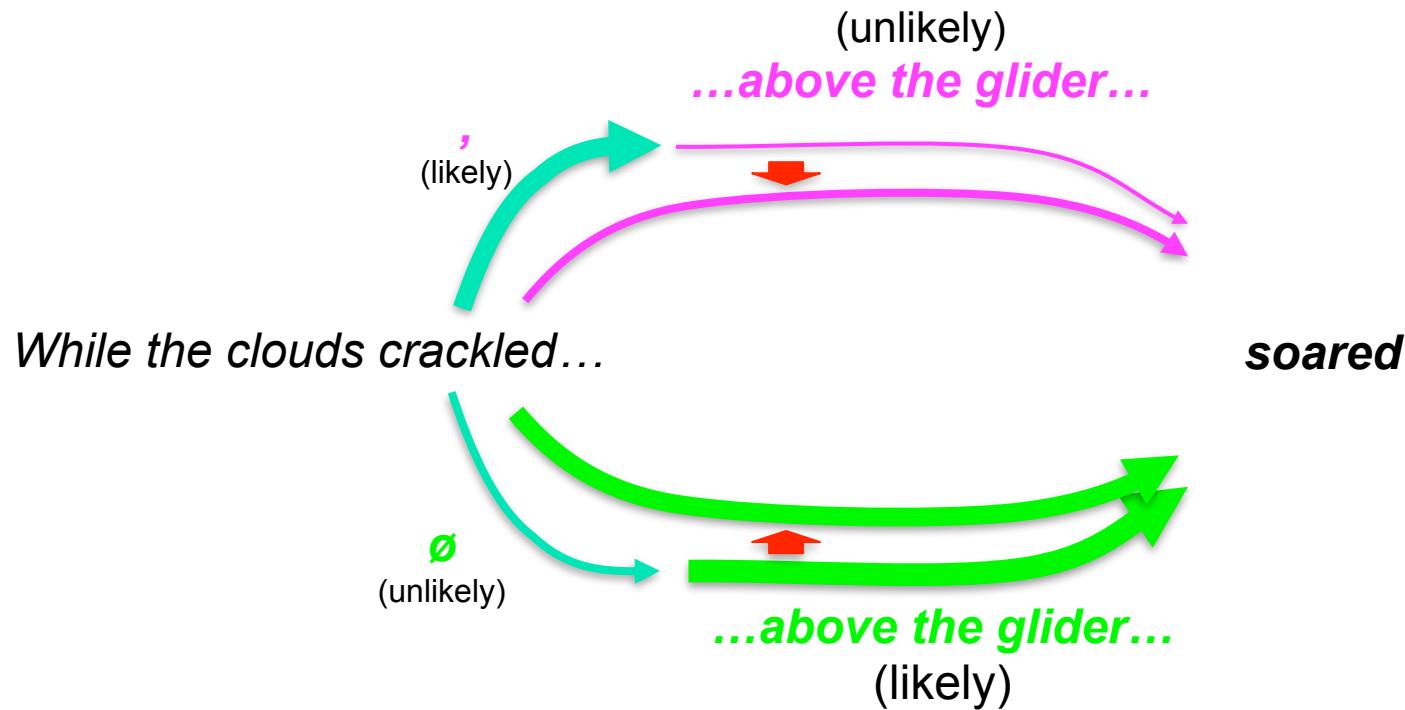
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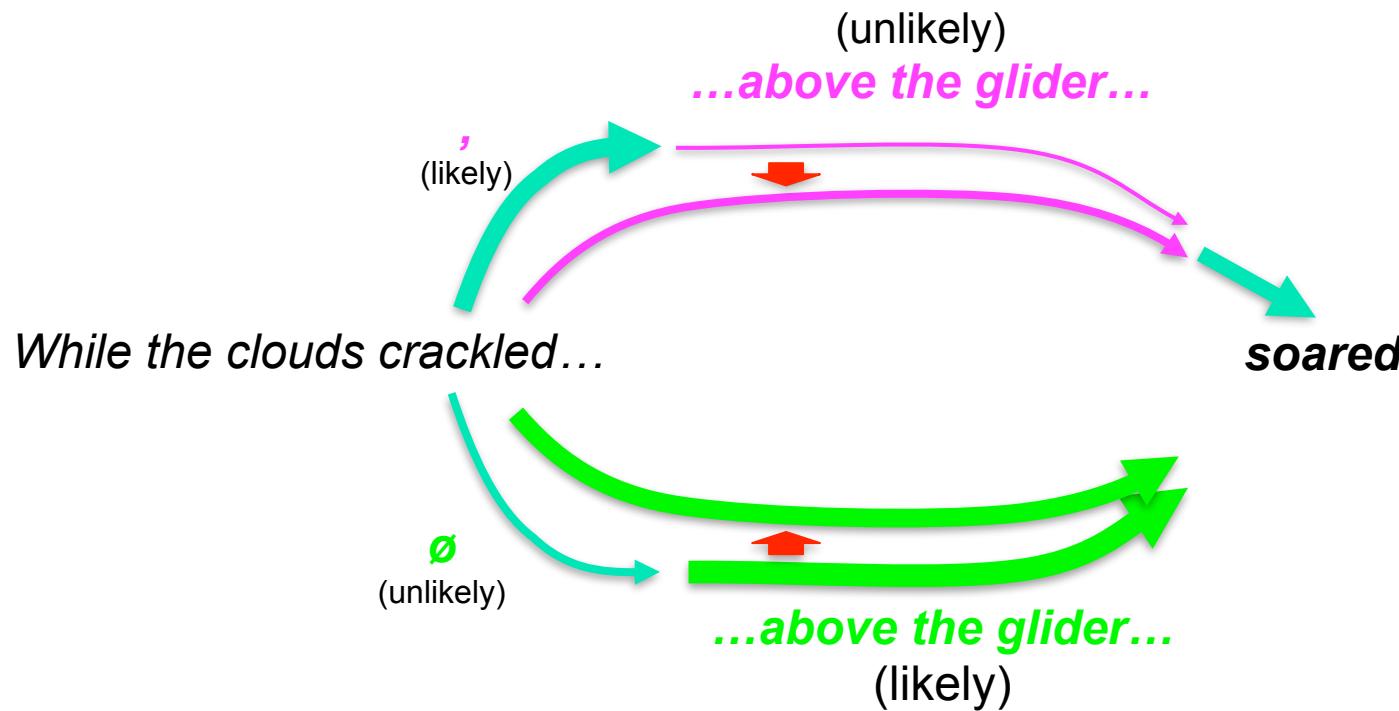
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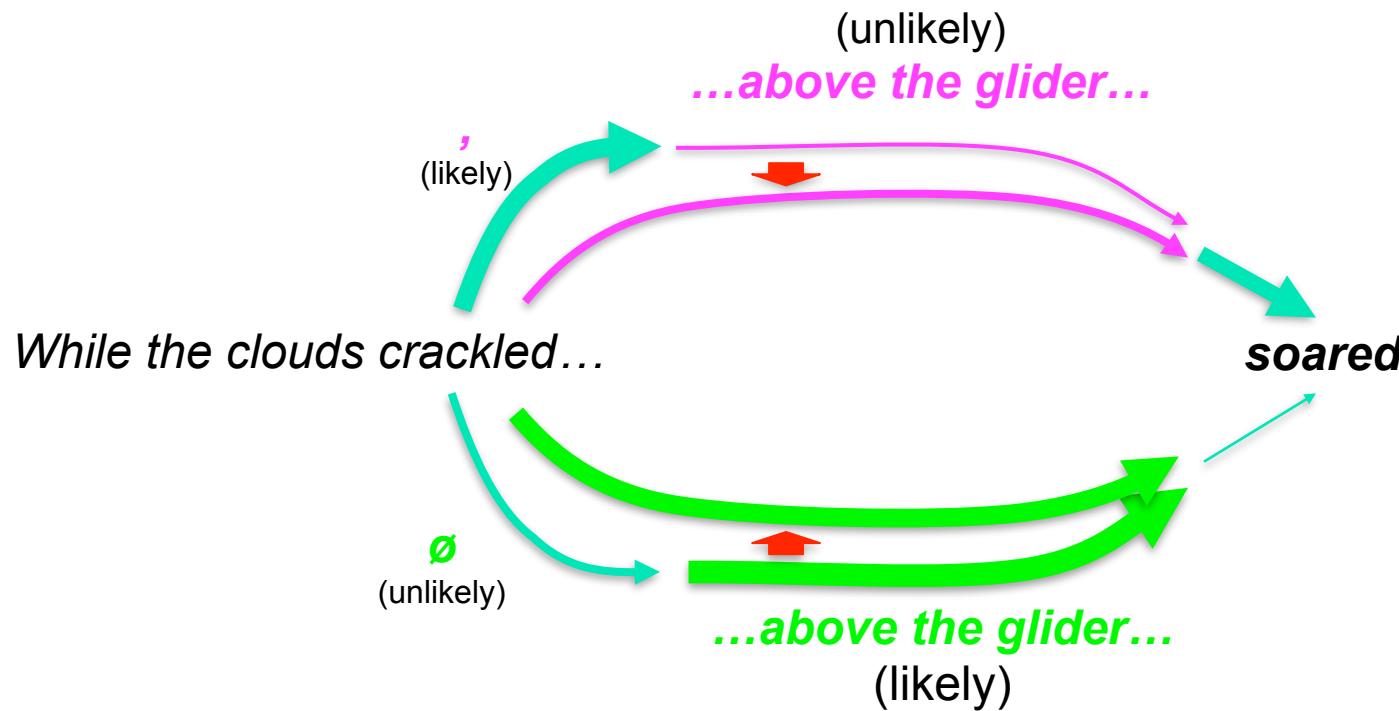
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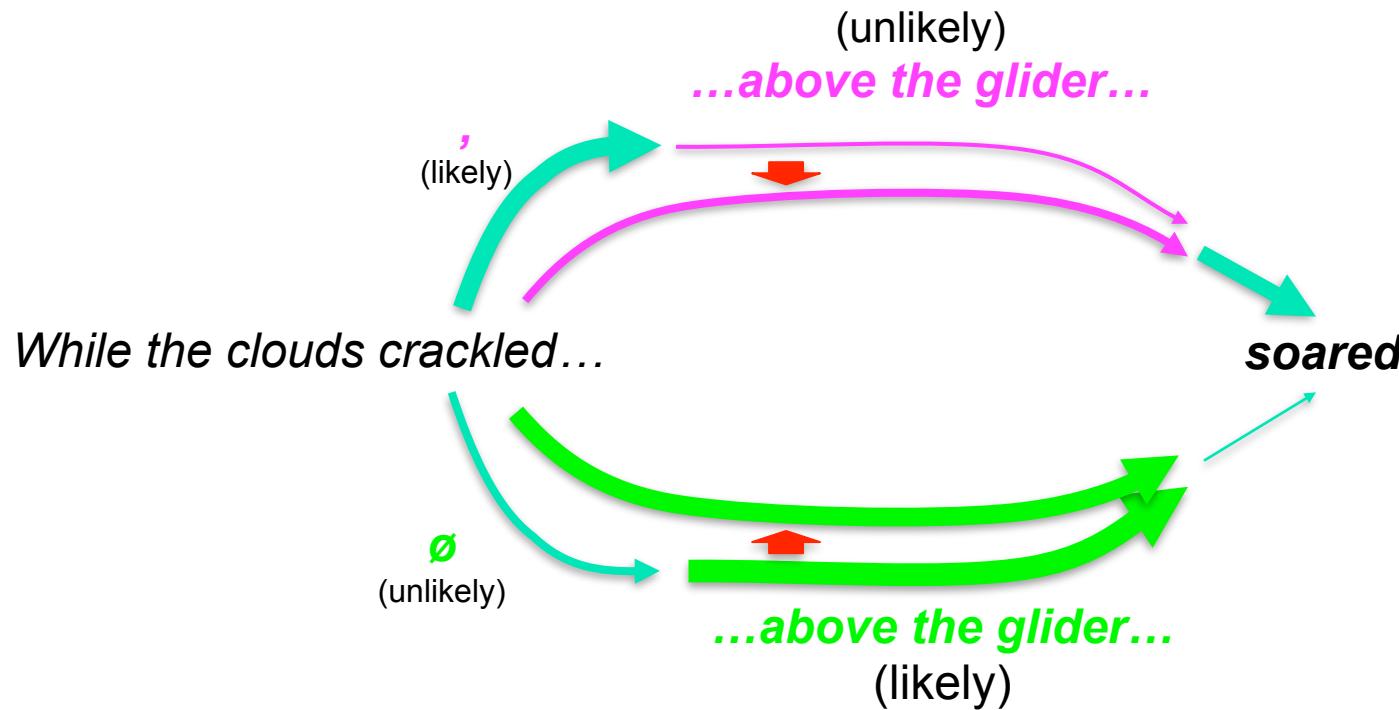
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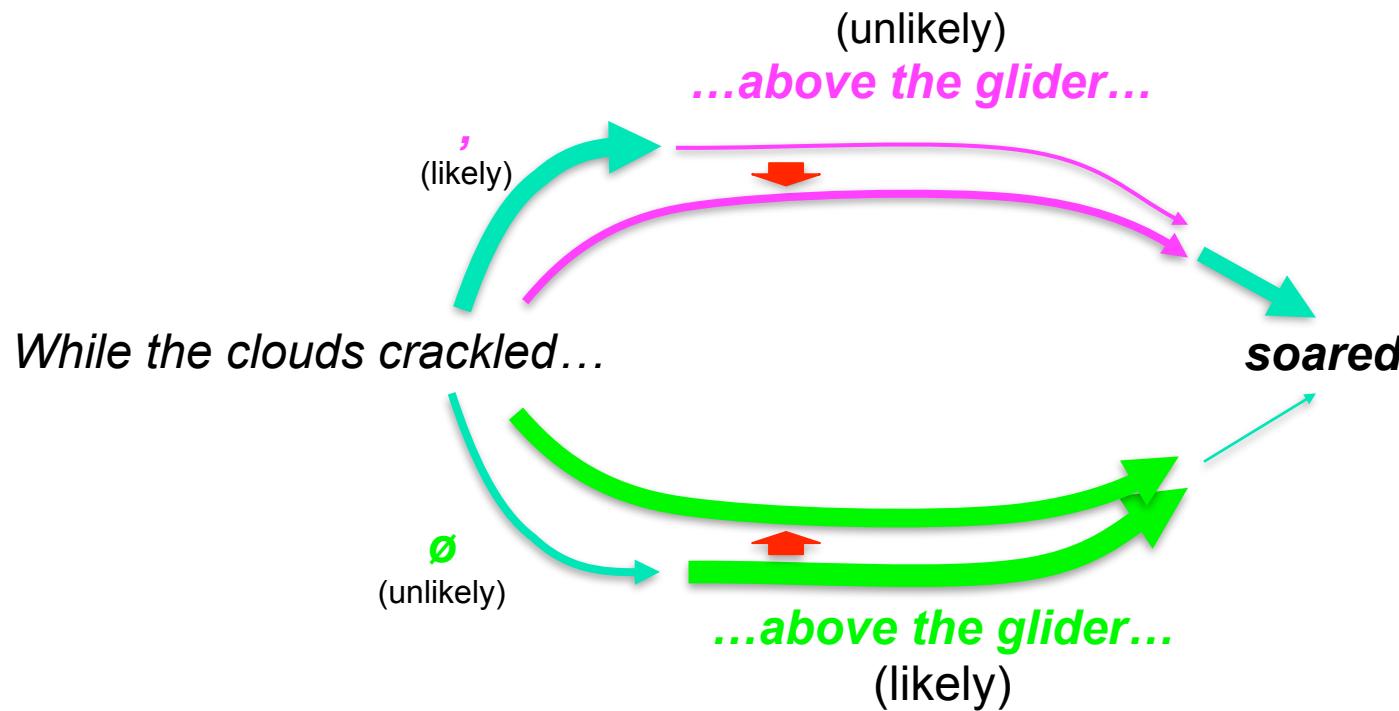


