UC Santa Cruz
Graduate Research Symposium 2016

Title
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Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/14r6501f

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Publication Date
2016-04-01

Limited Reactivation in Noun Phrase Ellipsis

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Questions: What is the nature of the representation at ellipsis sites? What information, and how much, is reactivated?

Background

Reactivation occurs when constituents are reaccessed to resolve a dependency. e.g., fillers reactivating at gap sites, pronouns reactivating their antecedents

Ellipsis instantiates such a dependency between the antecedent and ellipsis site.

- ● Sue walked John's [dog]$_{Antecedent}$ and Bill walked Mary's [~~dog~~]$_{Ellipsis Site}$

○ differs from filler-gap   ○ requires antecedent   ○ *but* contains non-overt material

↻ What is the underlined depth of reactivation needed to interpret ellipsis sites?

Agreement Attraction (AA) can diagnose the amount of structure reactivated. AA occurs when the verb incorrectly agrees with the attractor that intervenes between the grammatical controller of agreement and the verb.

- ● The key$_{SG}$ to the cabinets$_{PL}$ are$_{PL}$ on the table.

AA is fed by differing number features contained in the same constituent[3-5].

(NP)Ellipsis + AA: Can agreement attraction effects be seen after ellipsis sites?

○ AA-triggering complex nominals can be used as the antecedent for NPE
○ The amount of structure reactivated will reactivate different number features

- ● Sarah's [key to the cabinets]$_{Antecedent}$ got lost, but Scarlett's . . .

  Full Reactivation (Deep):   [key to ~~the cabinets~~] were on the table.
  Partial Reactivation (Shallow): [key]   was on the table.

➢ Agreement appearing on the verb after the ellipsis site will diagnose the size of the reactivated constituent.

☆ **Predictions:**

|		
If underlined full reactivation	→ ✓	agreement attraction
If underlined partial reactivation	→ ✗	NO agreement attraction

Experiment 1

?: Do complex AA-triggering nominals generate agreement attraction when in a possessive structure?

Underlined Design: Self-paced reading; 32 participants; 32 item sets distributed via Latin Square; 96 fillers
2x2; Attractor Number (Singular ●, Plural ▲) x Verb Grammaticality (Grammatical, Ungrammatical)

Underlined Items: Scarlett's memo from the editor$_{SG}$ {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} on the table.   *Singular Attractor*
Scarlett's memo from the editors$_{PL}$ {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} on the table.   *Plural Attractor*

Main effect of Grammaticality; interaction of Number x Grammaticality
Ungrammatical, Plural (▲) condition is read faster than Ungrammatical, Singular (●)

