Grammatical and pragmatic cues guide temporal comprehension in discourse

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2. Experiment 1: AdvP Position

Design: 2 (AdvP position: Init, Fin) x 2 (Temporal disambiguation: Back, Prog)

Results
- At AdvP, Fin Backs faster than Fin Progs.
- At Spill1, trend towards Fin Backs slower than Fin Progs.

Procedure & Participants
- Self-paced reading. 32 items, 72 fillers. All Plausibility Non-high.
- A yes/no comprehension question followed each item.
- N=36 paid Mechanical Turk workers (60 recruited).

3. Experiment 2: Plausibility of Backshift

Design: 2 (Plausibility: High, Non-high) x 2 (Temporal disambiguation: Back, Prog)

Results
- At V+1, High Backs will be faster than Non-high Backs at V+1.

Procedure & Participants
- Same procedure. 35 items, 72 fillers. AdvPs Fin, Plaus Non-high.
- N=48 paid Mechanical Turk workers (60 recruited).

Discussion
- Backshift may not be costlier than Progression.
- No replication of Dickey’s (2001) findings.
- Plausibility may facilitate backshift comprehension fairly early and strongly.
- Though not a fully disambiguating backshift cue.
- May support formal [3,4] and experimental [5] work arguing that discourse coherence relations—which subsume cross-sentential temporal relations—can incrementally influence interpretation.
- Comprises several semantic & pragmatic factors.
- Next steps: Isolate effects of component factors.
- No evidence that Aspect facilitates backshift comprehension.
- Though a highly valid backshift cue, it is quite small.
- Had may actually incur a penalty.
- Next steps: Eye-tracking while reading to zero in on had.

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