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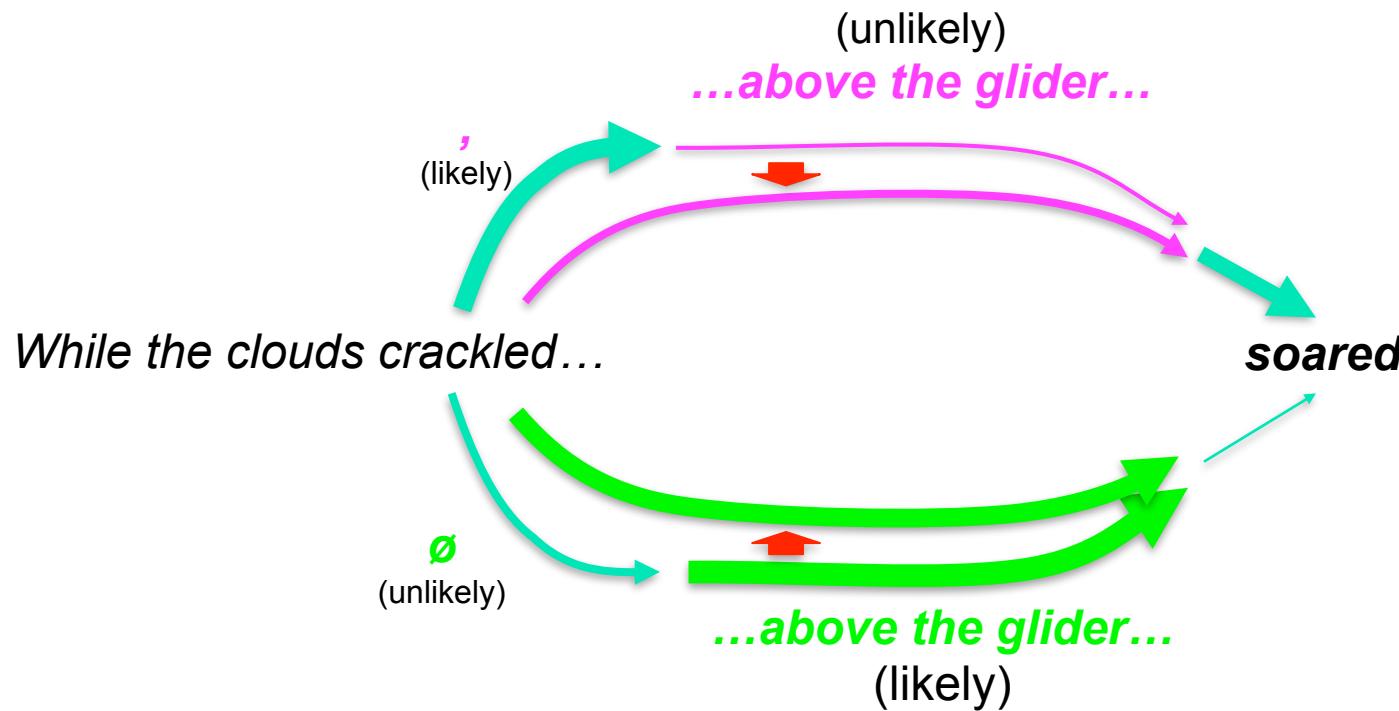
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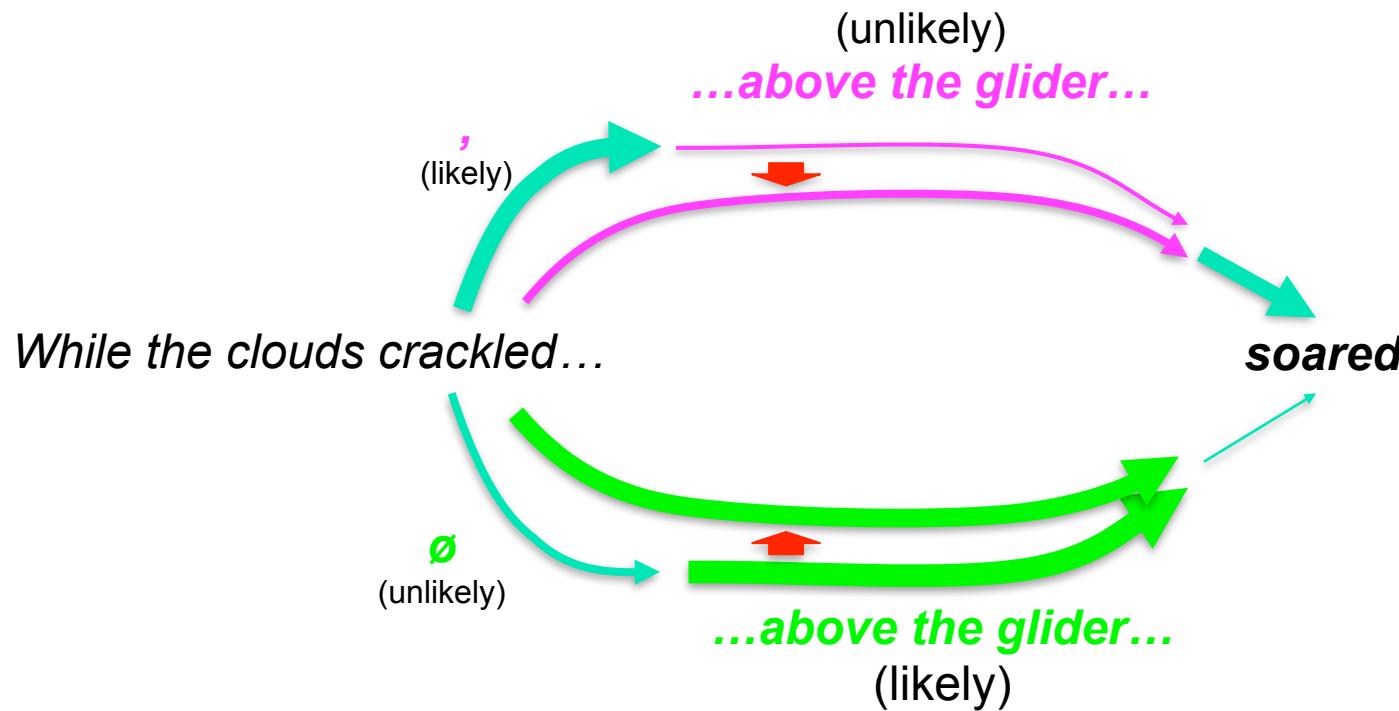
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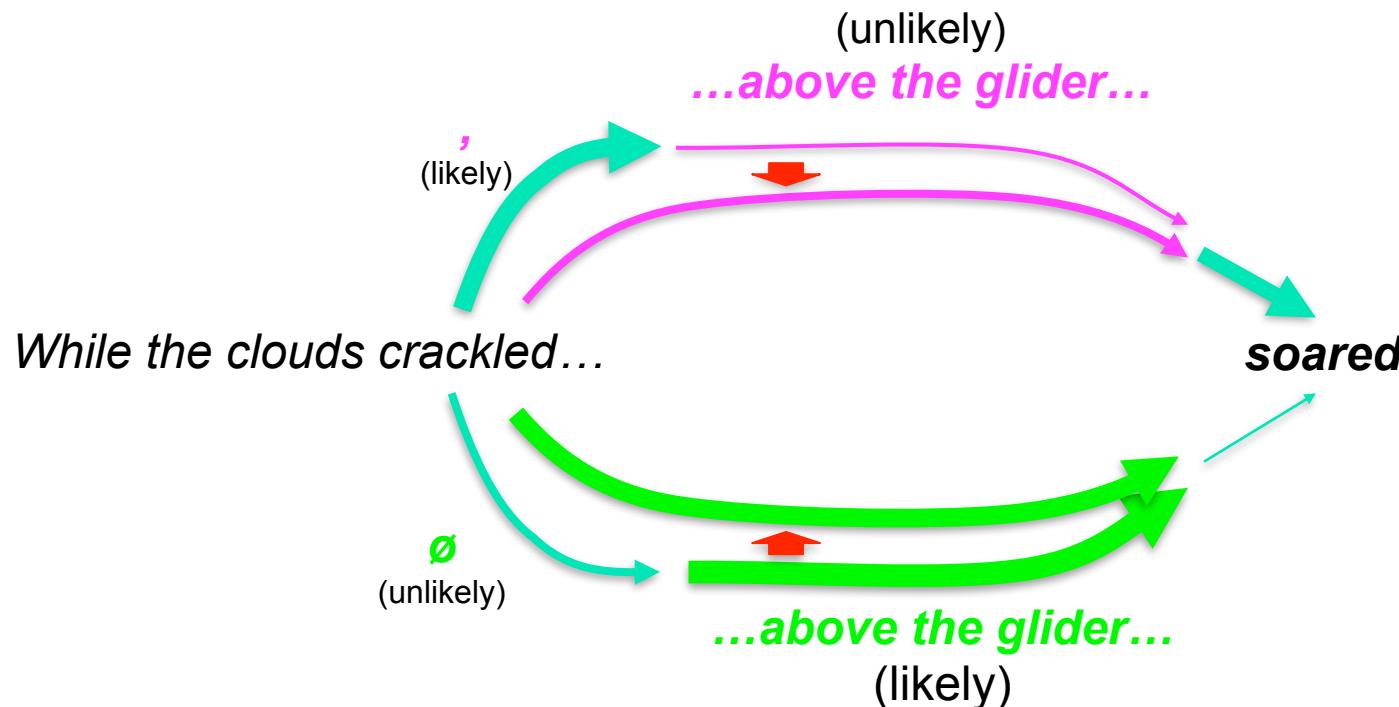
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- Two properties come together to create “hallucinated garden path”
  1. Subordinate clause into which the main-clause inverted phrase would fit well
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- Methodology: word-by-word self-paced reading
- Readers aren't allowed to backtrack

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---

- Methodology: word-by-word self-paced reading

white-----

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---

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white-the-----

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- So the comma is visually *gone* by the time the inverted main clause appears

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- Simple test of whether beliefs about previous input can be revised

