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How does learning to read shape the neural representation of spoken and written language?

Adam Jowett

Dr Joanne Taylor¹

Dr Angelika Lingnau²

Professor Kathy Rastle²



¹Aston University ²Royal Holloway, University of London



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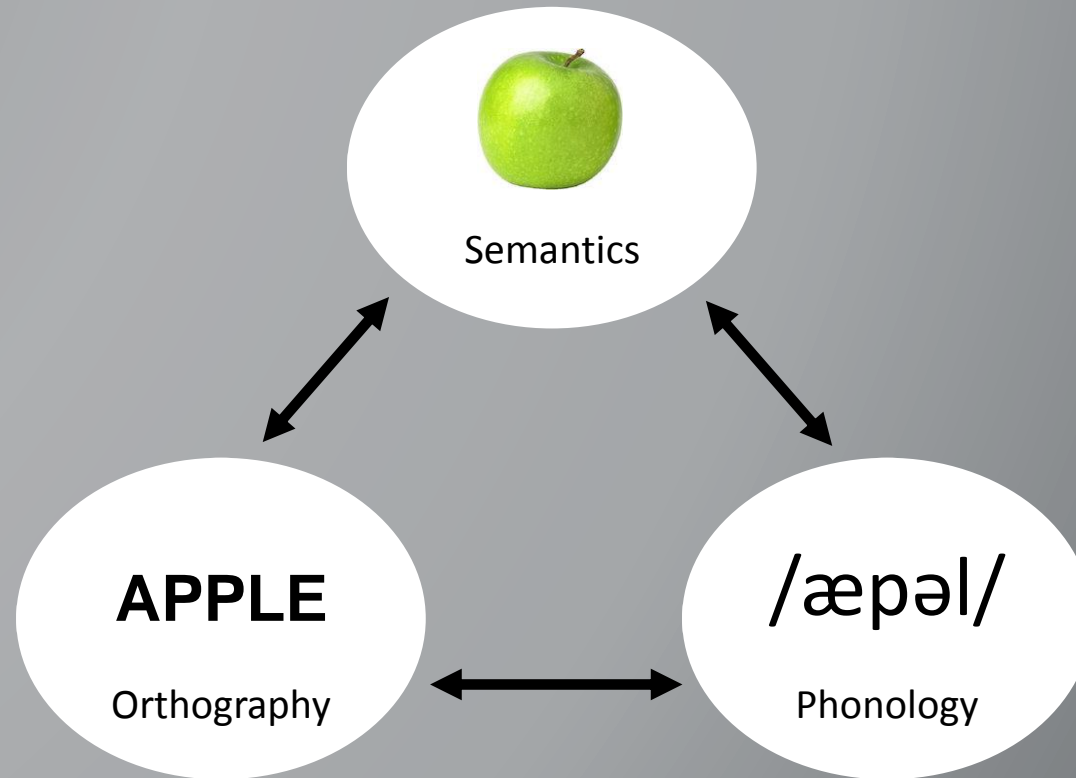
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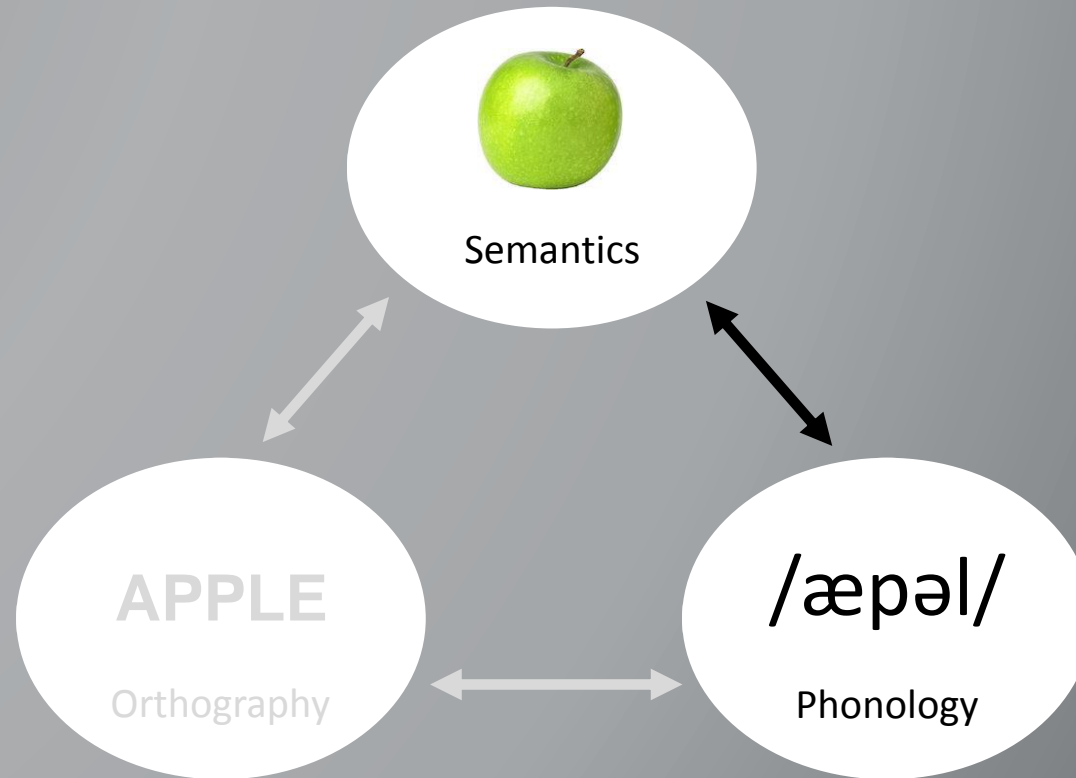
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Before acquiring skills in reading and writing, most of us have developed relative competence in understanding spoken language



