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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2014

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Sense, F., Morey, C. C., Morey, R., Prince, M., & Heathcote, A. (2014). *Opportunity for verbalization does not improve visual change detection performance: a state-trace analysis*. Poster session presented at MathPsych 2014, Quebec City, Canada.

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Opportunity for verbalization does not improve visual change detection performance: **A state-trace analysis**

Florian **Sense**, Candice C. **Morey**, Richard D. **Morey**, Melissa **Prince**, & Andrew **Heathcote**

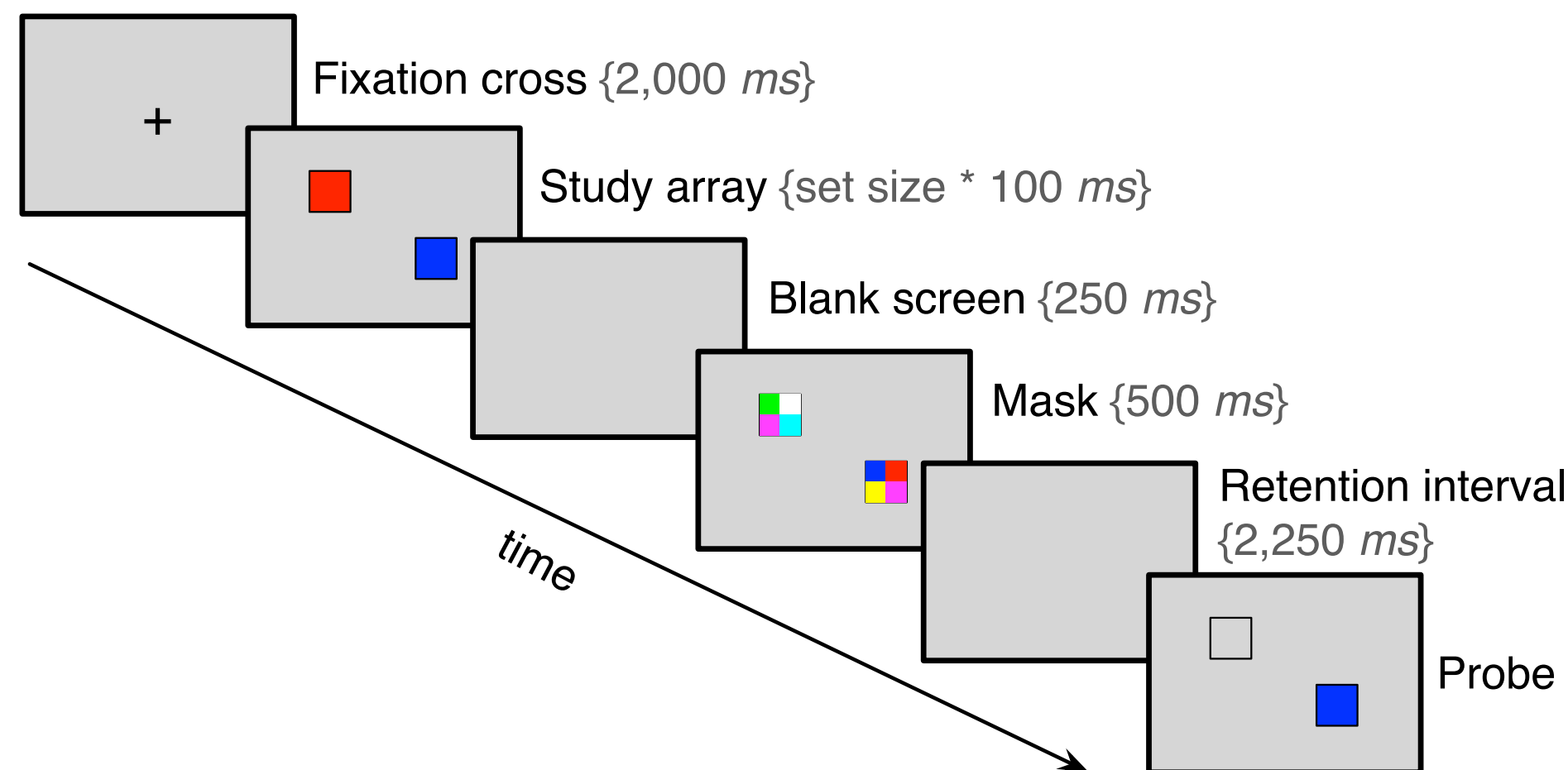
Background

People can verbalize visual information. To **study visual working memory**, cognitive psychologists need to **isolate visual components** of working memory from other components.