# Model predictions

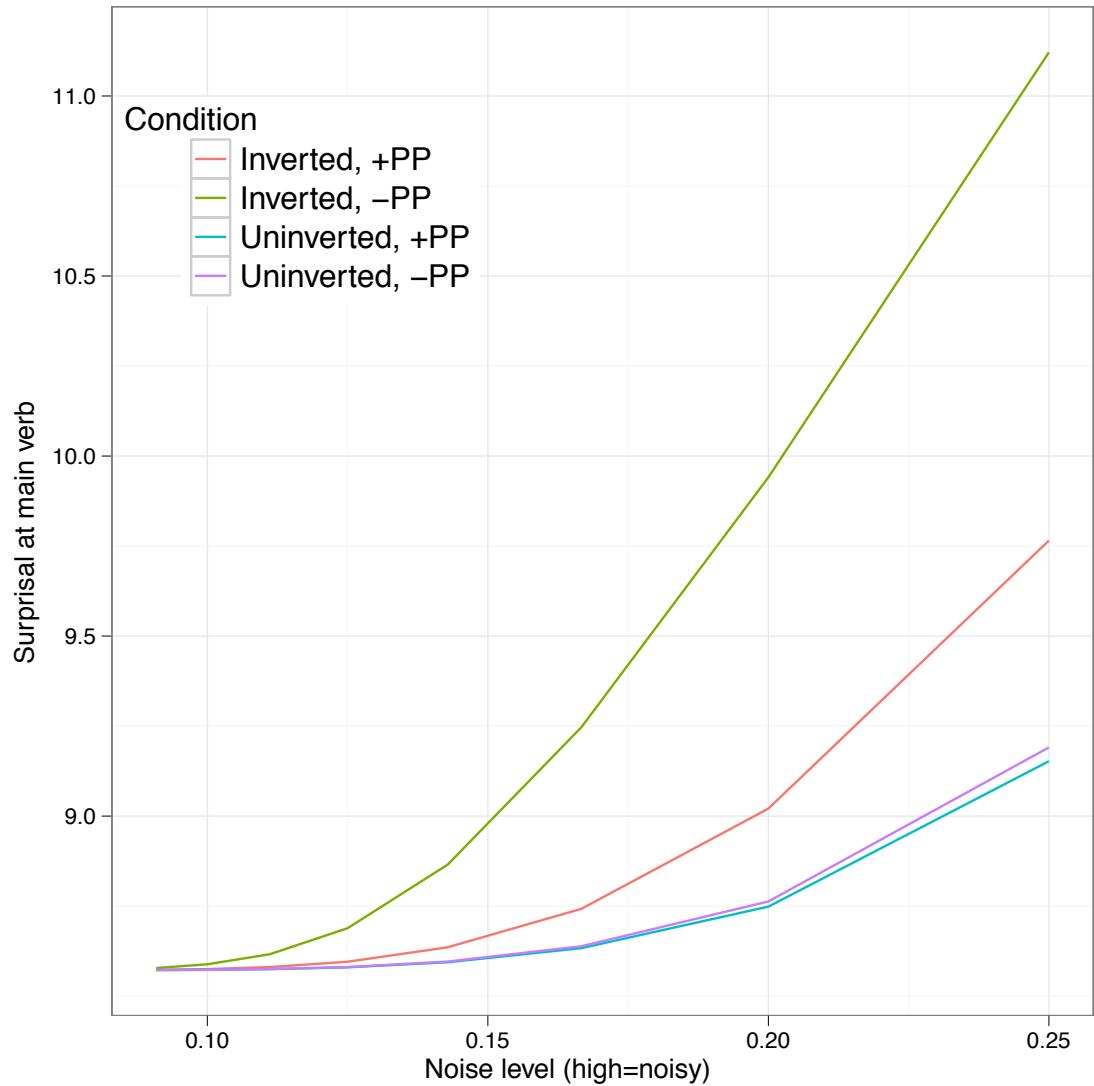
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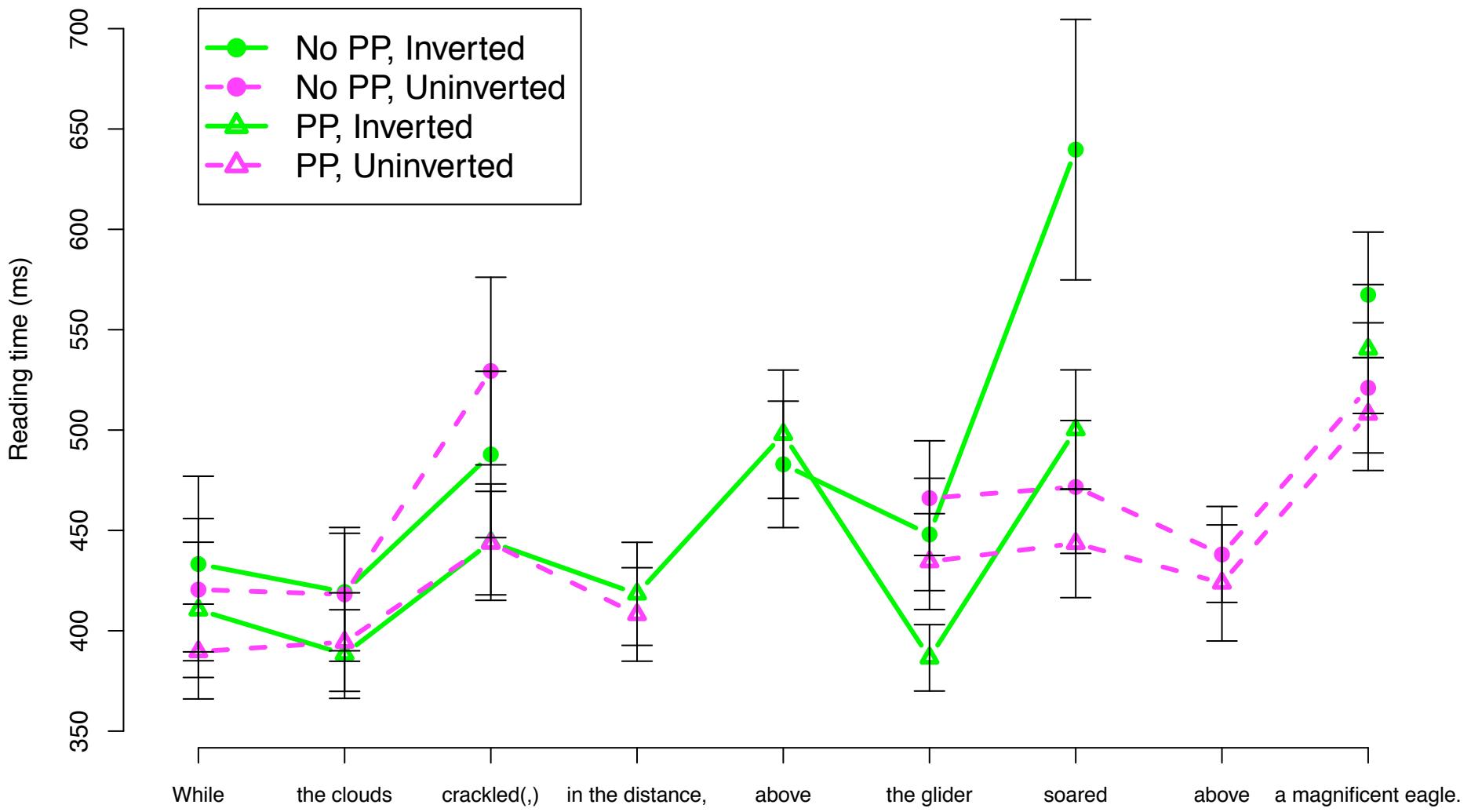
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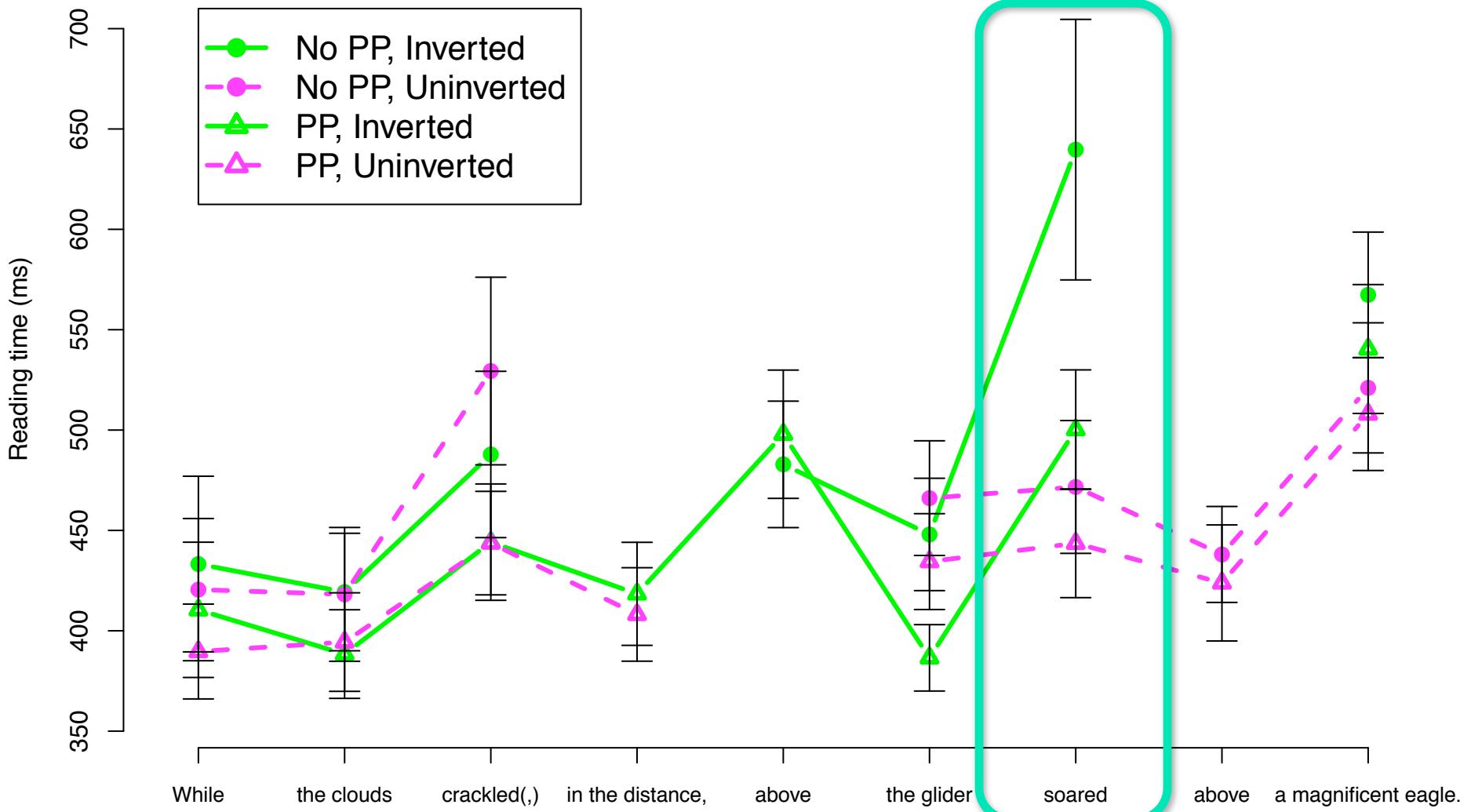
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# Results: whole sentence reading times

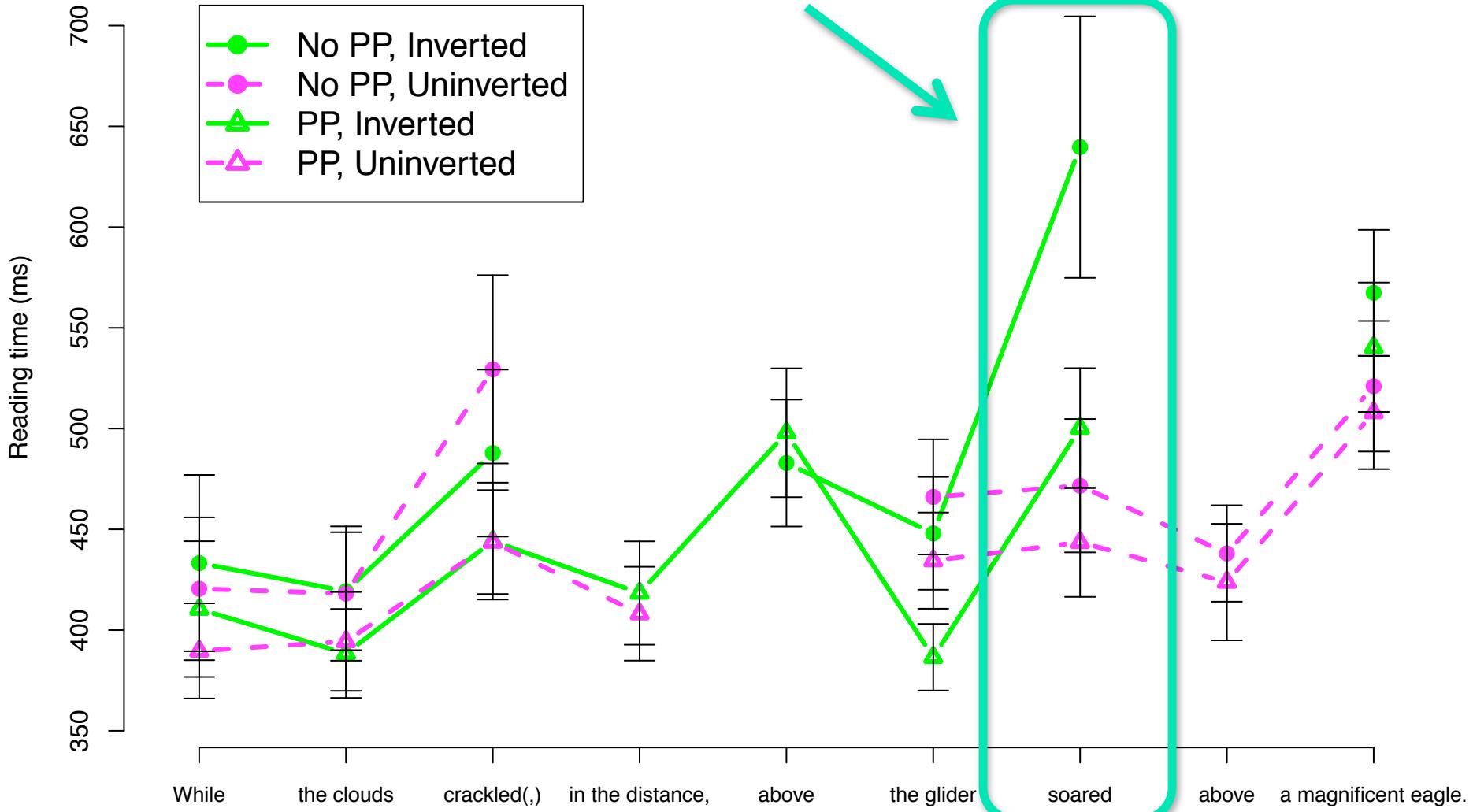


# Results: whole sentence reading times



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*Processing boggle occurs exactly where predicted*



# Hallucinated garden-path summary

---

- The *at/toward* study showed that comprehenders *note the possibility of alternative strings and act on it*
- This study showed that comprehenders can actually *devote resources to grammatical analyses inconsistent with the surface string*

# Hallucinated garden paths cont'd

---

- Sure, but punctuation's weird stuff
  - What about *real words*?
- 
- At least sometimes, bias *against N N interpretation*

# Hallucinated garden paths cont'd

---

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*I know that the desert trains could resupply the camp.*

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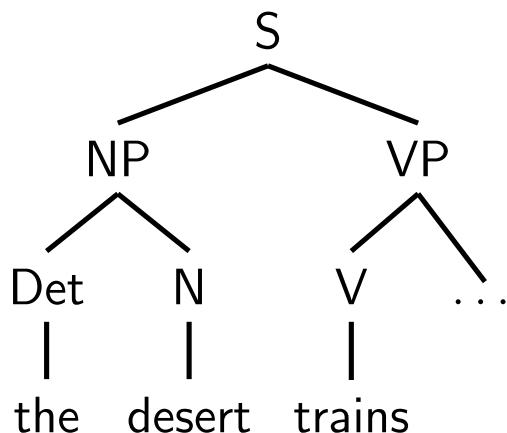
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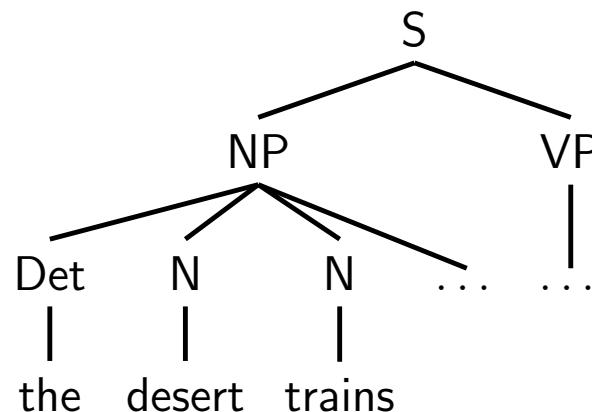
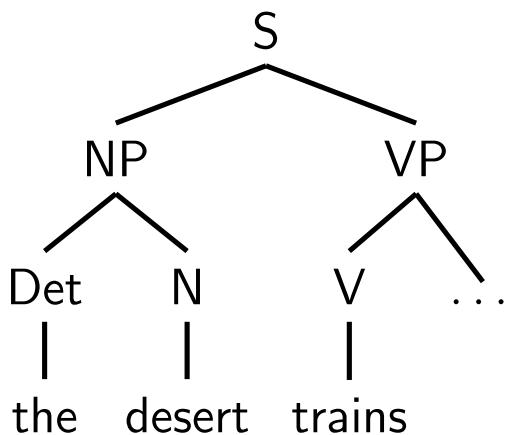