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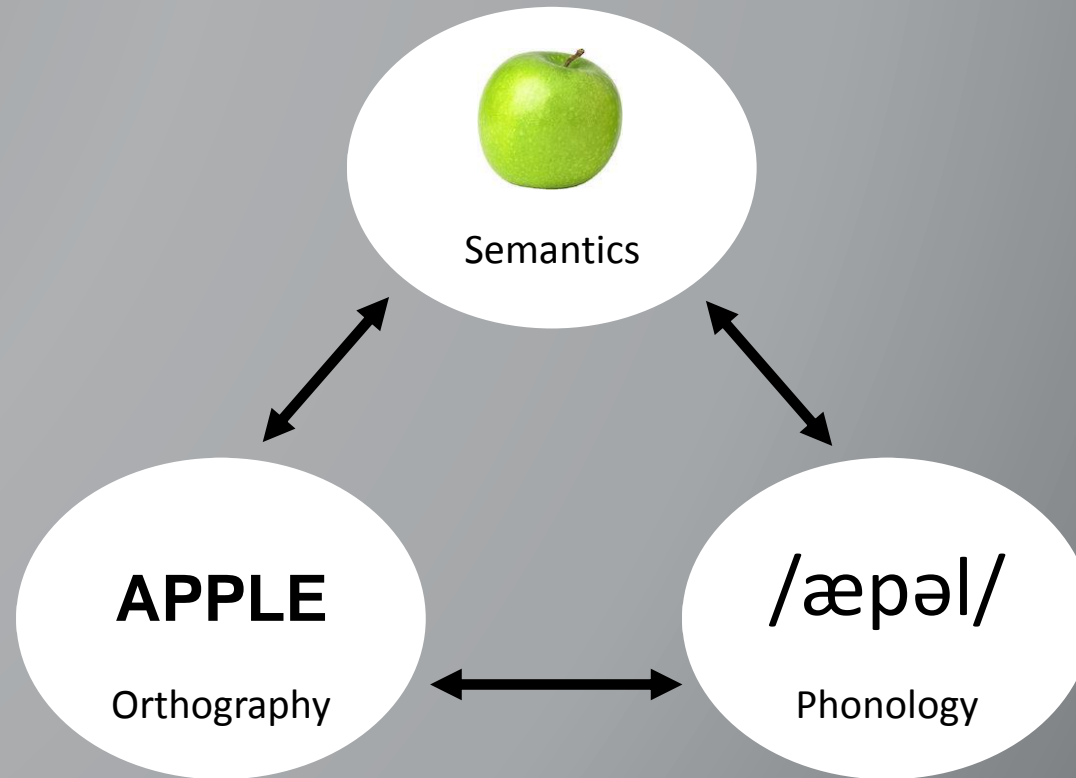
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Learning to read requires acquiring mappings from orthography onto existing phonological and semantic representations