This has typically been done using **articulatory suppression**. Recently, it has been debated whether articulatory suppression is actually necessary.

Known **methodological issues in this debate**: claims are based on significant interaction effects or null-findings. **State-trace analysis and Bayes factors offer a solution.**

The visual change detection paradigm



Dependent variable: binary response {same, change}

Independent variables:

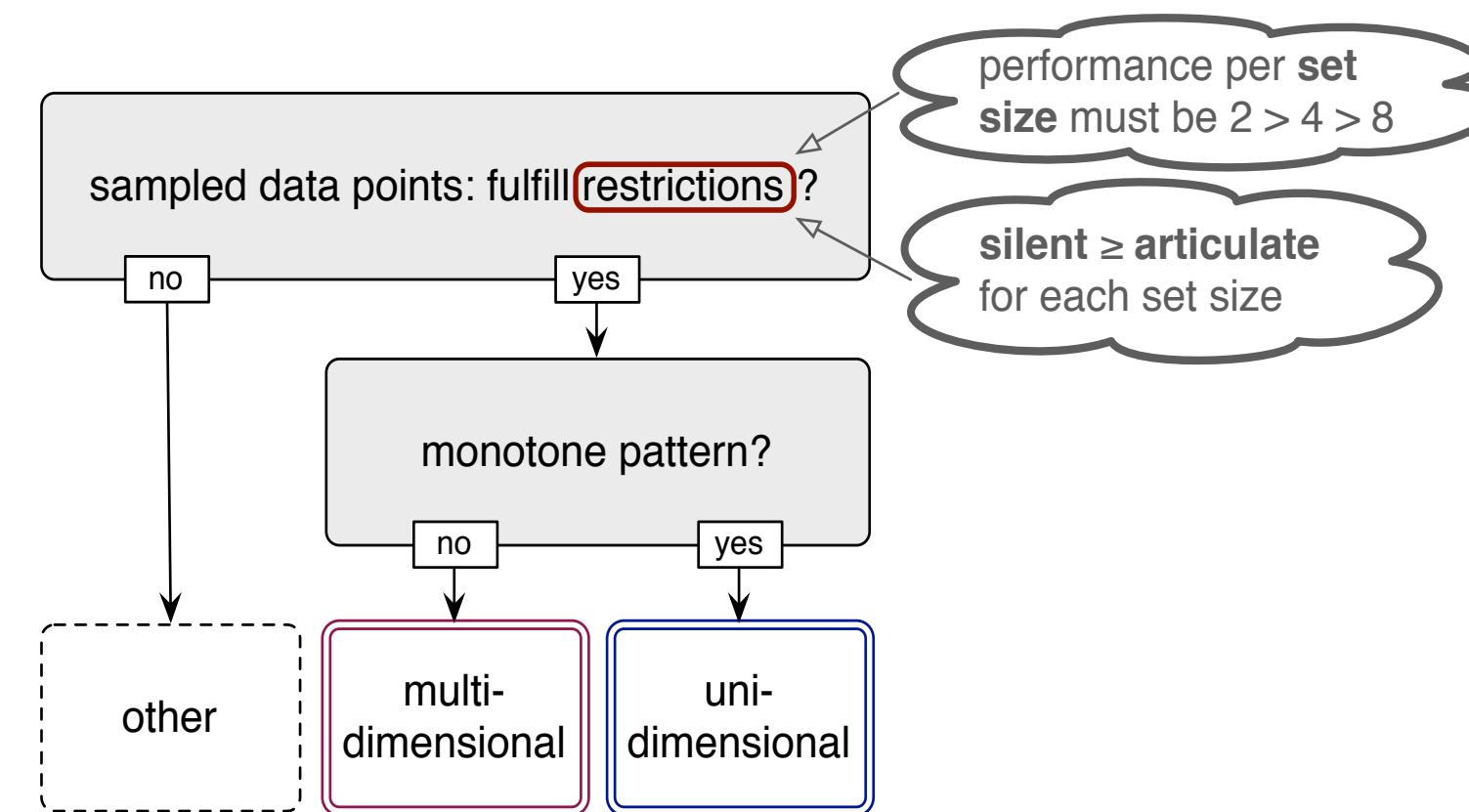
- simultaneous vs. sequential presentation of stimuli
- silent vs. articulate during trial
- set size {2, 4, 8}