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# Hallucinated GPs with words

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*Could be “intern chauffeured”*

*Could NOT be “inexperienced chauffeured”*

# Hallucinated GPs with words

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- We use a contextual bias against NN and toward NV to test for GP hallucinations involving wordform change

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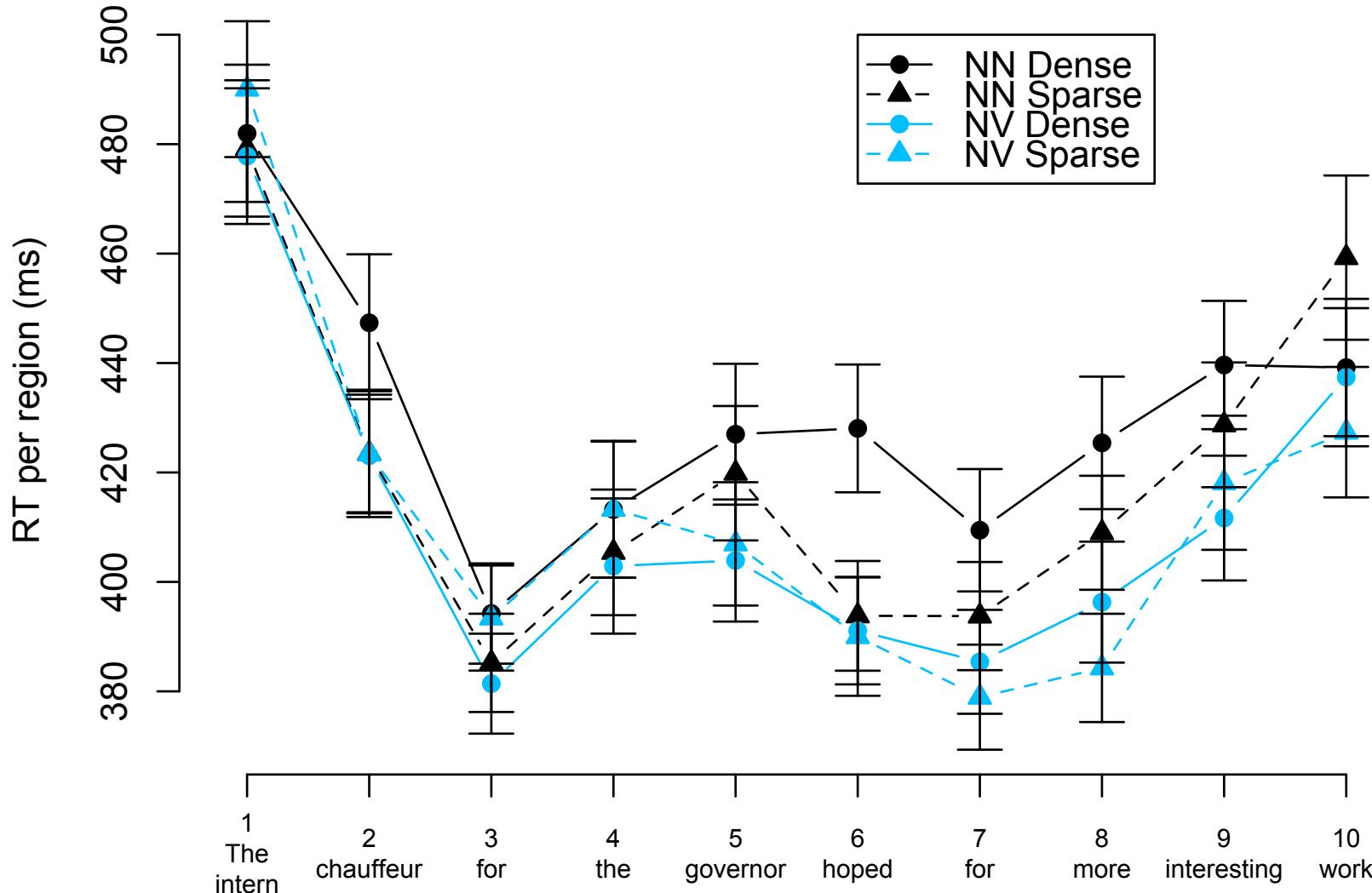
*Could NOT be “inexperienced chauffeured”*

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*Some interns chauffeured for the governor but hoped for more interesting work.*  
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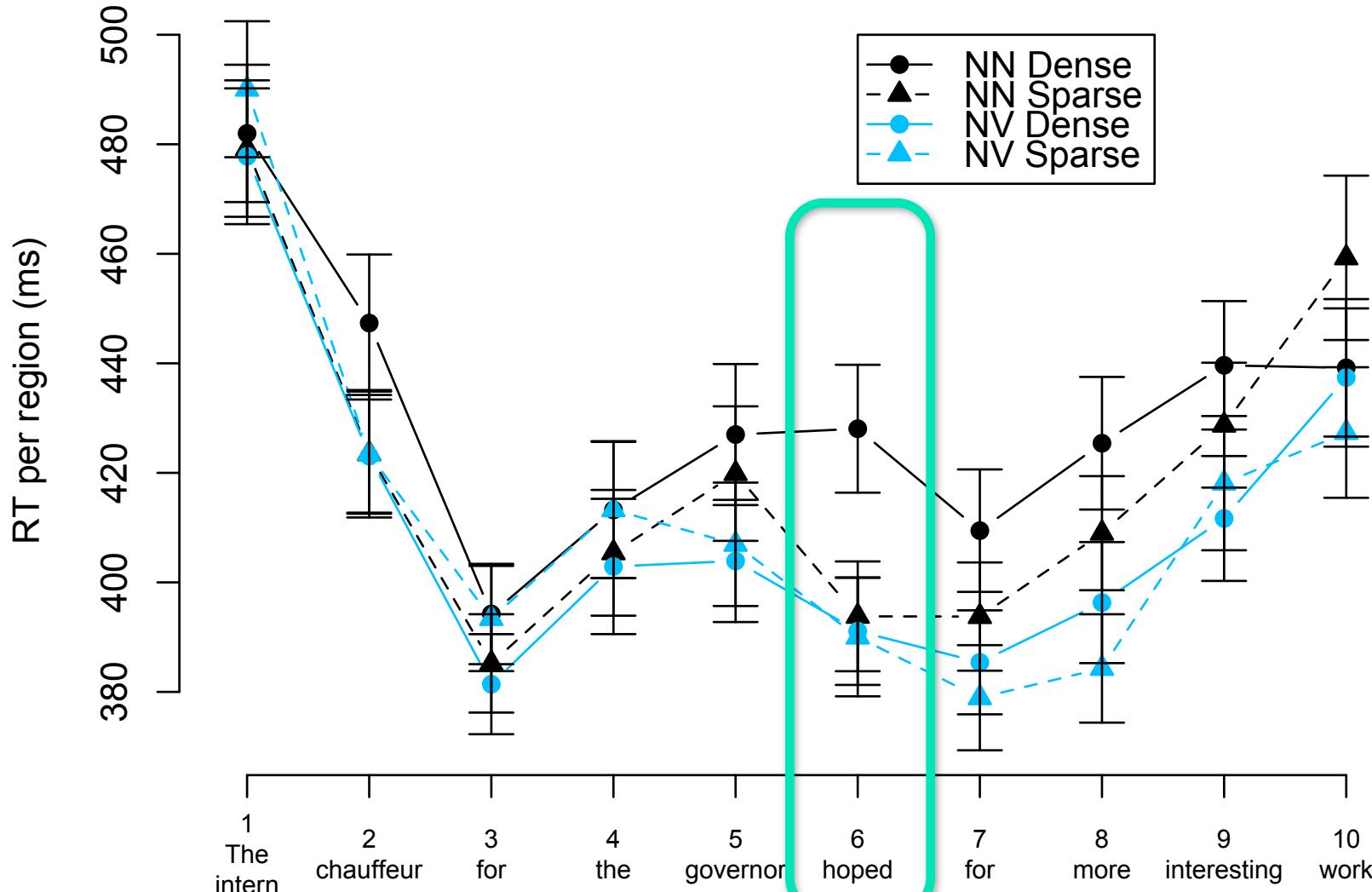
# Results

- RT spike at disambiguating region for NN Dense



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# Structure of the noise model

---

- Gibson et al. (2013) explored noise model with restricted noise operations: word *insertions* and *deletions*

Sentence	Plausibility	Insertions	Deletions
The cook baked Lucy a cake.	Plausible	0	1
The cook baked Lucy <u>for</u> a cake.	Implausible	1	0
The cook baked a cake <u>for</u> Lucy.	Plausible	1	0
The cook baked a cake Lucy.	Implausible	0	1

# Structure of the noise model

---

Sentence	Construction	Edits
The girl <u>was</u> kicked <u>by</u> the ball.	passive	2I
The ball kicked the girl.	active	2D
The tax law benefited <u>from</u> the businessman.	intransitive	1I
The businessman benefited the tax law.	transitive	1D
The cook baked Lucy <u>for</u> a cake.	Prepositional Object (PO) benefactive	1I
The cook baked a cake Lucy.	Double Object (DO) benefactive	1D

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*Often “corrected” to plausible interpretation inconsistent with literal meaning*

# Structure of the noise model

*Consistently given literal interpretation*

## Sentence

The girl was kicked by the ball.

The ball kicked the girl.

The tax law benefited from the businessman.

The businessman benefited the tax law.

The cook baked Lucy for a cake.

The cook baked a cake Lucy.

## Construction

passive

active

intransitive

transitive

Prepositional Object  
(PO) benefactive

Double Object (DO)  
benefactive

## Edits

2I

2D

1I

1D

1I

1D

*Often “corrected” to plausible interpretation inconsistent with literal meaning*

# Dependency length and noisy-channel surprisal

---

# Dependency length and noisy-channel surprisal

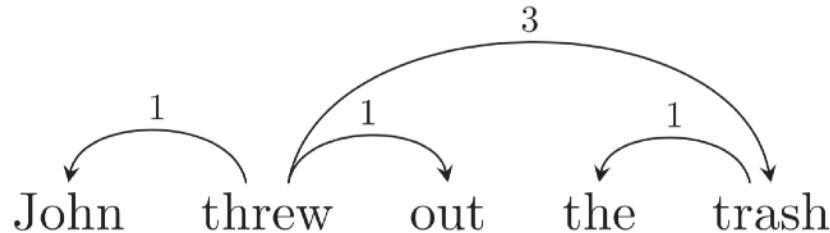
---

- Syntactic dependencies vary in linear distance

# Dependency length and noisy-channel surprisal

---

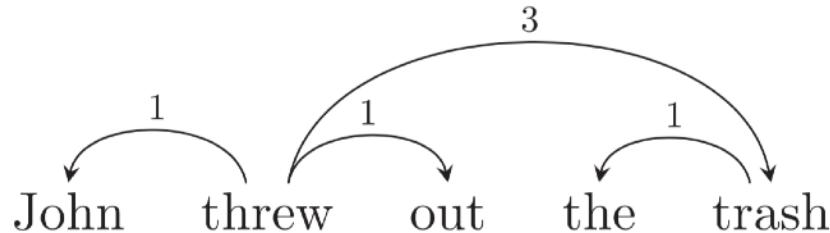
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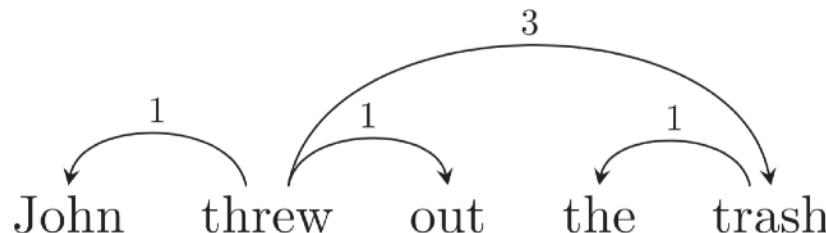
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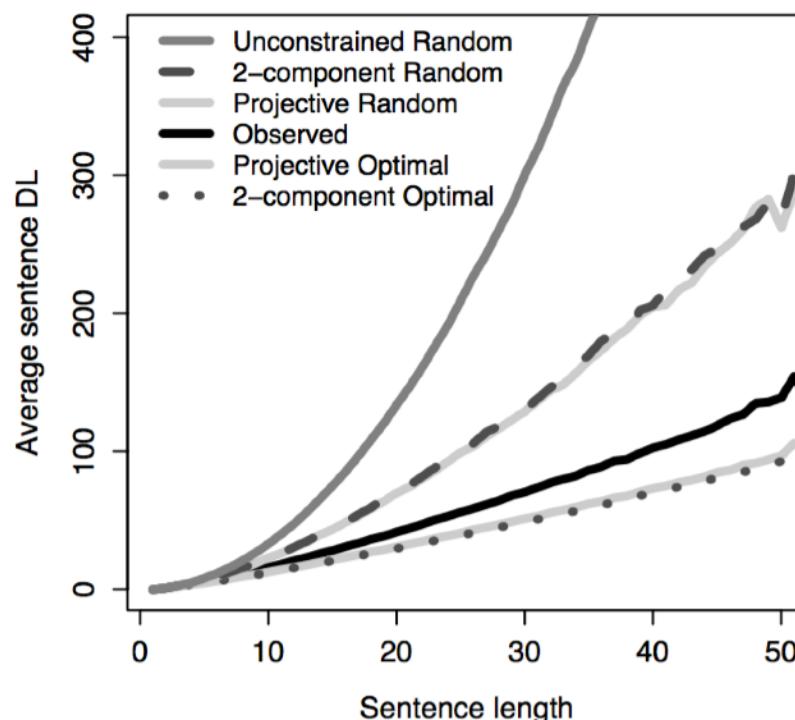
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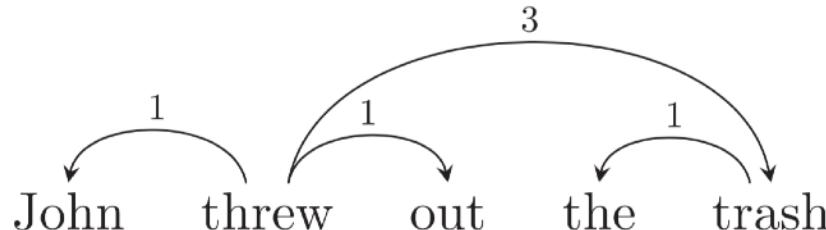


