Common Ground updates do not depend on how information is conveyed: a recognition memory study

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Assertions, implicatures and conventional implicatures typically convey new information, whereas presuppositions reference given content; but any content can be syntactically asserted, implicated or presupposed. It is unclear whether asserting versus presupposing new content affects how this content is integrated within hearer representations of the common ground (DiPaola & Domaneschi. 2017, Schwarz, 2017). In three experiments, we compare common ground updates using recognition memory for targets presented in a short story, in one of five forms: asserted (*There were clothes on the seat),* conventionally implicated (*The back seat, which had clothes in it*), implicated *(It's a bad idea to stuff your back seat with clothes*), strongly presupposed (*The bundle of clothes in the back seat*) or weakly presupposed (*She wouldn't stuff her back seat with clothes again).* We find similar recognition rates across forms. This result is surprising given classic models of presupposition and of the common ground (Stalnaker. 2002). Furthermore, we include a control form conveying propositional content with similar wording to ensure that recognition is not due to lexical priming. Finally, we also checked whether similar recognition for asserted, presupposed or implicated form could be due to participants remembering the verbatim form of the presupposed sentences and accommodating them at the recognition test, as suggested by fuzzy-trace theory (Brainerd & Reyna. 1998). However, Experiment 3 showed verbatim recognition to be low and similar across forms. Our results therefore provide strong indication that despite processing differences between assertion, presupposition and implicature, the impact on the common ground of these different information packaging forms is similar.

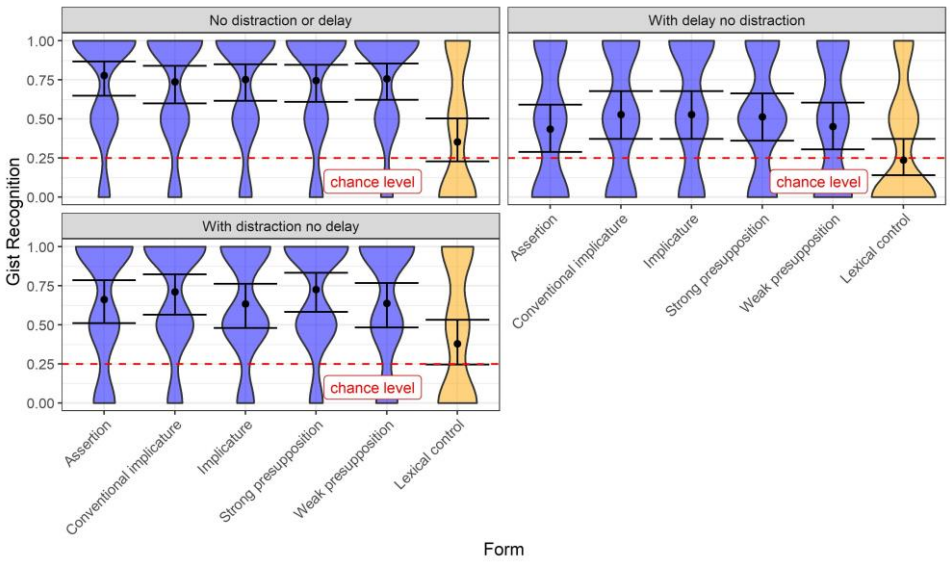

Fig. 1: Mean gist recognition rates by Form, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals and violin plots representing dispersion.

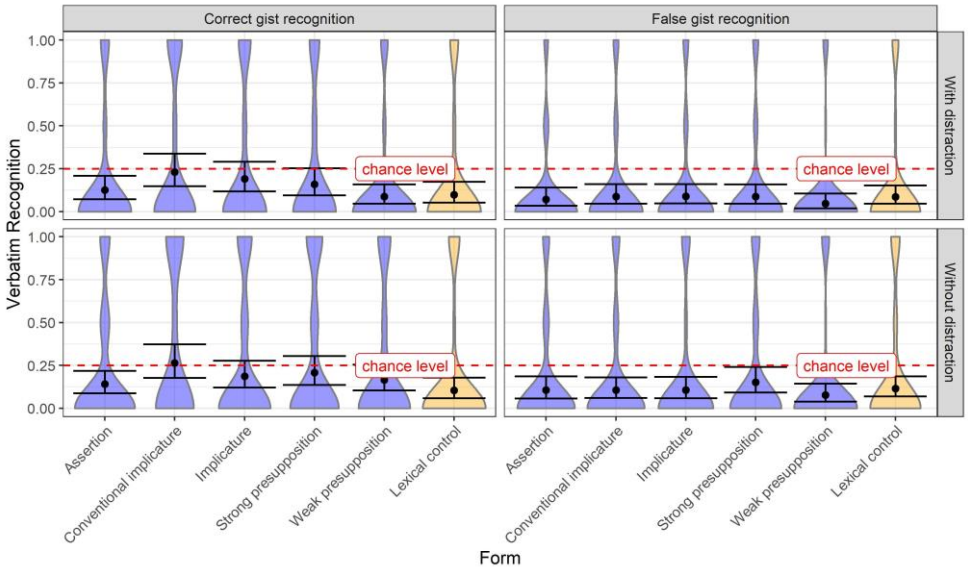

Fig. 2: Mean verbatim recognition rates by Form, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals and violin plots representing dispersion.

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