Data from 15 participants (8 female) that came in for 5 sessions of 504 trials each.

State-Trace Analysis

State-trace analysis allows us to probe the **dimensionality of a latent system**. The system of interest here is working memory. We start with assuming a uni-dimensional model and only reject it if the data cannot support it.

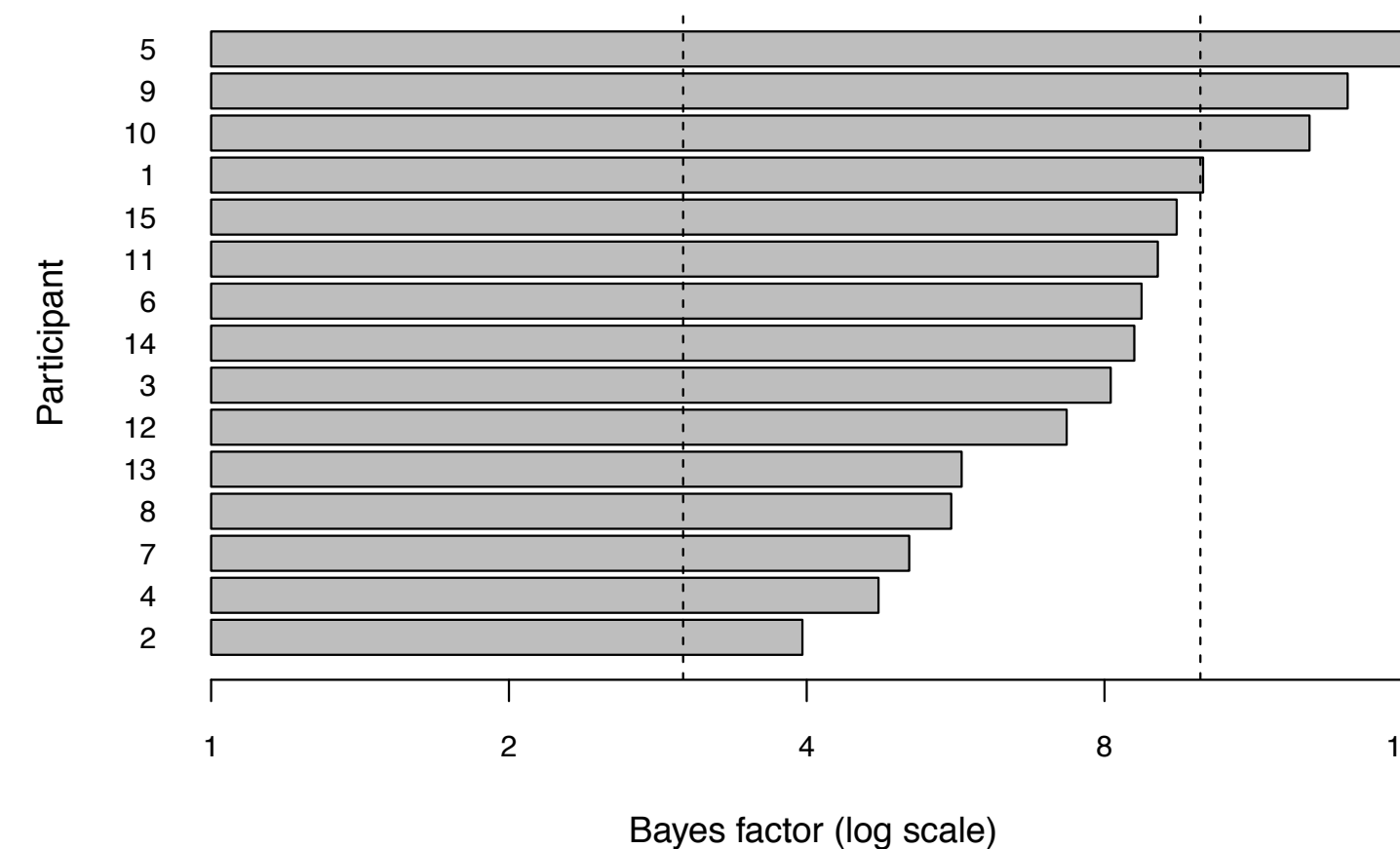
If the variation in the outcome variable is caused by a single dimension, their relationship must be monotonic when plotted against each other. Only a multi-dimensional system can produce non-monotonicity.