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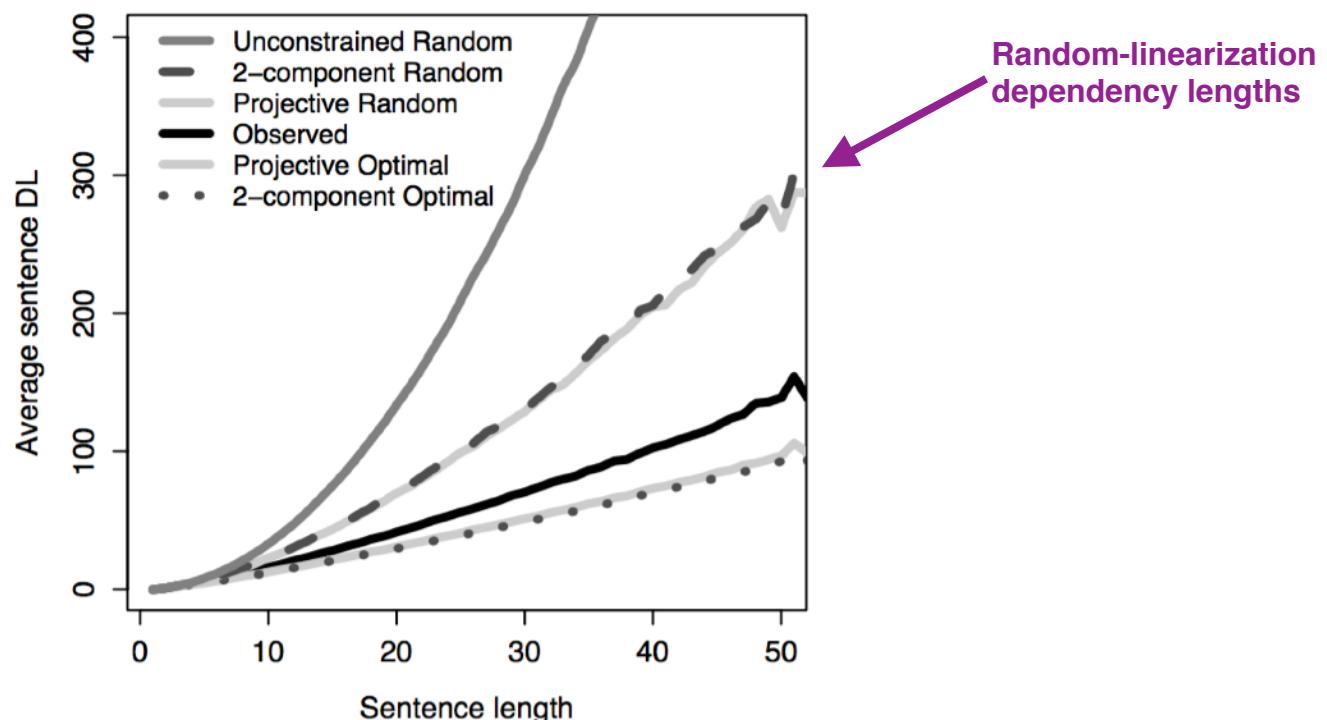


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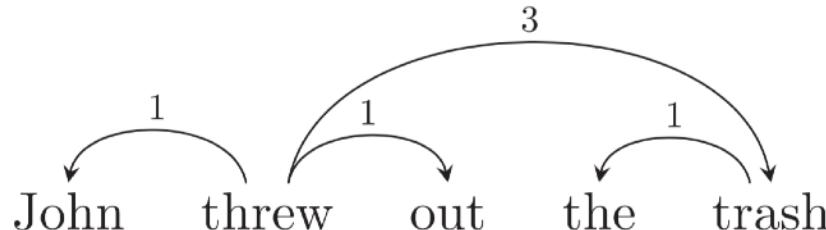


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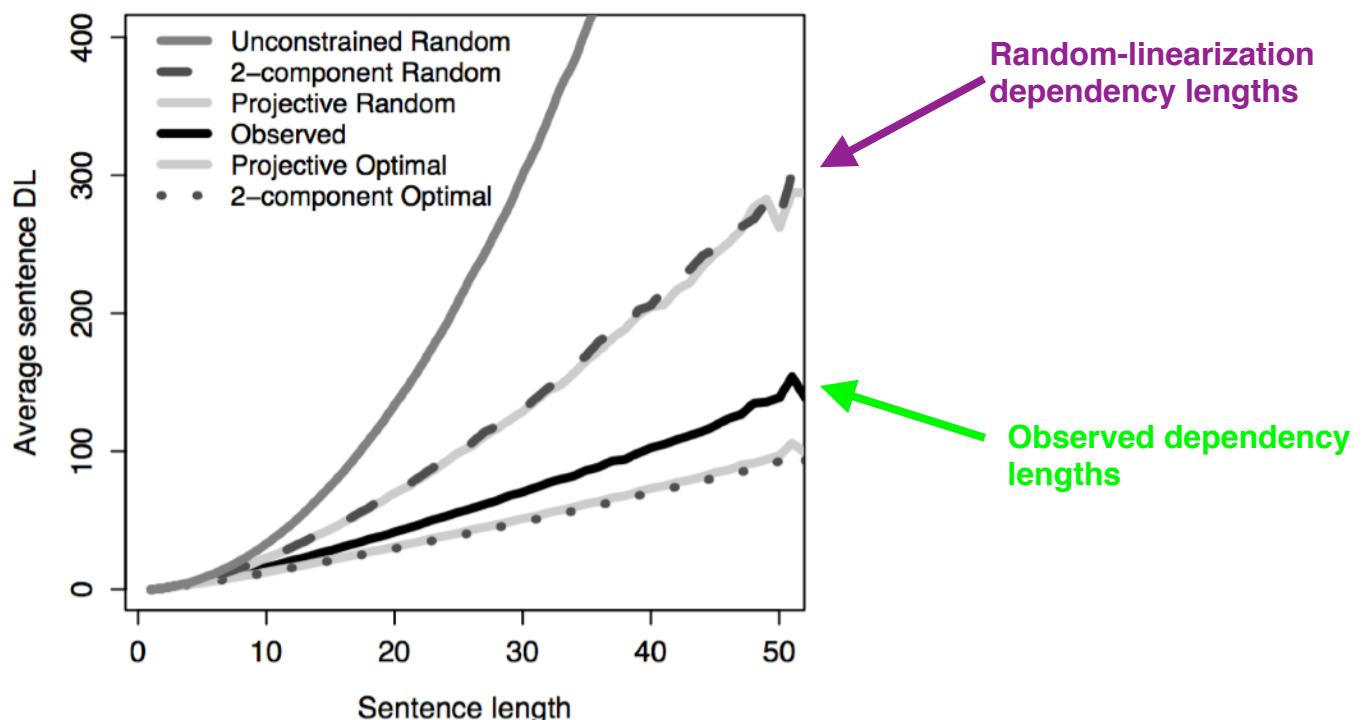


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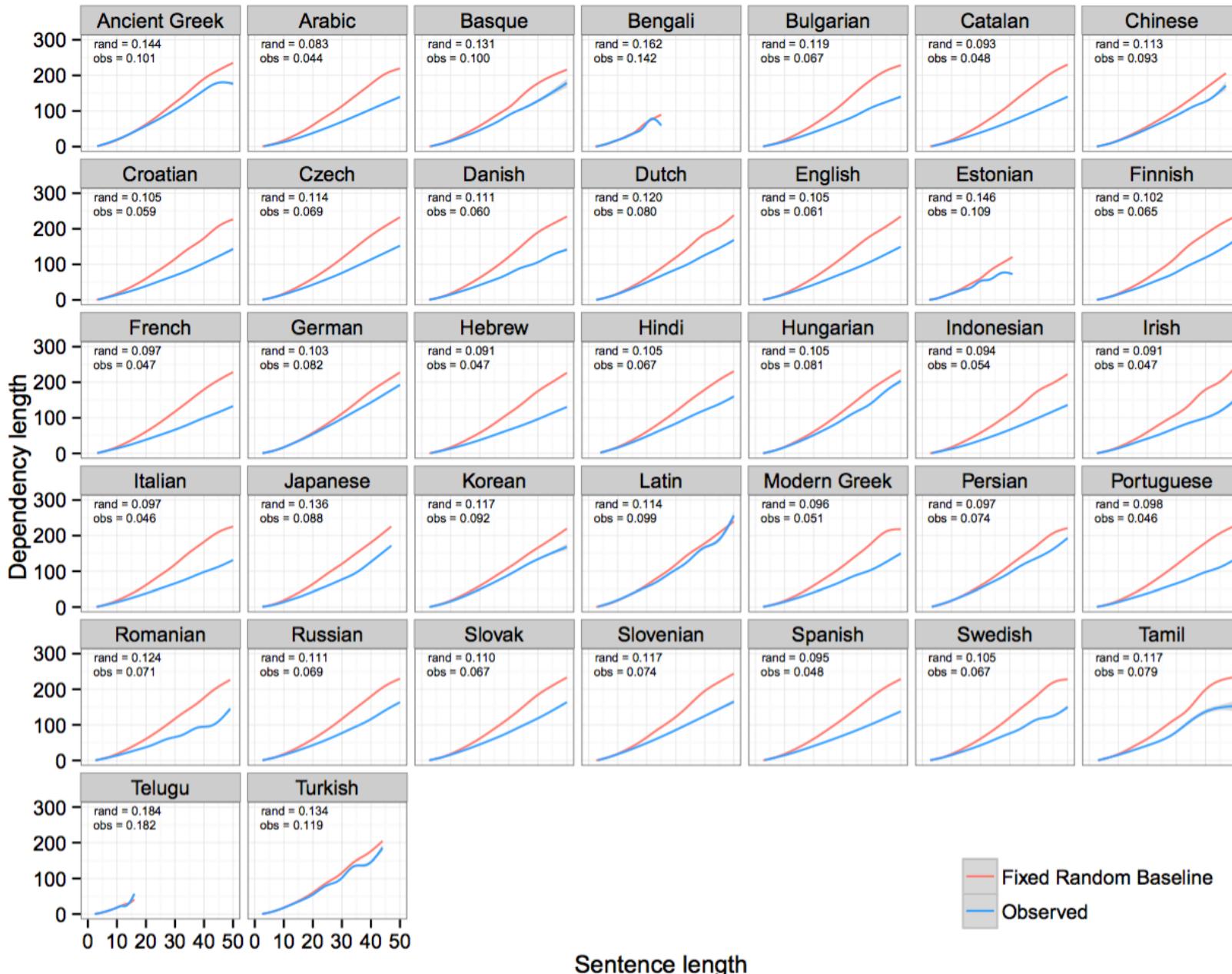
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- Idea with long history: short dependencies preferred



# Dependency lengths are short across languages!



# Dependency lengths and the noisy channel

---

- Here: dependency length minimization can be derived from a combination of surprisal & noisy-channel theory

# From noisy-channel & surprisal to dependency length minimization

context

John threw the old trash sitting in the kitchen

out

# From noisy-channel & surprisal to dependency length minimization

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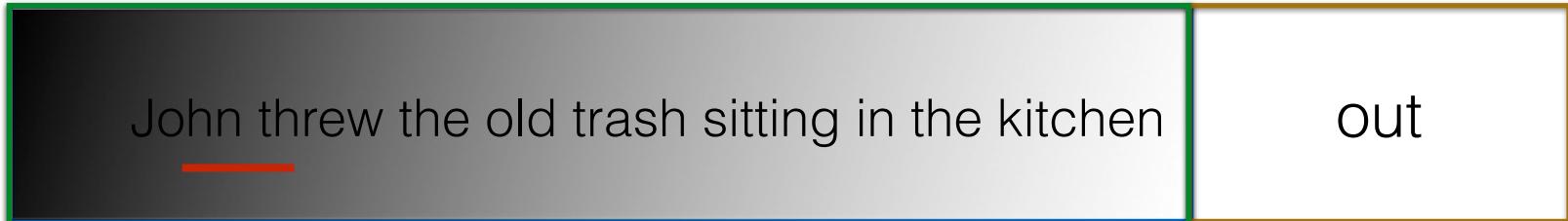
## noisy context



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- Noisy-context surprisal increases when **words that predict each other are far apart**.
- We call this **information locality** (following Gildea & Jaeger, 2015).

# Derivation of Information Locality

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John threw the trash out

$h(\text{out})$

The image shows a large block of binary digits (0s and 1s) arranged in a grid. The first few rows of the grid are as follows:

```
000011010101100101101000011100111011100  
01010101110101100101000000101011100100111  
001001101010110011000101010010011010100110  
100100100001001010011011110010010010001000  
011000111100111100010011110010010110100100  
11000010000110011000010101010011111111100  
110100110011011100000001011000111001111010  
01010001001111110110111100101001011000001  
100111100100001011110001000110000111010001  
001111010100111101110010100011100100100101  
10101100100010111010100001110011101101101  
11010100001100010011000101000100100101000  
00110110010000100100101000101001100000111  
00100110100111101110100110100011010111000  
100000101010100010110100111101011010110011  
011010100001100000110001000001111111111001  
110101000011101001101110000111000111001011  
00111011110001110101110011011111100001110  
011110011001100111010101100101111001100000  
0111100101011110011010000110000000000011110  
110000010010011111011010101011110001100  
00111101010101101111110111100110010010111  
101010011110110110010000111100100100000000  
111110111101001010000100101000101000001101  
01010110010110100001110011110111001010101  
111010110010100000001010111001001100100110  
10101100110001010100100110101010011010010010
```

A large curly brace on the right side of the grid is labeled with the letter 'C', indicating that the entire block of binary digits represents the context 'C'.

