The influence of morphophonological variables on the acceptability and processing of code-switching within aspectual structures

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Introduction

- There is an aspectual asymmetry in Spanish-English code-switching (CS):
  a. Los estudiantes **están *writing*** *their assignments*.
  b. Los estudiantes **han *written*** *their assignments*.
  the students are/have…
- Auxiliary-participle code-switches whithin perfect structures (b) are extremely infrequent,[1] less acceptable,[2] and incur longer reading times.[1,3]
- Syntactic[4-5] and usage-based explanations[1,3] have limitations.
- Because CS involves a change at all linguistic levels, we adopt a novel approach which investigates the potential influence of morphology and phonology within an equivalence framework.

Equivalence at participle level

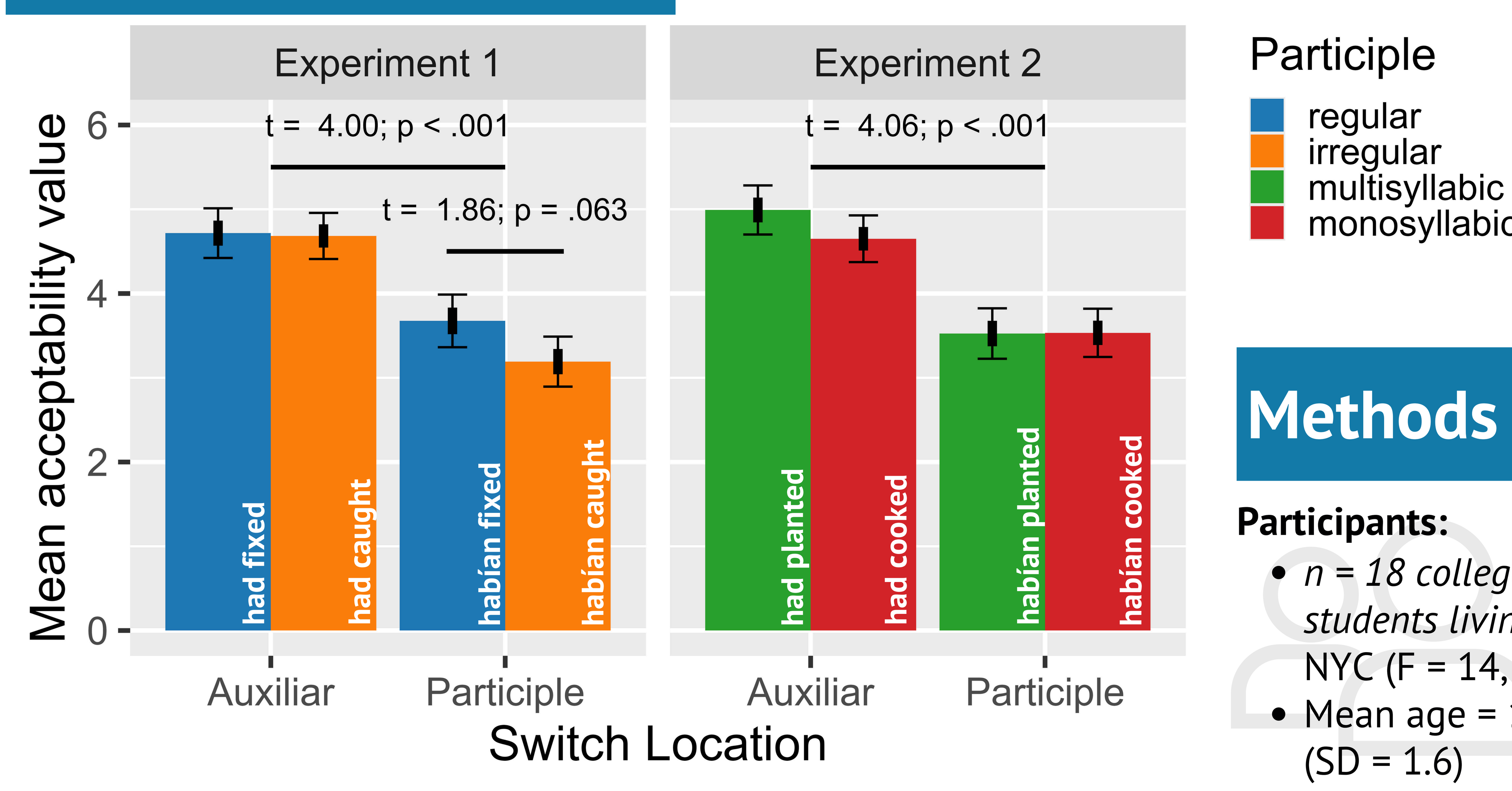
Present Participles		Past Participles	
SP	**ENG**	**SP**	**ENG**
regular	regular	reg/**irreg**	reg/**irreg**
[V + -ndo] [σσ(σ)]	[V + -ing] [σσ(σ)]	[V + -do] [σσ(σ)]	[V + -ed/en] [**σ**(σ)]