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BEACH

/bi:tʃ/

PEACH

/pi:tʃ/

Alphabetic languages = High orthographic transparency

Information about phonological structure within orthography
Each sound usually mapped to one orthographic symbol



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郑 张
/'tʂəŋ/ /'tʂɑːŋ/

Logographic languages = Low orthographic transparency

Less information about phonological structure within orthography
Each sound usually mapped to multiple orthographic symbols



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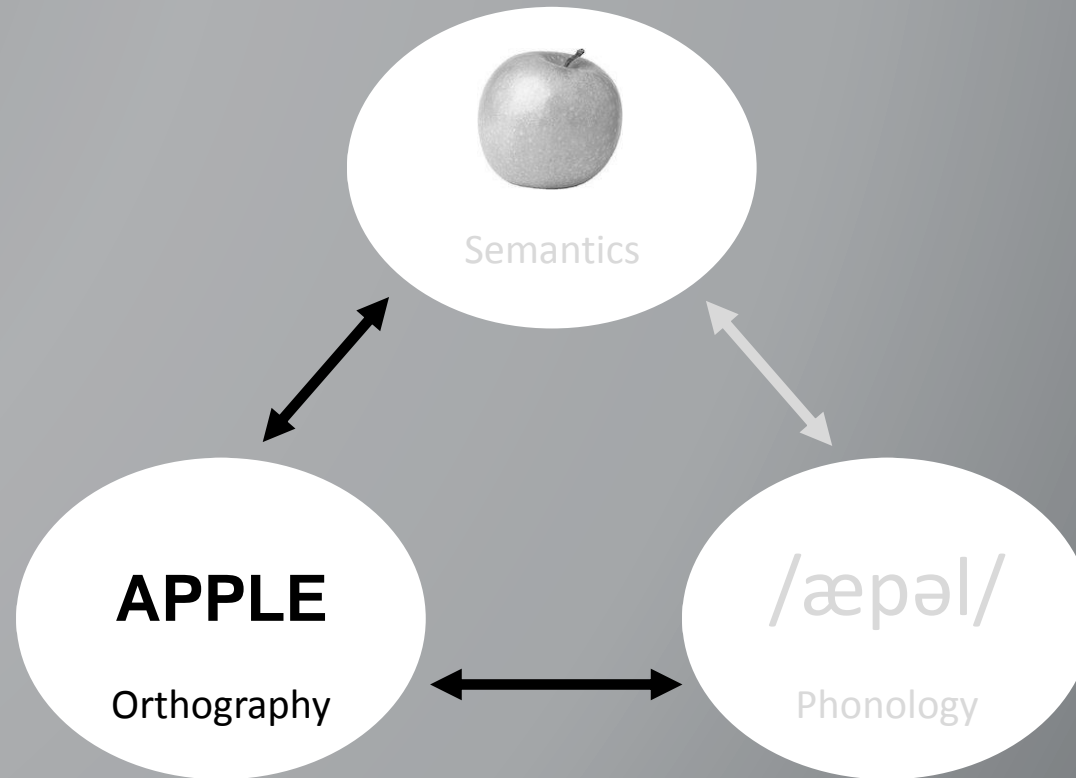
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Such differences in orthographic structure impacts on the nature of reading acquisition...