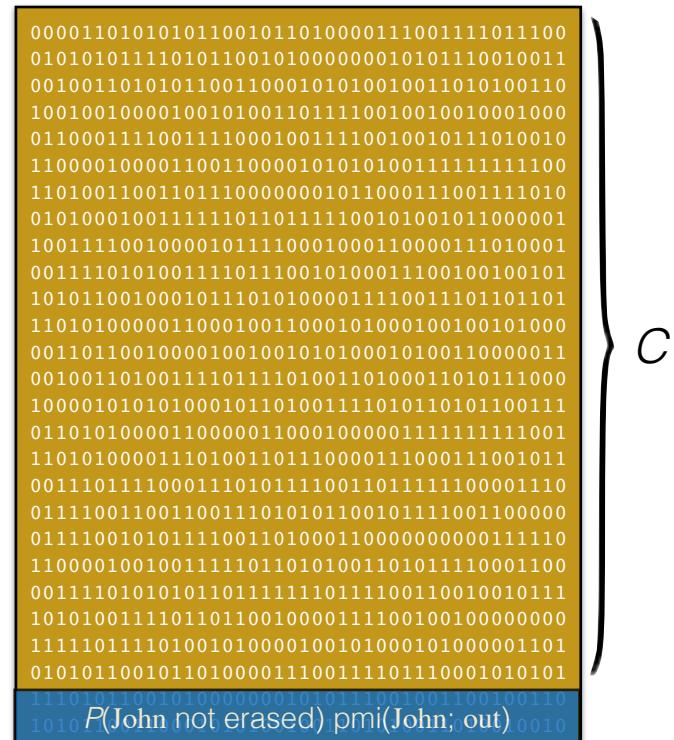
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John threw the trash out

$$h(\text{out}) - P(\text{John not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{John}; \text{out})$$



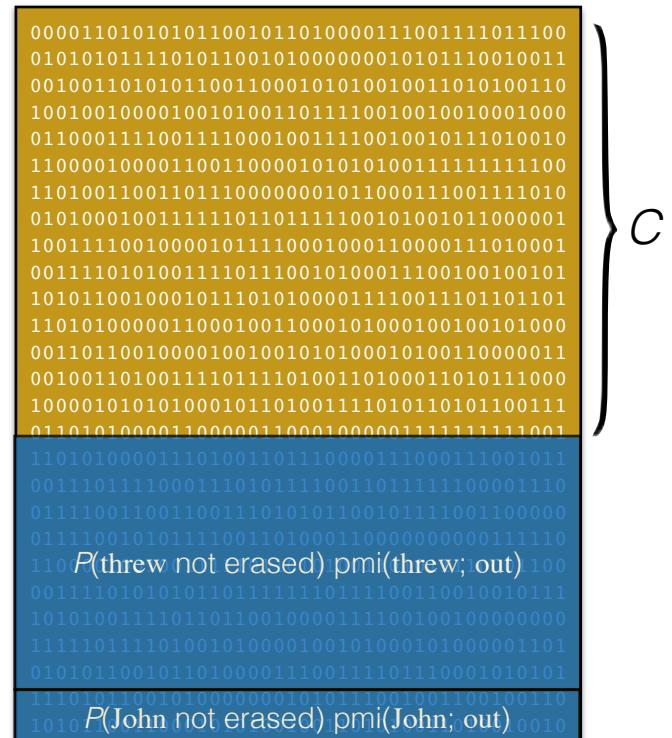
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$$h(\text{out}) - P(\text{John not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{John}; \text{out}) \\ - P(\text{threw not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{threw}; \text{out})$$



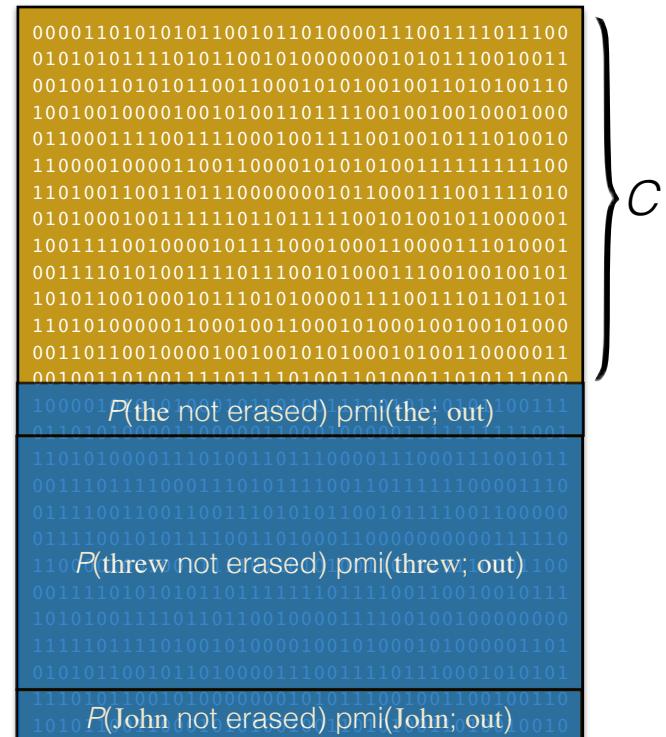
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$$\begin{aligned} h(\text{out}) &- P(\text{John not erased}) \text{pmi}(\text{John}; \text{out}) \\ &- P(\text{threw not erased}) \text{pmi}(\text{threw}; \text{out}) \\ &- P(\text{the not erased}) \text{pmi}(\text{the}; \text{out}) \end{aligned}$$



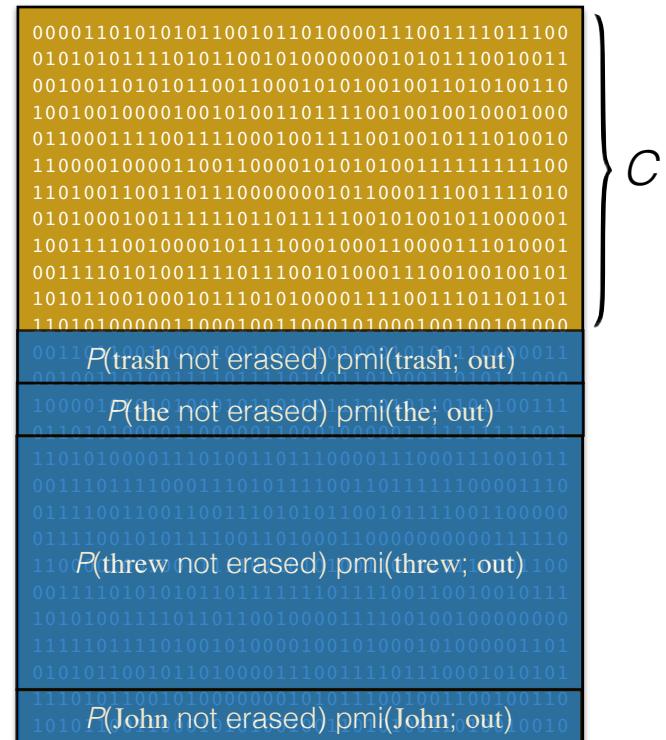
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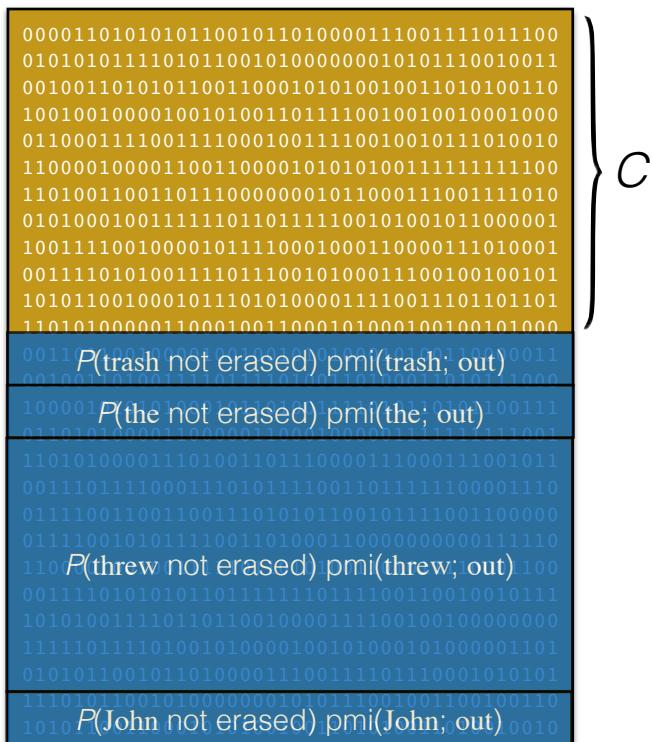
John threw the trash out

$h(\text{out}) - P(\text{John not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{John}; \text{out})$

-  $P(\text{threw not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{threw}; \text{out})$

-  $P(\text{the not erased}) \quad \text{pmi}(\text{the}; \text{out})$

-  $P(\text{trash not erased})$  pmi(**trash**; **out**)



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$$C(w|\text{context}) \approx h(w) - \sum_{w' \in \text{context}} P(w' \text{ not erased}) \text{pmi}(w; w')$$