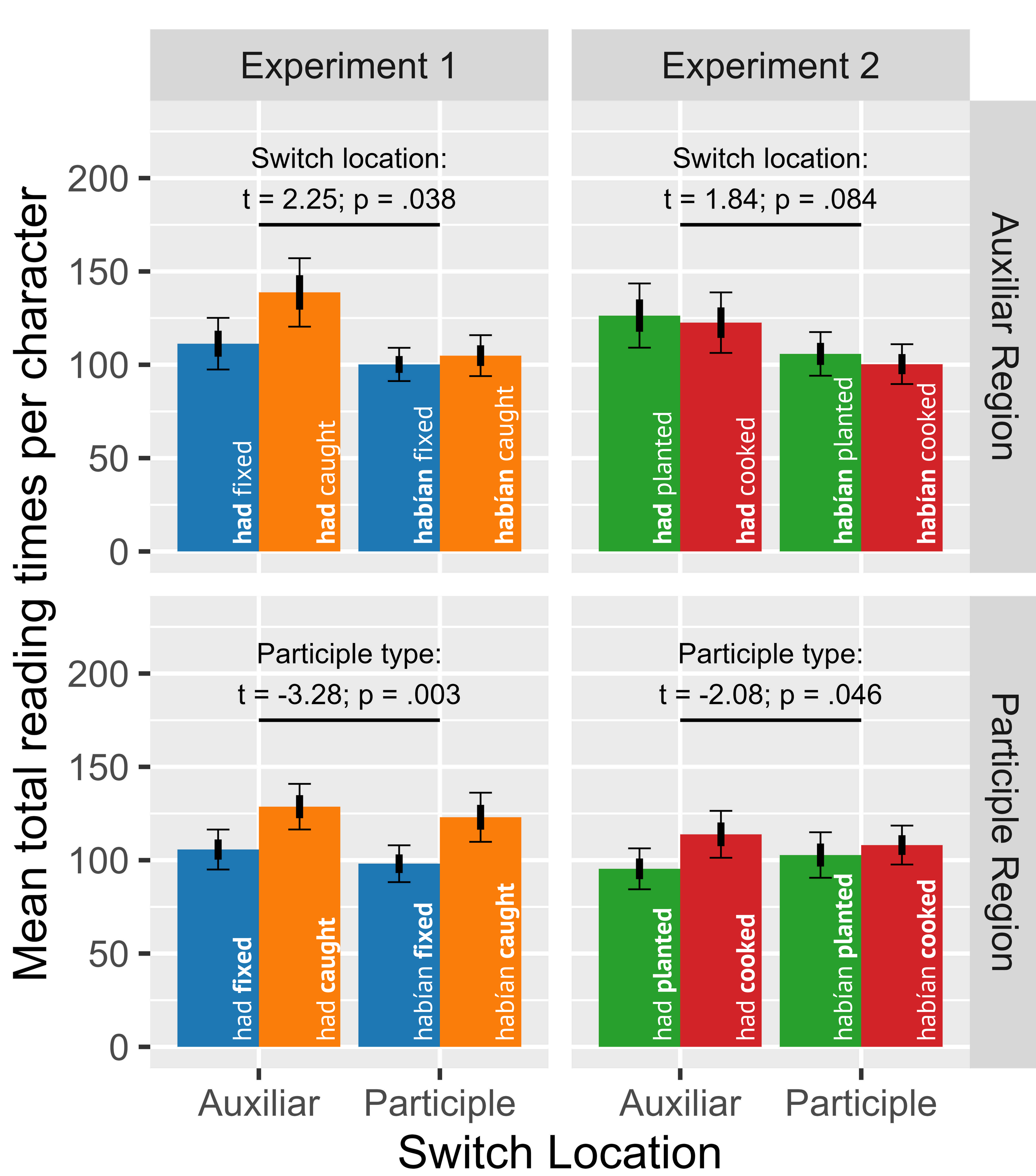
RQ & hypotheses

Does **regularity** or **length** of the **past participle** modulate acceptability ratings and the magnitude of switch costs?

Exp. 1 hypothesis	Exp. 2 hypothesis
If verb regularity plays role: • lower ratings for irregular verbs • slower RTs at irregular verbs	If participle length plays role: • lower ratings for monosyllabic verbs • slower RTs at monosyllabic verbs

Preliminary results



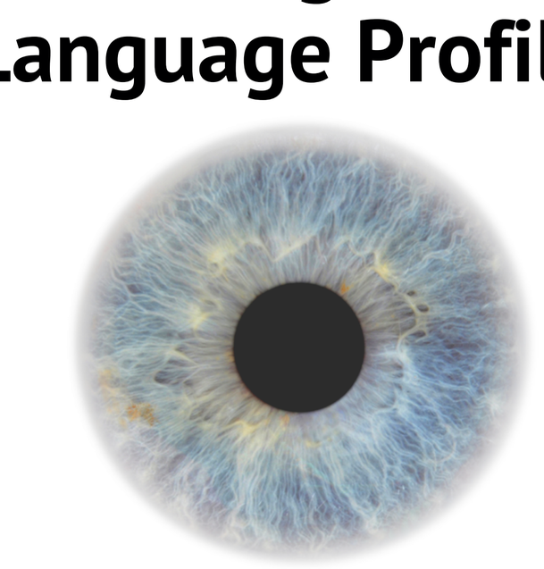


Methods

Participants:
- *n = 18 college students living in* NYC (F = 14, M = 4)
- Mean age = 19.6, (SD = 1.6)
- L1 SPA