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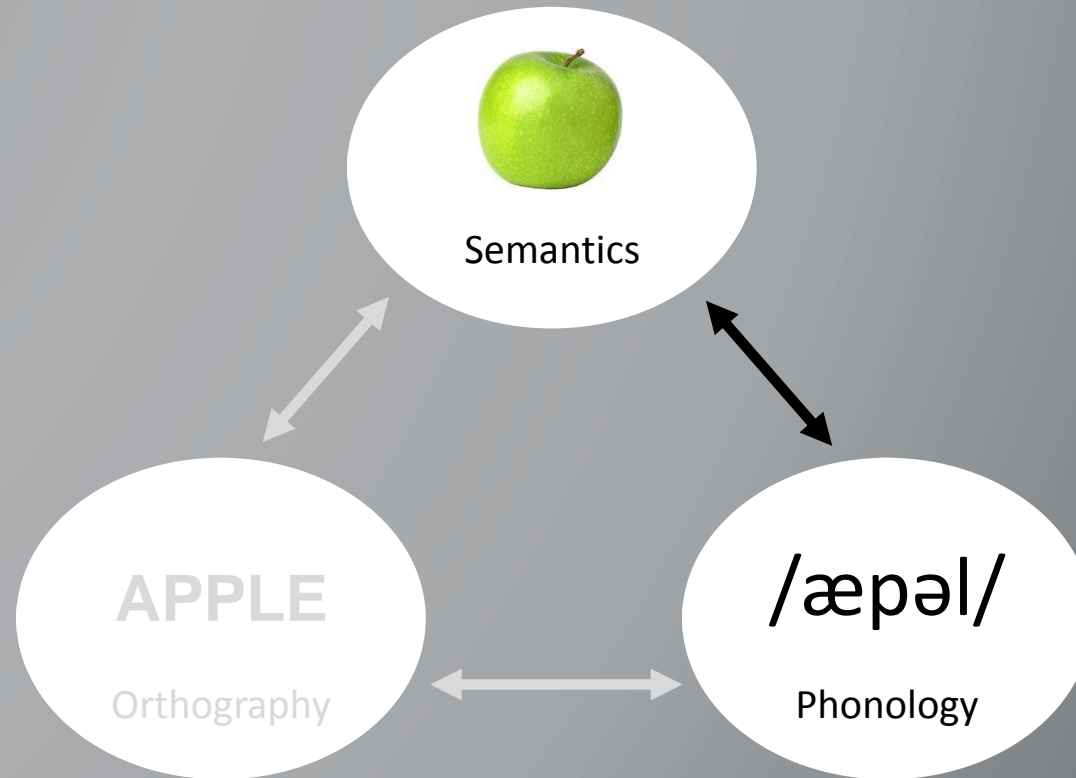
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...as well as wider impacts on existing
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Participants

24 monolingual native English speakers (16 females)
Aged between 19-34 ($M = 22.16$, $SD = 3.97$)



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Within subjects design

All participants learned two artificial languages with
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Within subjects design

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Artificial orthographies

Each language contained 24 pseudowords, each
denoted by visual, spoken, and semantic components