threw out

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```

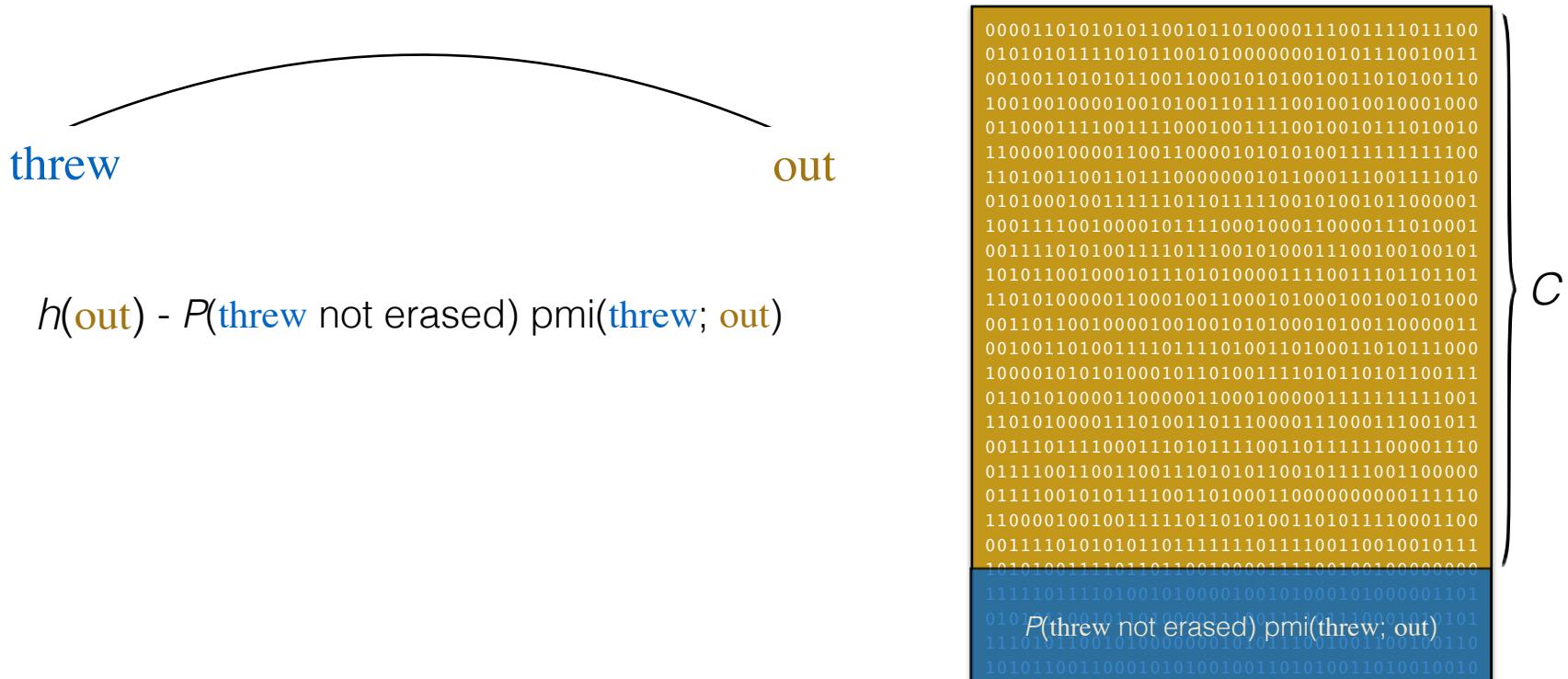
0000011010101011001011010000111001111011100
010101011110101100101000000010101110010011
001001101010110011000101010010011010100110
1001001000010010100110111100100100100010001000
011000111001111000100111100100101101001010
11000010000110011000010101010011111111100
110100110011011110000001011000111001111010
010100010011111101101111100101001011000001
100111100100001011110001000110000111010001
001111010100111101110010100011100100100101
101011001000101110101000011110011101101101
11010100001100010011000101000100100100101000
001101100100001001001010100010100110000011
001001101001111011110100110100011010111000
1000001010101000101101001111010110101100111
011010100001100000110001000001111111111001
11010100001110100110111100001110001110010111
001110111100011101011110011011111100001110
0111100110011001101010110010111100100000000
011 P(threw not erased).pmi(threw;out)1110
110000010010011110110101001101011100001100
0011110101010110111111011110011001001010111
101010011110110110010000111100100100000000
111110111101001010000100101000101000001101
01010110010110100001110011110111001010101
111010110010100000001010111001001100100100110
10101100110001010100100110101001101010010010

```

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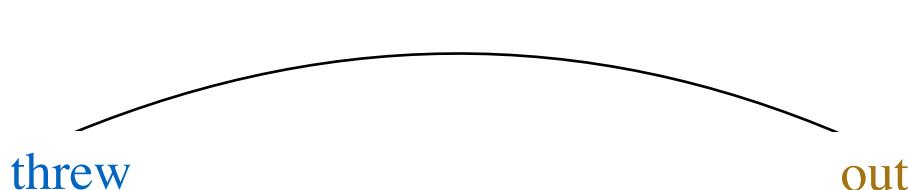
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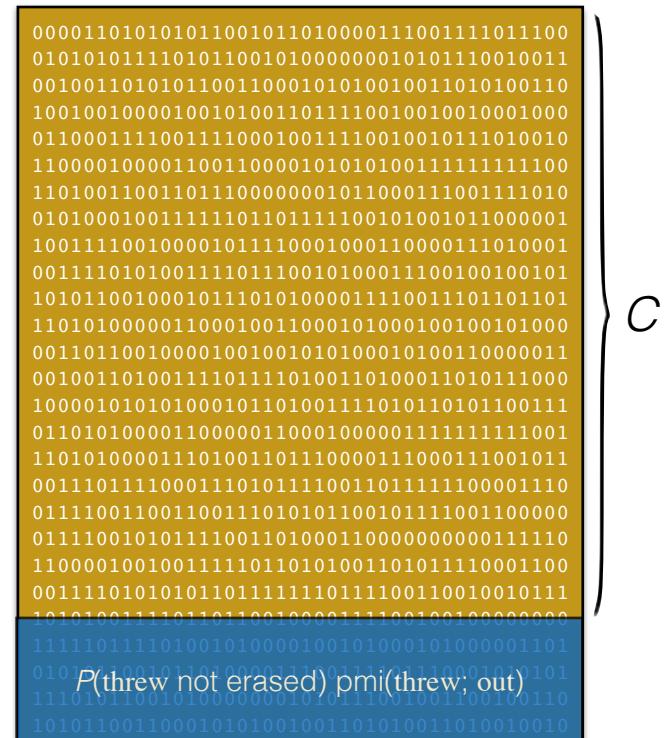
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- When context items are far, their cost-reducing influence decreases.



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**threw**      **out**

$h(\text{out}) - P(\text{threw} \text{ not erased}) \text{ pmi}(\text{threw}; \text{out})$

- When context items are far, their cost-reducing influence decreases.
    - Similar to the concept of decay in cue effectiveness  
(Qian & Jaeger, 2012)

00001101010110001011010000111001111011100  
 010101011110101100101000000010101110010011  
 0010011010101100110001010100100110100110  
 10010010000100101001101111001001000100001000  
 011000111001111000100111100100101101001010  
 110000100001100110000101010100111111111100  
 11010011001101110000001011000111001111010  
 01010001001111110110111100101001011000001  
 100111100100001011110001000110000111010001  
 001111010100111101110010100011100100100101  
 101011001000101110101000011110011101101101  
 110101000001100010011000101000100100101000  
 001101100100001001001010100010100110000011  
 001001101001111011110100110100011010111000  
 100001010101000101101001111010110101100111  
 011010100001100000110001000001111111111001  
 110101000011101001101110000111000111001011  
 001110111100011101011110011011111100001110  
 011110001100110011010101100101111001100000  
 0111100101010111100101000011000000000111110  
 1100000100100111110101101001101011110001100  
 001111010101011011111101111001100010010111  
 101010011111010110010000111100100100000000  
 111110111101001010000100101000101000001101  
 01  
 11101011001001000000010101100101010101010101  
 010101100100001010100100110101010011010010010

# Information Locality

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- We will show that the hypothesis is true in dependency corpora.

# Do Dependencies Have High Mutual Information?

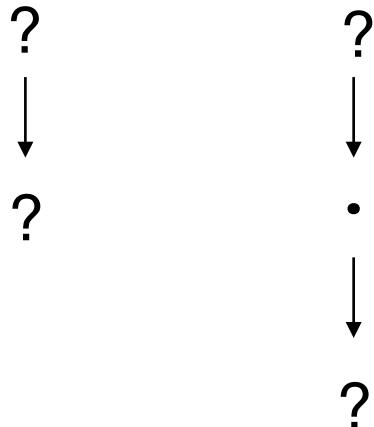
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?

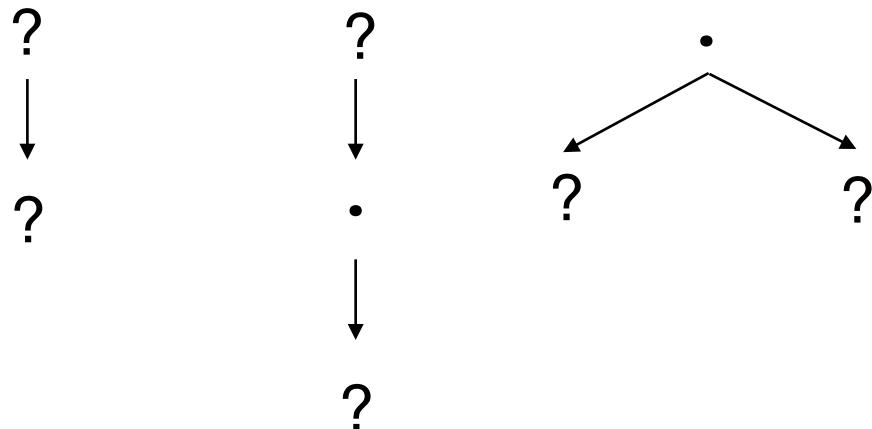


?

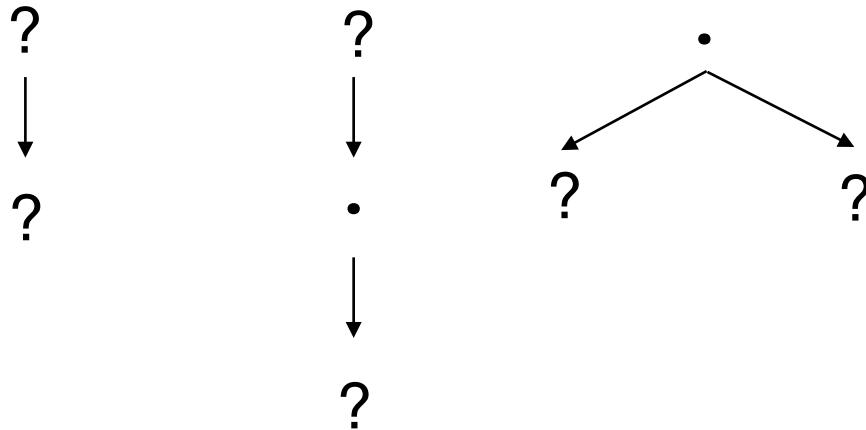
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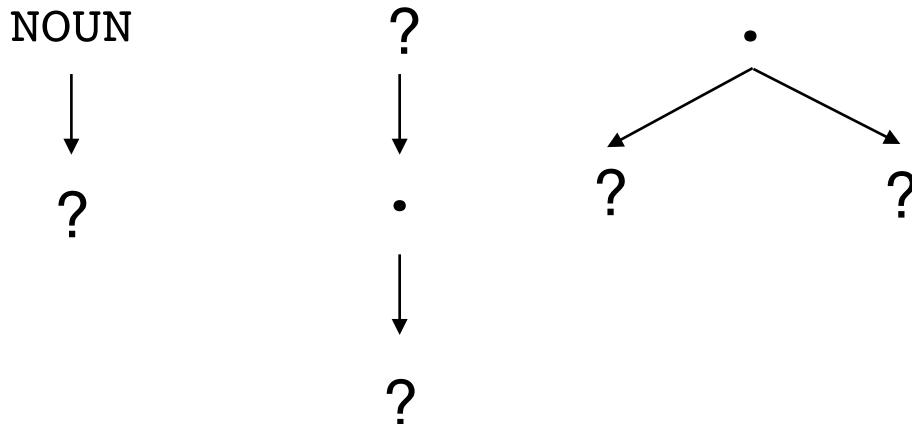


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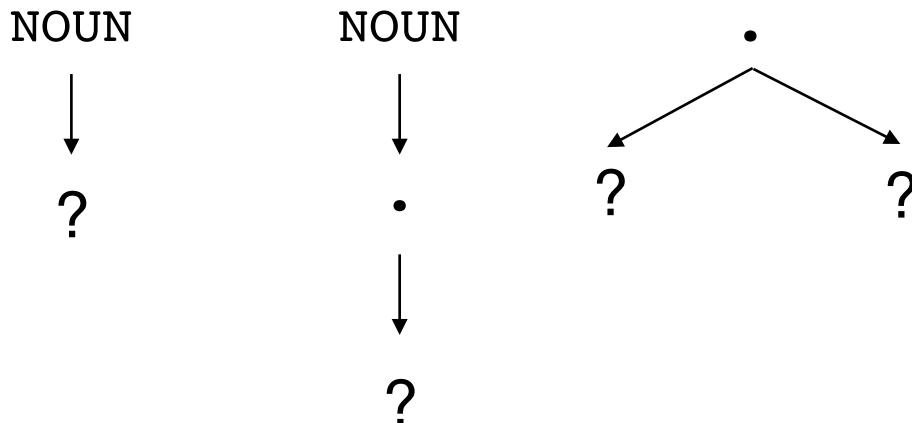
- We calculated mutual information values over part-of-speech tags for pairs of words in the UD corpora.

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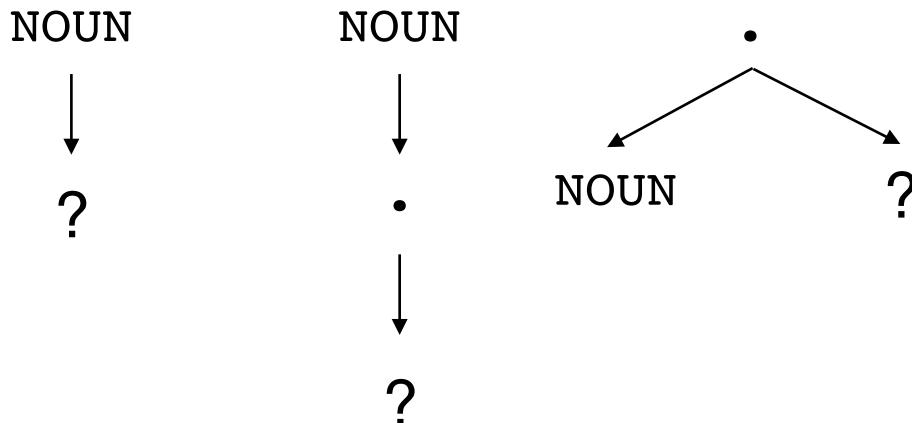
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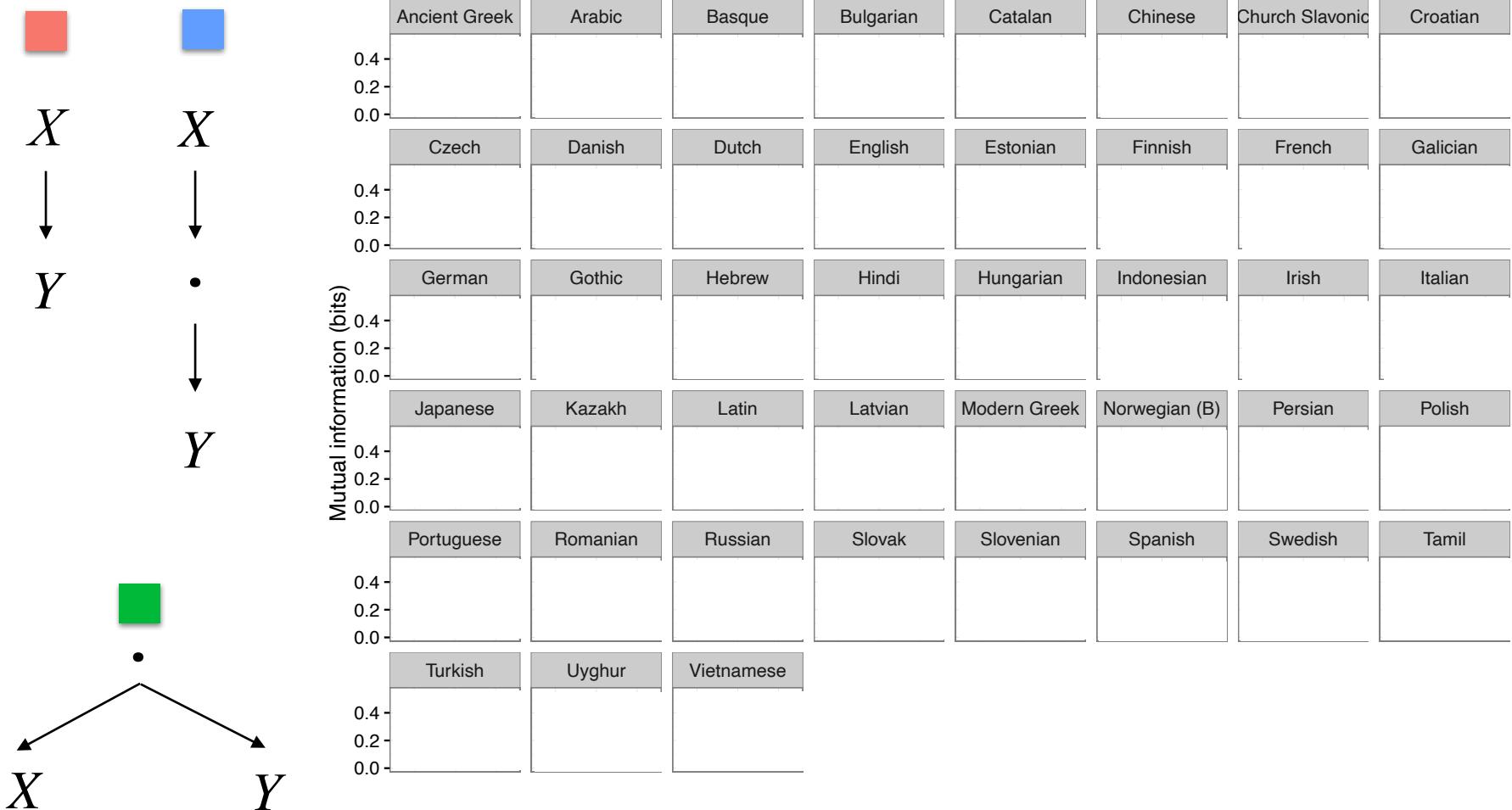


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# Comprehension as exploration of input

---

- Broader ongoing goal: develop eye-movement control model integrating the insights discussed thus far:
  - Probabilistic linguistic knowledge
  - Uncertain input representations