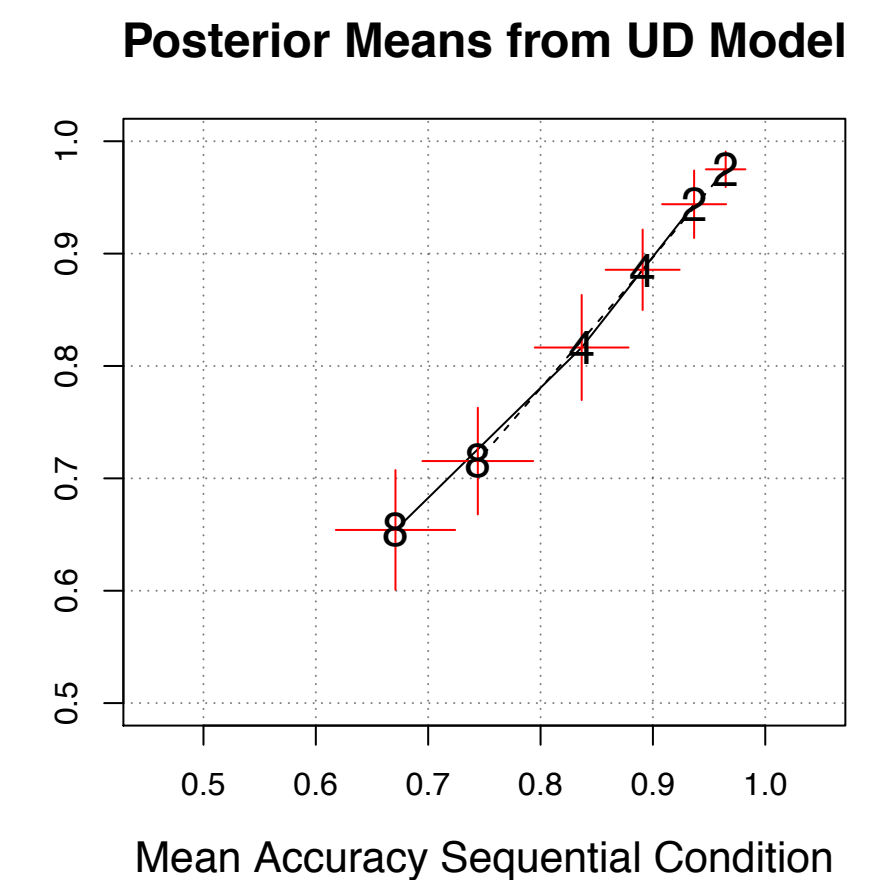
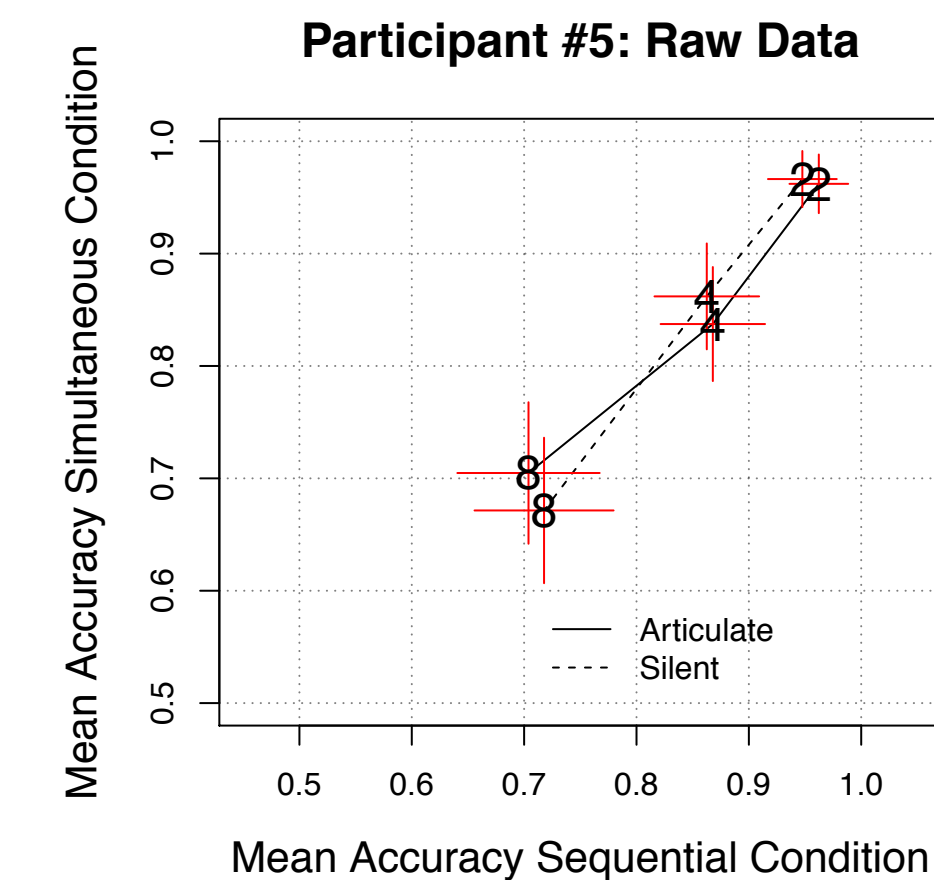
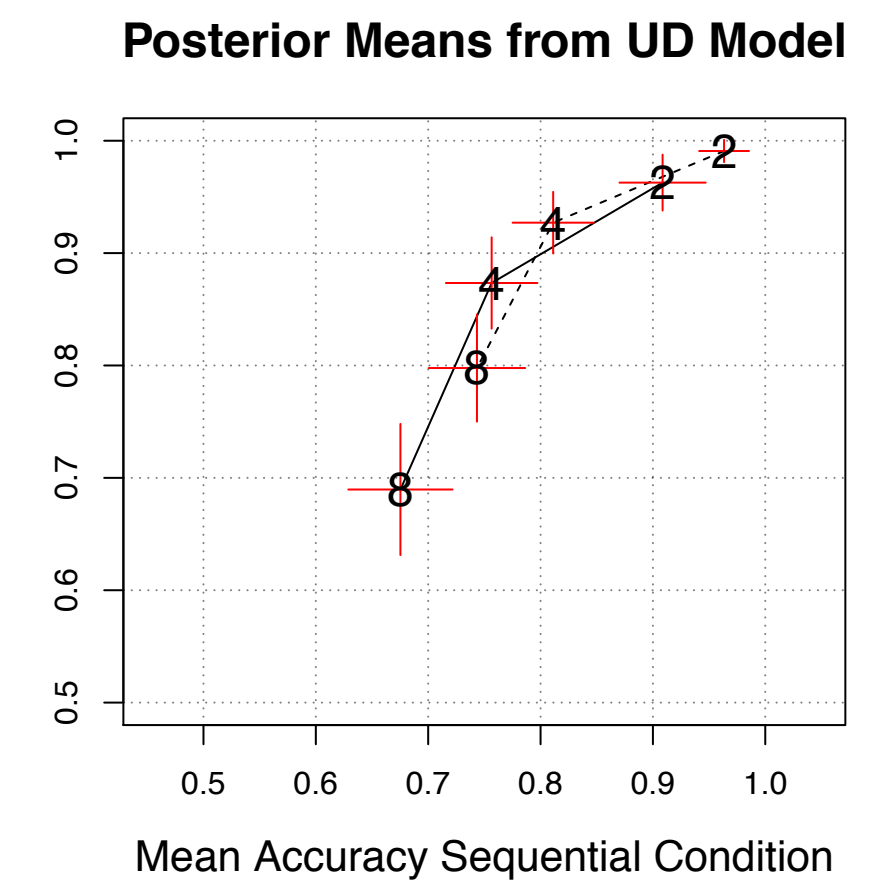
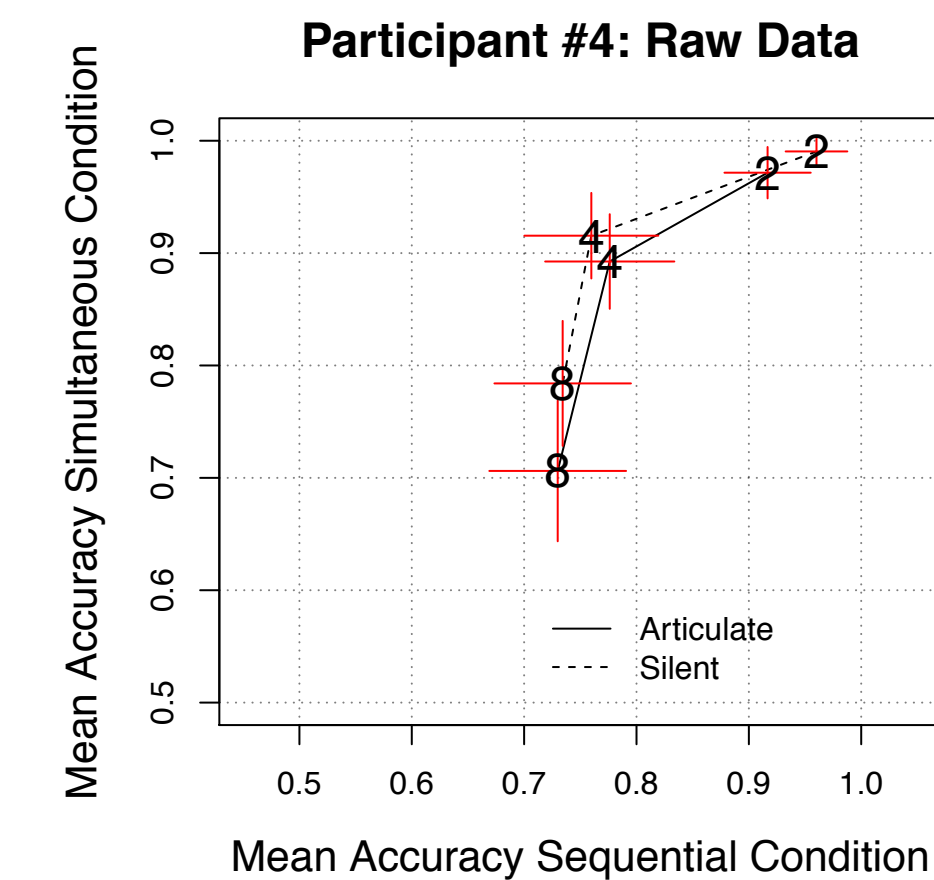
$$BF = \frac{Pr(M_1 | D)}{Pr(M_2 | D)} = \frac{Pr(M_1)}{Pr(M_2)} = \frac{\# UD \text{ samples}}{\# MD \text{ samples}} = \frac{\# UD \text{ orderings}}{\# MD \text{ orderings}}$$

Bayes factors let us quantify the relative evidence the data provide for two competing models: the **restricted** versus the **encompassing** model.

Bayes Factors in Favor of Monotonicity



Selected State-Trace Plots



Conclusions

Support for the uni-dimensional model is very strong.

State-trace analysis is an appropriate and informative alternative to conventional methods.

Pre-cautionary articulatory suppression does not seem to be necessary (in this particular setup).

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