Alphabetic

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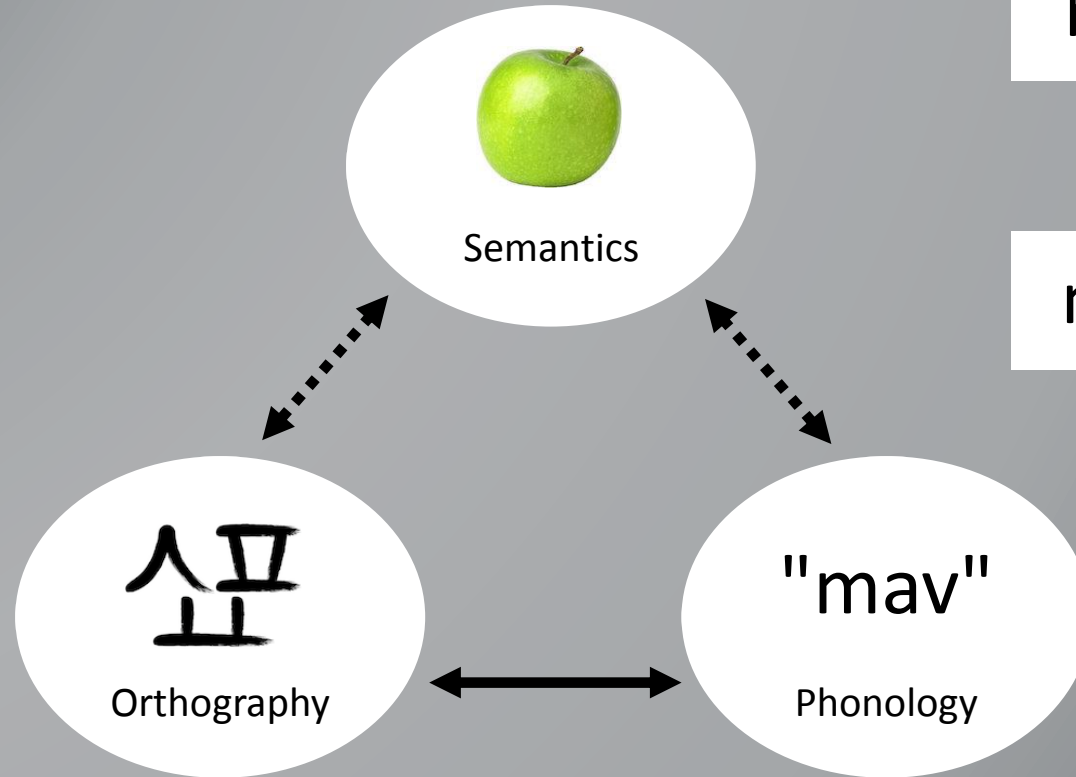
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m a z

=



m o z

=



Each word is three letters long. Each sound has a corresponding letter. A vowel is always underneath.



Logographic

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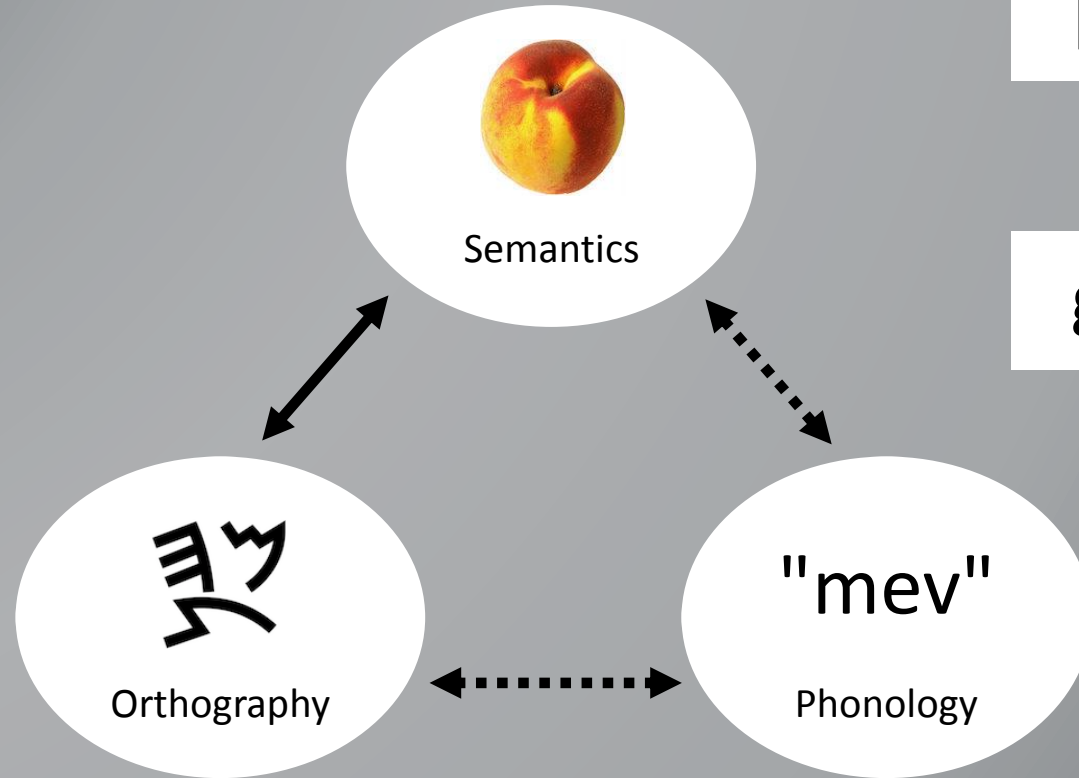
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p a v

