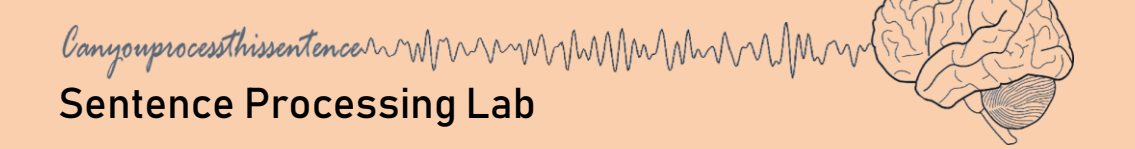


# Distant relatives: Resumptive pronouns can inherit agreement features of implied antecedents

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## Introduction

How do lexical items interact during encoding & retrieval and what types of linguistic representations affect these processes?

Agreement attraction effects are a window to linguistic representations during production and comprehension (Eberhard et al., 2005; Wagers et al., 2009).

We investigate how the discourse representation of the distractor modulates agreement attraction.

## Experiment 3

Offline ratings, 32 participants, 24 sets (+24 fillers).

We tested whether the intrusion observed in Exp. 1&2 is due to the semantic association of the distractor and the filler or to their shared discourse referent. The same noun pairs were used with the phrase “another x that”, thus implying that the first noun can be subsumed under the category of the second (3a, “shared semantics”). However, in this case the nouns refer to distinct discourse entities.

(3) Dan said that the { fork.M / spoon.F }

- a. is near another utensil.M that
  - b. is usually a utensil.M that
- you can eat with it.F small portions of food.