☆   Complex AA-triggering nominals in a possessive structure ...   ✓ **agreement attraction**
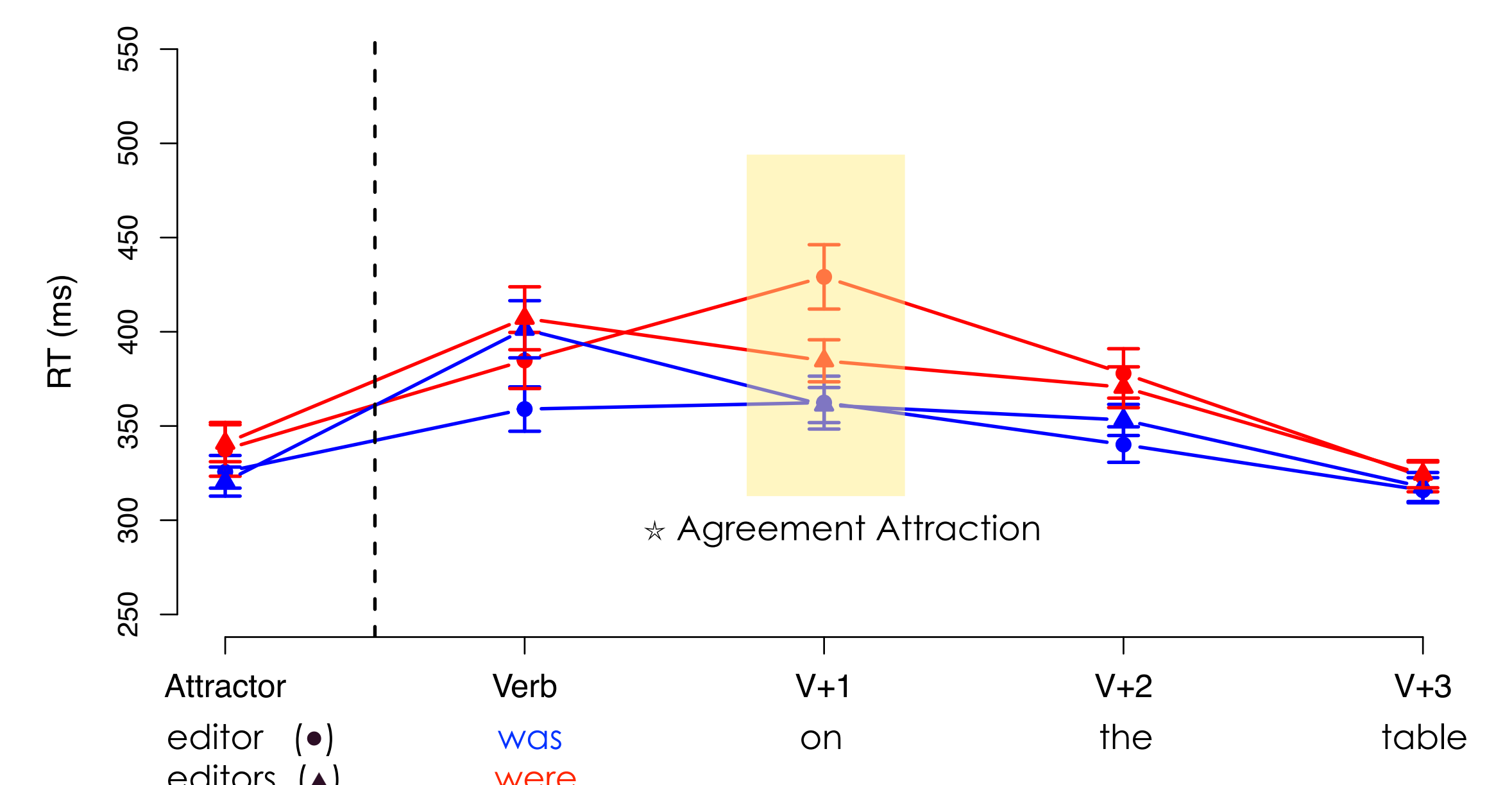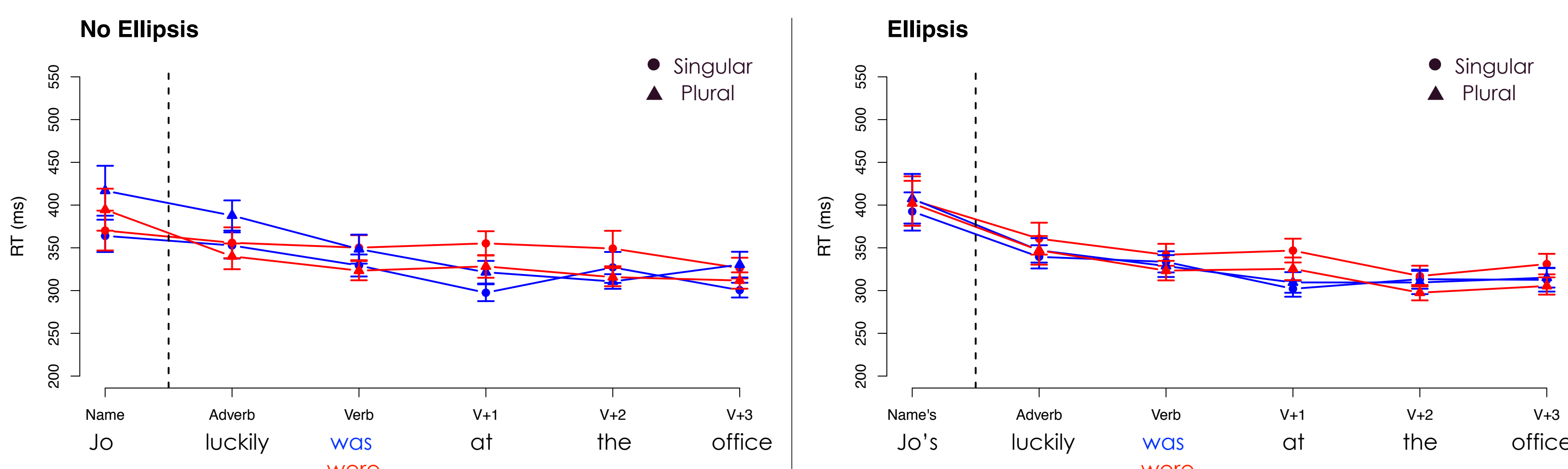

Experiments 2 & 3

?: Do complex AA-triggering nominals generate agreement attraction when elided?