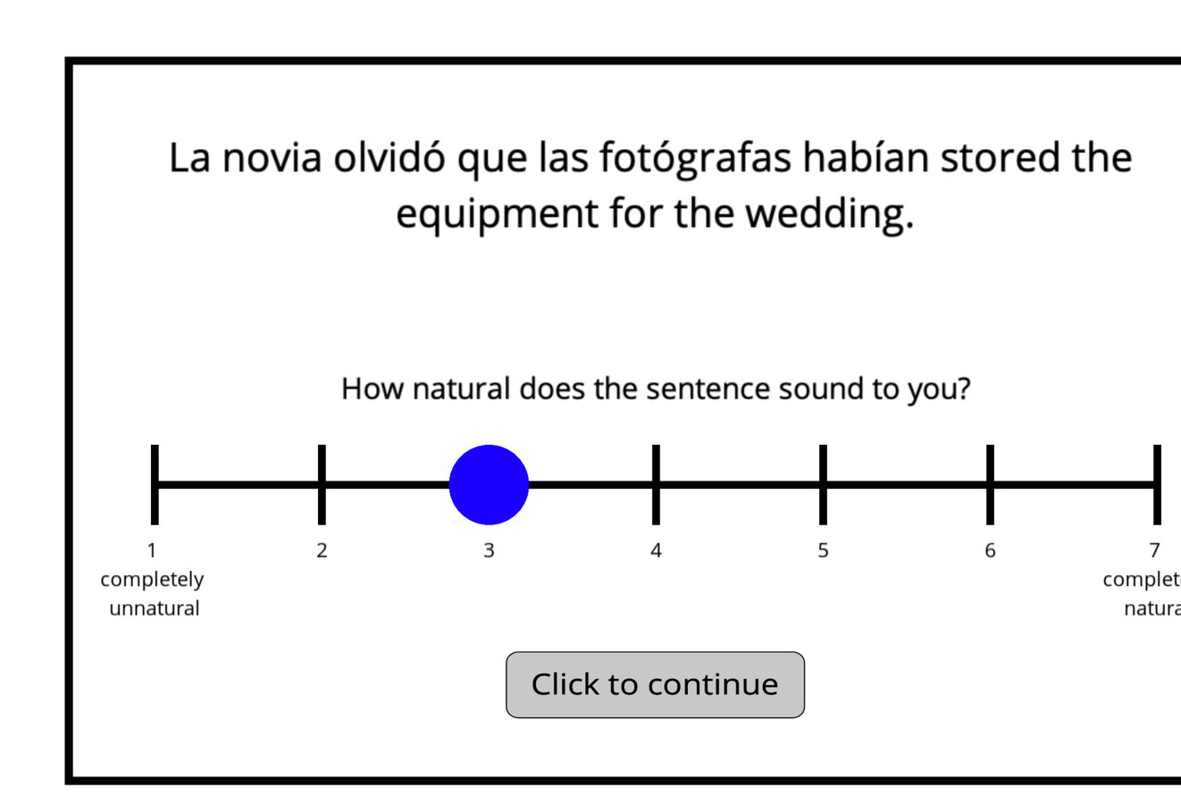
Session 1: Tasks

Eye-tracking while reading + Bilingual Language Profile[6]



Session 2: Tasks

AJT + Extended LexTALE[7-8] (SPA, ENG) + Fill-in-the-blanks + Bilingual CS Profile[9]



Stimuli

Exp1	La jefa notó que las editoras **had/habían caught** the errors…
	La jefa notó que las editoras **had/habían fixed** the errors…
Exp2	La mujer dijo que las madres **had/habían cooked** the vegetables…
	La mujer dijo que las madres **had/habían planted** the vegetables…

Discussion & conclusion

- In AJT, the main effect of switch location in Exp. 1 and 2 aligns with previous findings[2] (i.e., had caught/fixed > habían caught/fixed).
- The marginal effect in ratings for regularity in Exp. 1 suggests a tendency to disfavor irregular participles as loci for switching but no difference was found for participle length.
- In eye-tracking, mean total RT per character at the participle region shows an effect of regularity in Exp. 1, suggesting that irreg. verbs induce longer RTs regardless of switch location.
- Similarly, monosyllabic participles induce longer RTs.
- Unlike previous studies,[1] we found no difference in mean total RTs at the participle region between a unilingual and a switched auxiliary phrase.
- These preliminary results hint that the asymmetry found in the literature is also affected by morphology (verb regularity) and phonology (syllable length) and that our exploration within an equivalence framework seems to be on the right track.

Poster & references >

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