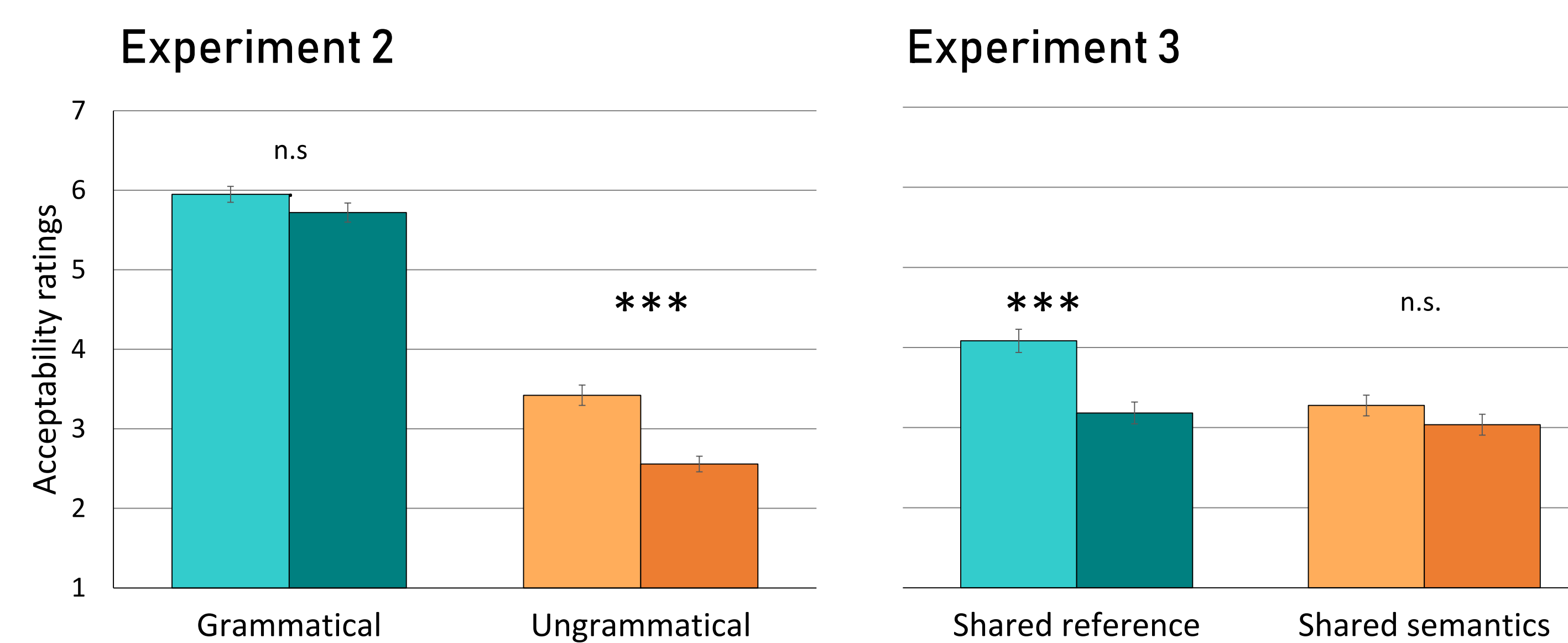
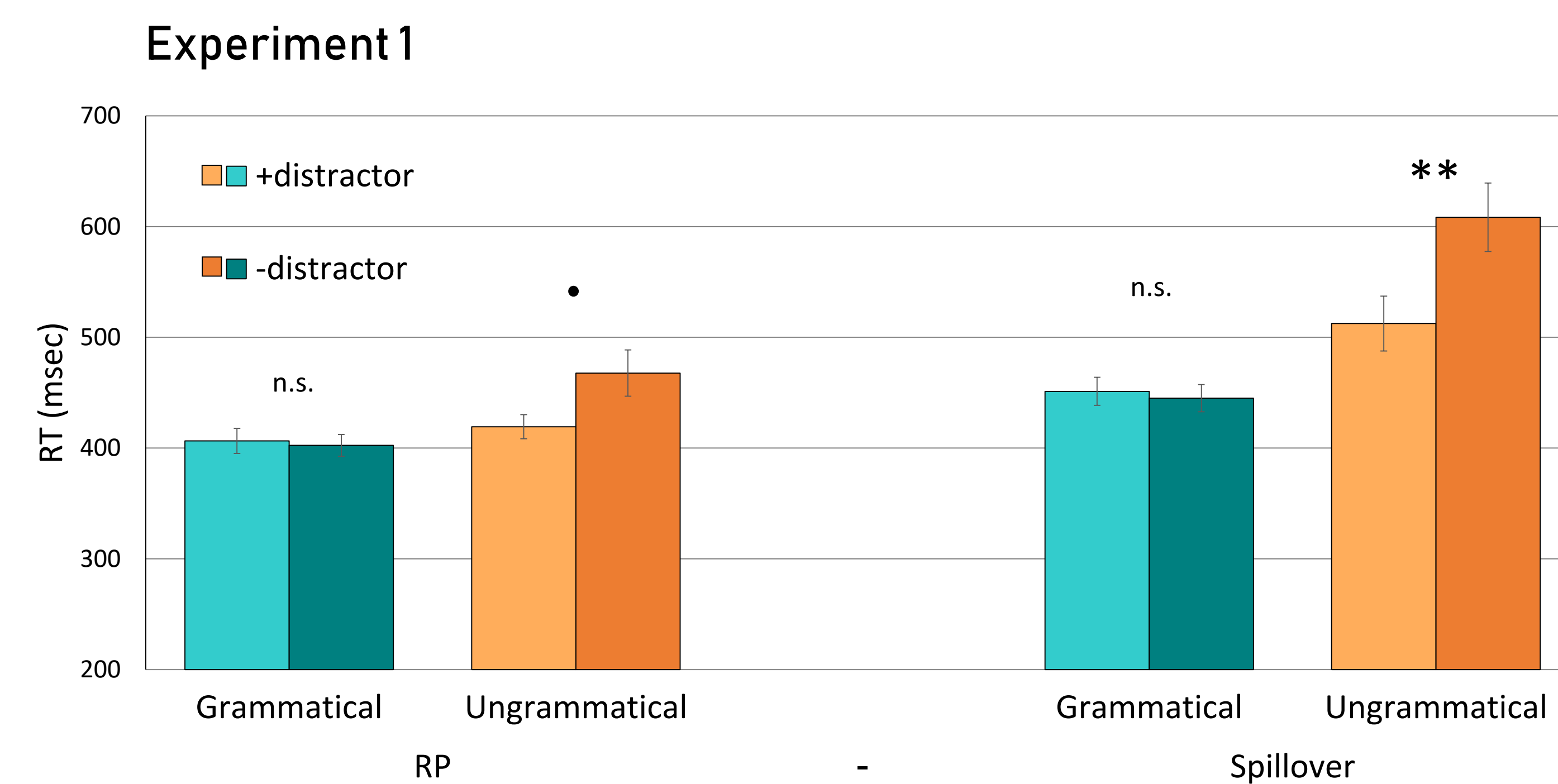
Results: We replicated the attraction effect in definitional sentences (3b,  $p < .001$ ), but found no effect in “shared semantic” sentences (interaction  $p < .001$ ).

We focus on Hebrew definitional sentences and examine grammatical gender “attraction” between a resumptive pronoun (RP) inside a relative clause, and the defined noun outside of the modified NP (similar to “fake indexical” cases of person agreement, Kratzer, 2009).

(1) A fork is a utensil that you can eat food with.

(2) A { fork.M / spoon.F } is a utensil.M that you can eat with { it.M / it.F }.

DISTRACTOR                  FILLER                  RP



## Experiments 1 & 2

**Exp. 1:** SPR, 48 participants, 24 sets (+24 grammatical fillers).

Results revealed decreased RTs for the matching distractor condition when RP mismatched the filler ( $p = .009$ ). No corresponding effect in grammatical conditions (interaction  $p = .047$ ).

**Exp. 2:** Offline ratings, 32 participants, 24 sets (+24 ungrammatical fillers).

Results revealed higher acceptability ratings for the matching distractor condition when RP mismatched the filler ( $p < .001$ ). No effect in grammatical conditions (interaction  $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

Our results provide evidence from comprehension for discourse representation effects on agreement, and for attraction beyond the nominal head of an RC.

The results suggest that formation of agreement is sensitive to the distractor’s discourse referent, and that this is true even when features are not semantically meaningful (i.e. grammatical gender).

Implications:

- Under cue-based retrieval (Lewis et al., 2005): Context-specific cues for co-activation of the referent.
- Under marking & morphing (Bock et al., 2001): Conceptual/discourse representations modulate the consolidation of agreement features.