Underlined Design: Self-paced reading
2x2x2; Number x Grammaticality x Ellipsis (Ellipsis, No Ellipsis)

### Experiment 2: Clauses Joined with Causal & Contrastive Connectives   n=64

Underlined Items: Ann's memo from the editor{∅$_{SG}$/s$_{PL}$} got lost,
though Jo's, luckily, {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} at the office.   *Ellipsis*
though Jo, luckily, {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} at the office.   *No Ellipsis*

Experiment 3: Clauses Joined with Temporal Subordinators   n=60

Underlined Items: Even before Harry's examination of the patient{∅$_{SG}$/s$_{PL}$} revealed nothing,
Richard{∅$_{NE}$/'s$_E$}, similarly, {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} unable to help.
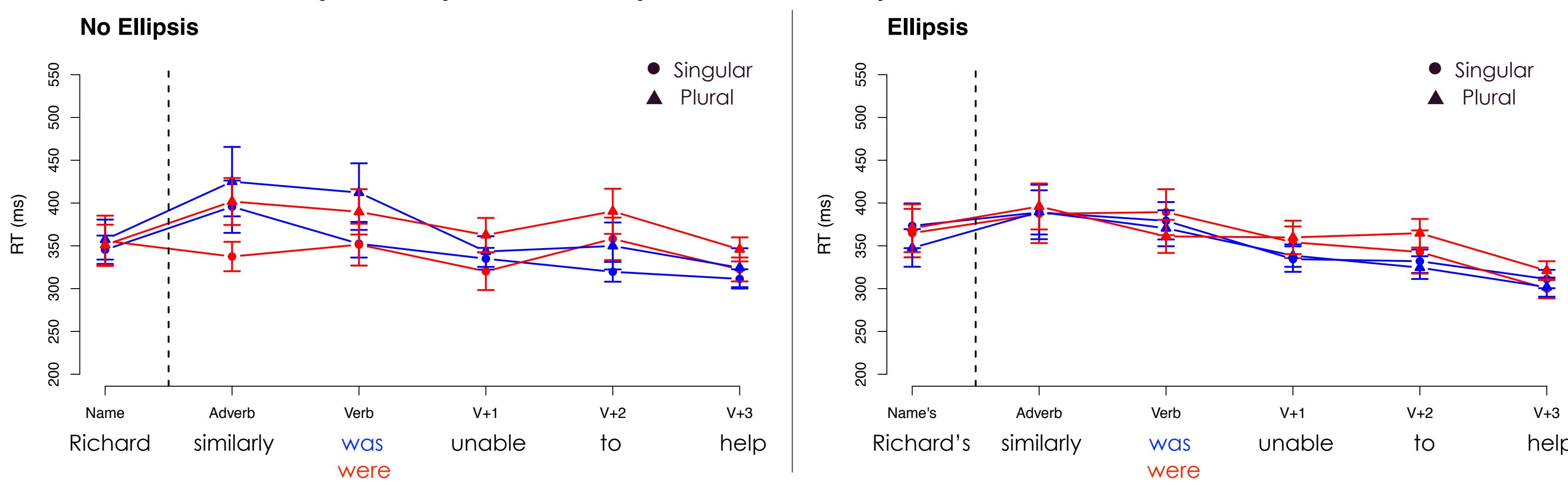
Main effect of Grammaticality; no Grammaticality x Attractor interaction

☆ When elided ...   ✗ **NO agreement attraction**

   ✓ Sensitivity to grammaticality; *at least* reactivating head

⊗ **Claim:** Reactivation is underlined partial; only the head is reactivated
NO attraction since the intervening number features are not reactivated

Experiment 4

?: Does agreement attraction occur when only the attractor is elided?

