

Why an *Avalanche* is Faster than an *Explosion*: Evidence from a Grammatical Decision task.



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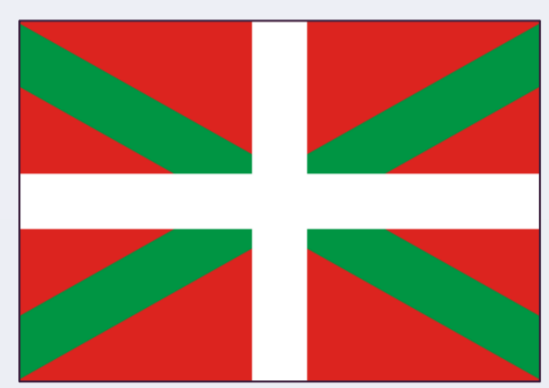


Introduction

Two Questions:

1) Do we access the morphological structure of nominalizations during processing?

- verb stem: *explode, excur, ???* **Explosion**
- nominal suffix: *-sion* **Excursion**
- word-whole **Avalanche**



Rich Morphology = Frequent Decomposition¹



2) Does knowledge of a morphologically rich language (Basque) affect lexical processing in other languages (Spanish)?

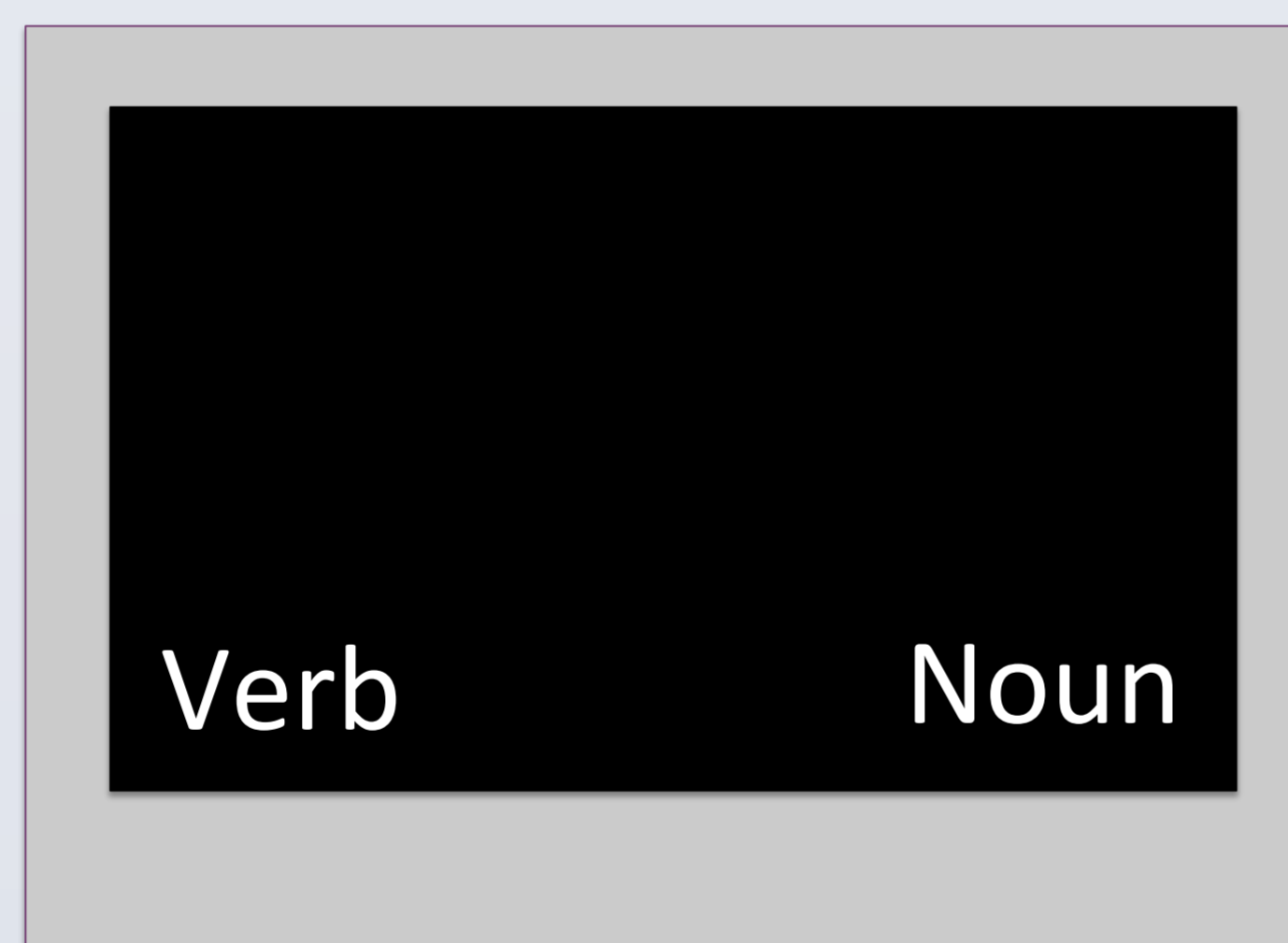
Method

Participants:

- L1 Basque, L2 Spanish
- L1 Spanish, high Basque
- L1 Spanish, low Basque

Stimuli:

- 65 nouns
- 104 verbs

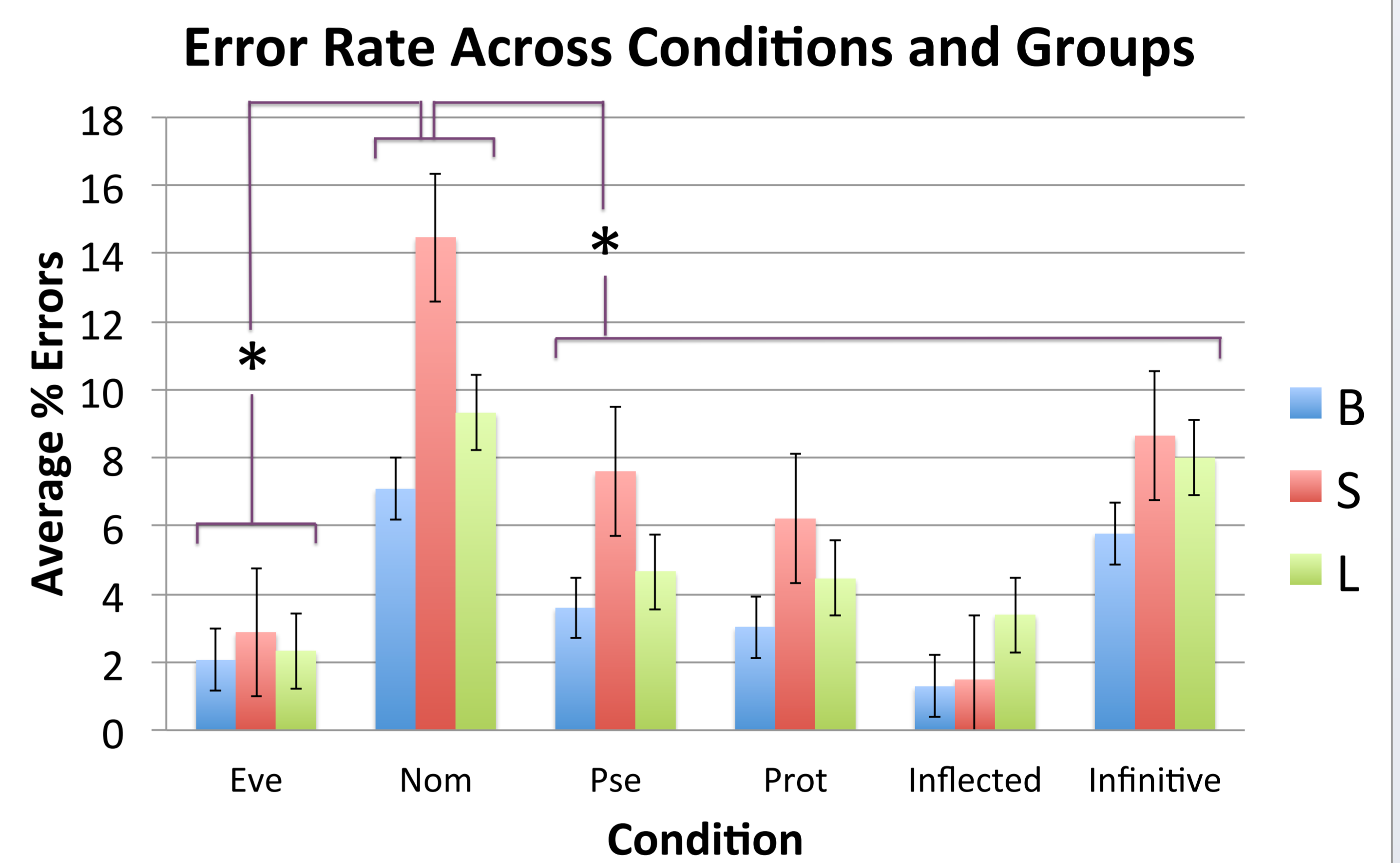
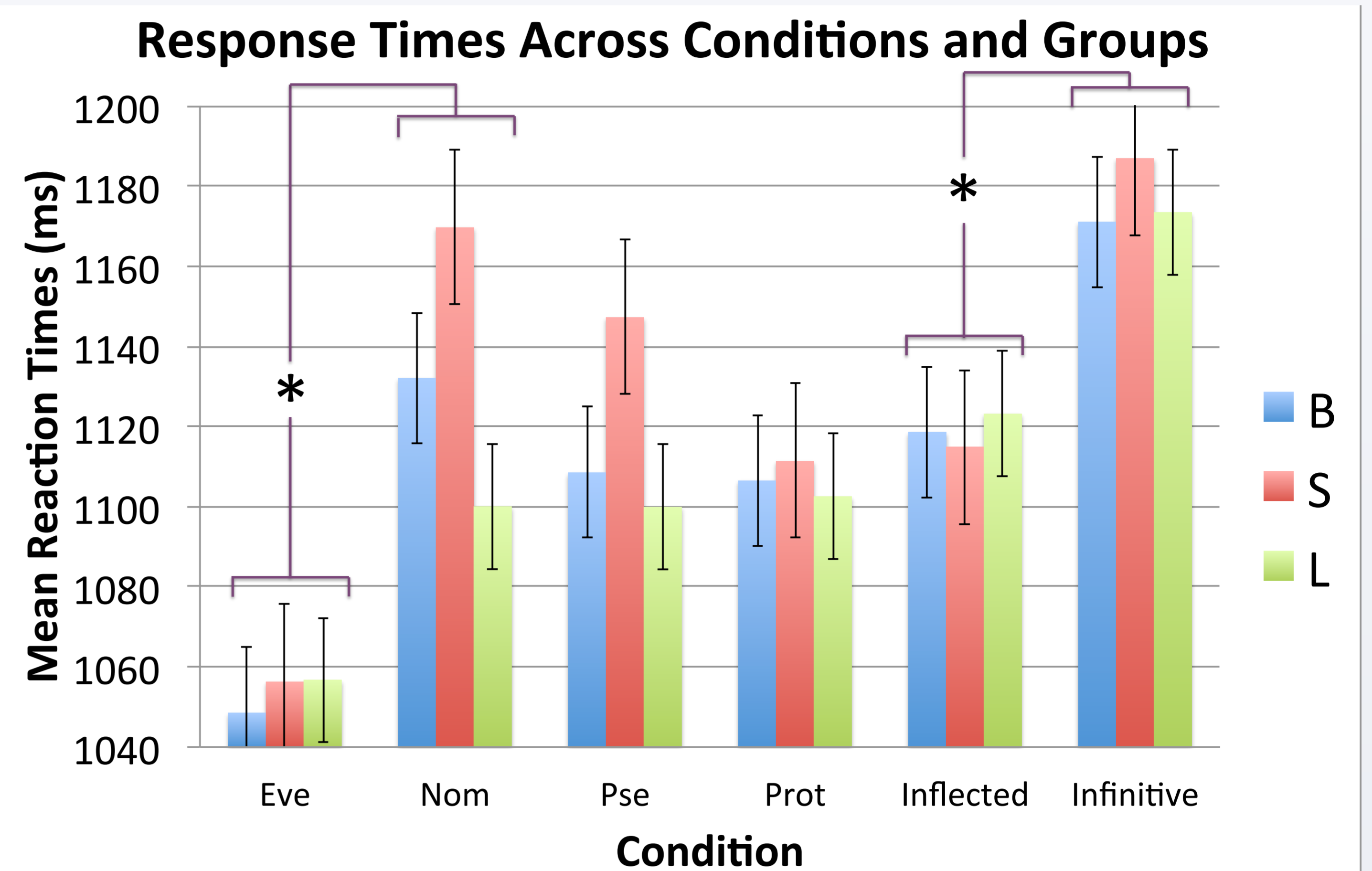


Auditory Task:

- Listen to 3 lists of 169 Spanish words
- Decide whether each is a noun or verb
- Measured reaction time and error rate

Condition	Example	(Translation)	n=
Event Noun	Terremoto	<i>Earthquake</i>	13
Nominalization	Matanza	<i>Slaughter</i>	13
Pseudo-suffix	Vigencia	<i>Validity</i>	13
Prototypical Noun	Afrenta	<i>Insult</i>	26
Inflected Verb	Besaréis	Will kiss (2 nd Psn)	52
Infinite Verb	Difundir	To broadcast	52

Results



Conclusions

- 1) Greater difficulty identifying nominalizations suggests **activation of verbal stem**, requiring inhibition and repair of 'verb' response
- 2) No apparent sensitivity to the word-class determining **nominal suffix**
- 3) Atypical 'action-like' semantics did not predict difficulty in noun identification
- 4) The difference in **linguistic profile** appears to have implications on lexical processing and decomposition
- 5) Inflected verbs were identified more easily than infinitives, despite the need for decomposition

References

¹ Hankamer, J. (1989). "Morphological Parsing and the Lexicon." In *Lexical Representation and Process*, William Marslen-Wilson, ed., 392-408. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.