  - Principles of adaptive, rational action
- *Reinforcement learning* is an attractive tool for this

# A rational reader

---

- Very simple framework:
  - Start w/ prior expectations for text (linguistic knowledge)
  - Move eyes to get perceptual input
  - Update beliefs about text as visual arrives (Bayes' Rule)
- Add to that:
  - Set of *actions* the reader can take in discrete time
  - A *behavior policy*: how the model decides between actions

# A first-cut behavior policy

---

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- Actions: *keep fixating*; *move the eyes*; or *stop reading*
- Simple behavior policy with two parameters:  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$
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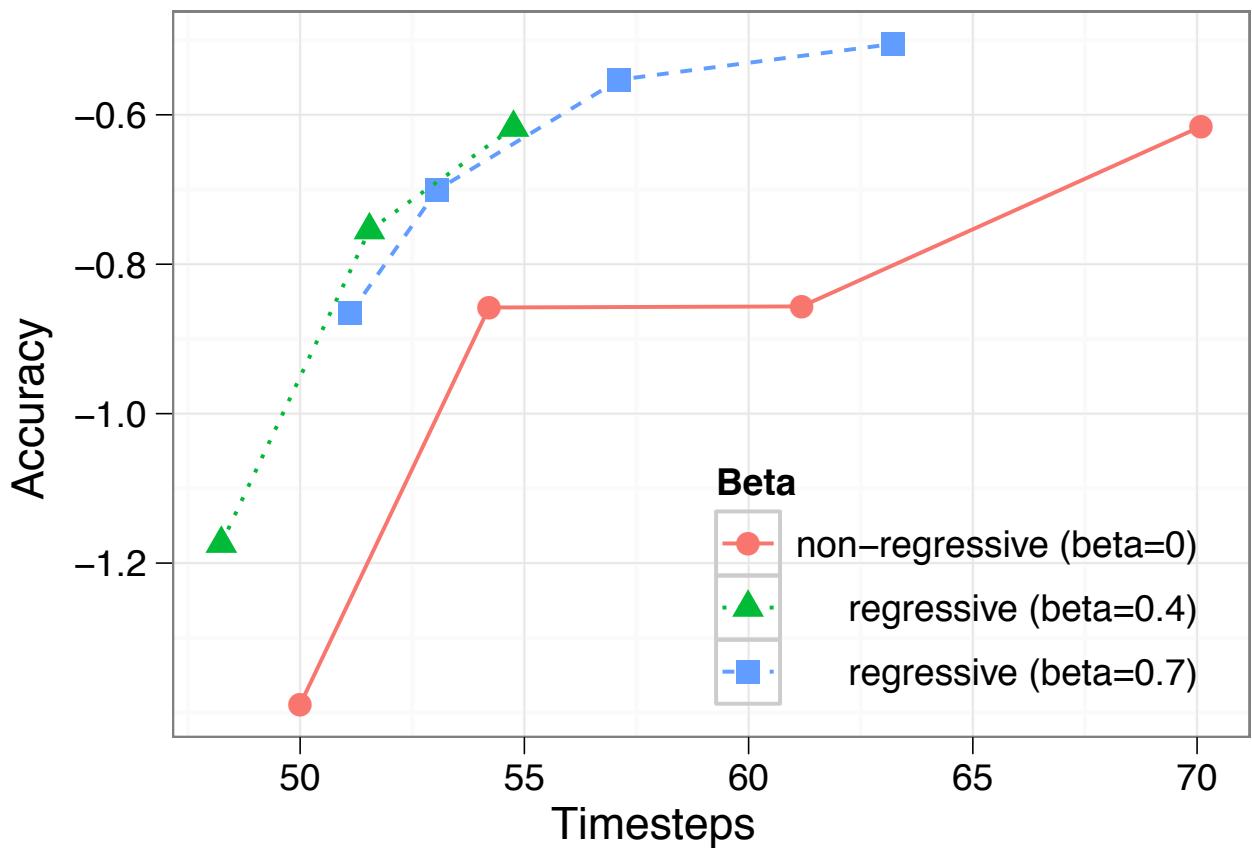
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$P(\text{jacket})=0.38$   
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 $P(\text{packet})=0.02$   
...

- Move left to right, bringing up confidence in each character position until it reaches  $\alpha$
- If confidence in a previous character position drops below  $\beta$ , regress to it
- Finish reading when you're confident in everything

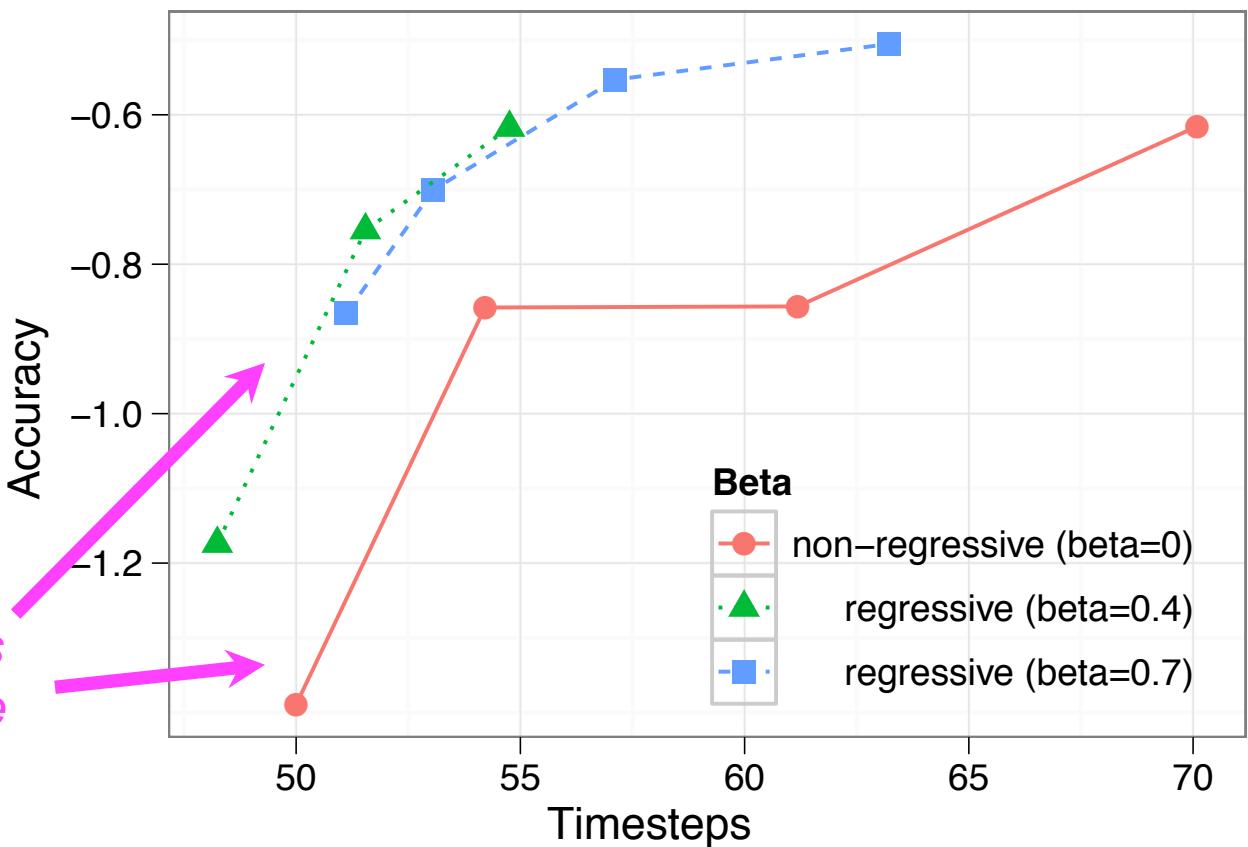
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- Hypothesis: non-regressive policies strictly dominated
- Test: estimate speed and accuracy of various policies on reading the Schilling et al. (1998) corpus



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# Goal-based adaptation

---

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- Open frontier: modeling the adaptation of eye movements to specific reader goals
- We set a *reward function*: relative value  $\gamma$  of speed (finish reading in  $T$  timesteps) versus accuracy (guess correct sentence with probability  $L$ )
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$\gamma$	$\alpha$	$\beta$
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0.1		
0.4		

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$\gamma$	$\alpha$	$\beta$
0.025	0.90	0.99
0.1	0.36	0.80
0.4	0.18	0.38

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$\gamma$	$\alpha$	$\beta$	Timesteps	Accuracy
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0.1	0.36	0.80		
0.4	0.18	0.38		

# Goal-based adaptation

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- Open frontier: modeling the adaptation of eye movements to specific reader goals
- We set a *reward function*: relative value  $\gamma$  of speed (finish reading in  $T$  timesteps) versus accuracy (guess correct sentence with probability  $L$ )
- PEGASUS simplex-based optimization (Ng & Jordan, 2000)

$\gamma$	$\alpha$	$\beta$	Timesteps	Accuracy
0.025	0.90	0.99	41.2	P(correct)=0.98
0.1	0.36	0.80	25.8	P(correct)=0.41
0.4	0.18	0.38	16.4	P(correct)=0.01

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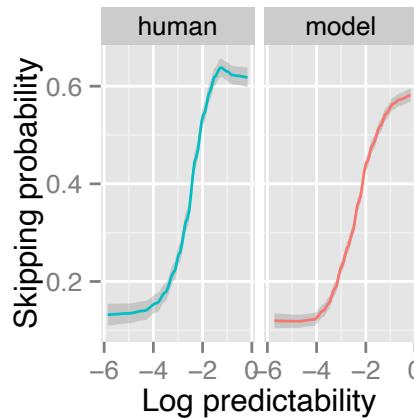
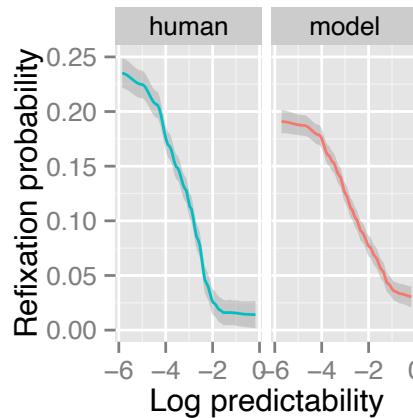
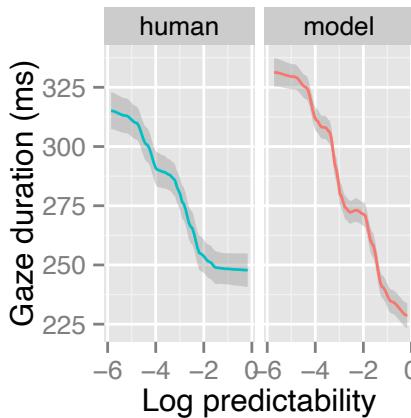
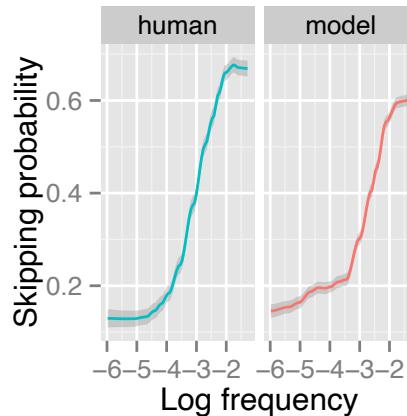
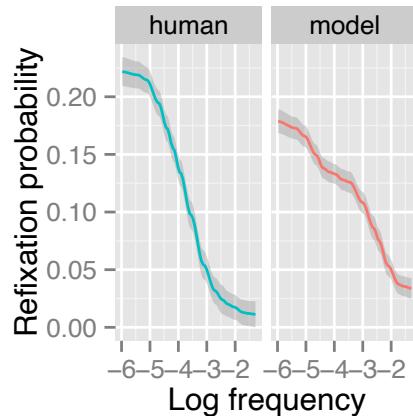
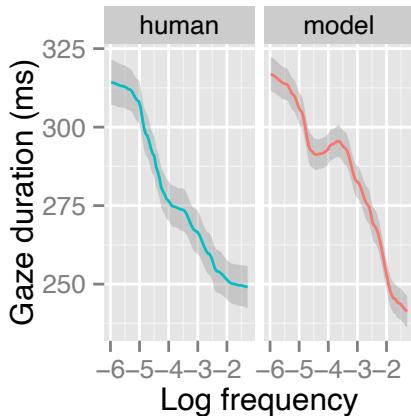
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- The method works, and gives intuitive results

# Empirical match with human reading

- Benchmark measures in eye-movement modeling:

frequency



predicts size and  
shape of all effects

predictability

Bicknell & Levy (2012)

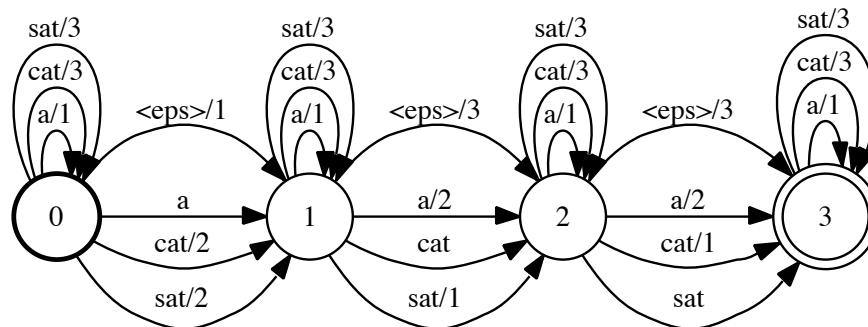
# Success at empirical benchmarks

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- Other models (E-Z Reader, SWIFT) get these too, but *stipulate* rel'nship between word properties & “processing rate”
- We *derive* these relationships from simple principles of noisy-channel perception and rational action

# Noisy-channel processing: summary

- Noisy-channel models help us understand
  - Basic capabilities of human language comprehension
  - Outstanding puzzles in syntactic processing
- These models open up a rich typology of new sentence processing effects
- There is growing evidence for these effects
- These models pose new theoretical opportunities and architectural challenges for the study of human linguistic cognition



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