Underlined Design: Self-paced reading
2x2x2; Number x Grammaticality x Ellipsis

Underlined Items: After the statement from Bob's friend {∅$_{SG}$/s$_{PL}$} sounded suspicious,
the report from Frank{∅$_{NE}$/'s$_E$} also {was$_G$/were$_{UG}$} sent out yesterday.
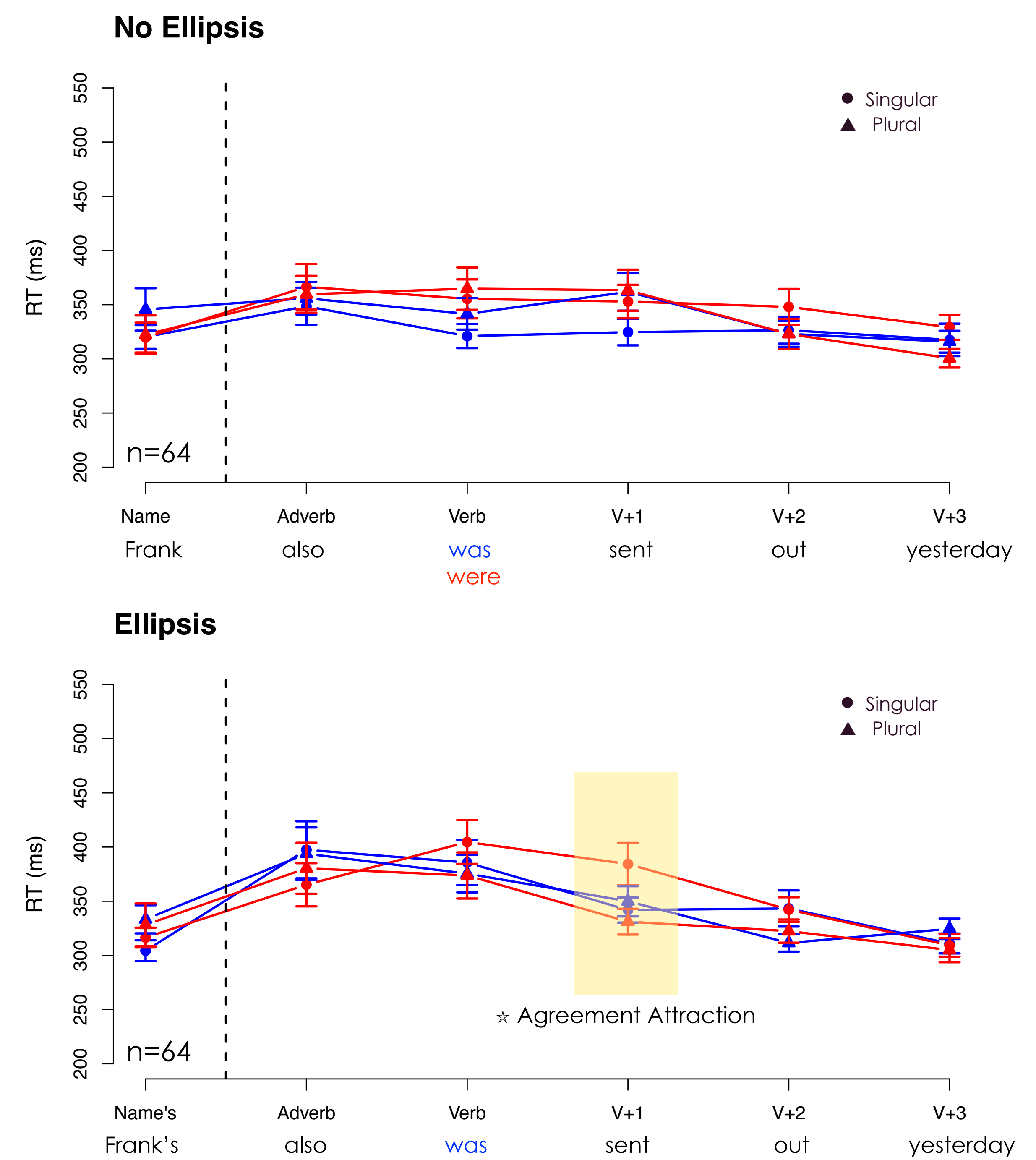
Main Effect of Grammaticality; Interaction of Grammaticality x Attractor

☆ When only the attractor is elided ...   ✓ **agreement attraction**

☆ Conclusions:

○ Reactivation is not deep/exhaustive; there is only **partial** reactivation
○ Representation at ellipsis sites is underlined sensitive to number features

Discussion

- Sensitivity to morpho-syntactic number features implicates that the representation is partially syntactic[4,cf.5].
- Lack of attraction effects in Experiments 2 & 3 is *contra* a percolation account, but compatible with a content-addressable account.

Future Work

- Is all reactivation under ellipsis partial[6] (perhaps generalizable to VPE, sluicing, etc.)?
- Are mismatches in NPE allowed as in VPE?
- What factors trigger partial versus full reactivation?

References
[1] Bock, J. K., & Miller, C. A. (1991). [2] Wagers, M., Lau, E., Phillips, P (2009). [3] Eberhard, K. M., Cutting, J. C., & Bock, J. K. (2005). [4] Merchant, J (2001). [5] Hardt, D (1993).[6] Martin, A. E., & McElree, B. (2009).