=



g a b

=



Each spoken word has three sounds, but there is no relationship between each sound and the written word



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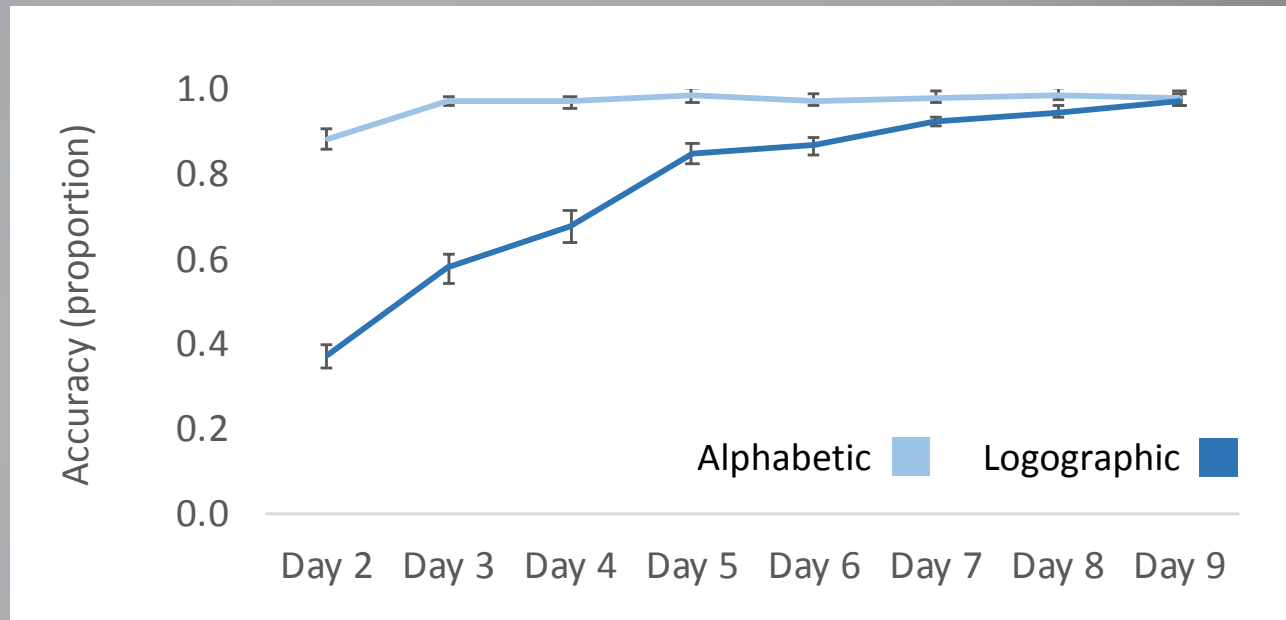
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Reading Aloud

See trained word  Say pronunciation "bev"



Alphabetic writing system benefits accuracy and speed of Reading Aloud during training and testing = alphabetic easier to learn and faster to retrieve



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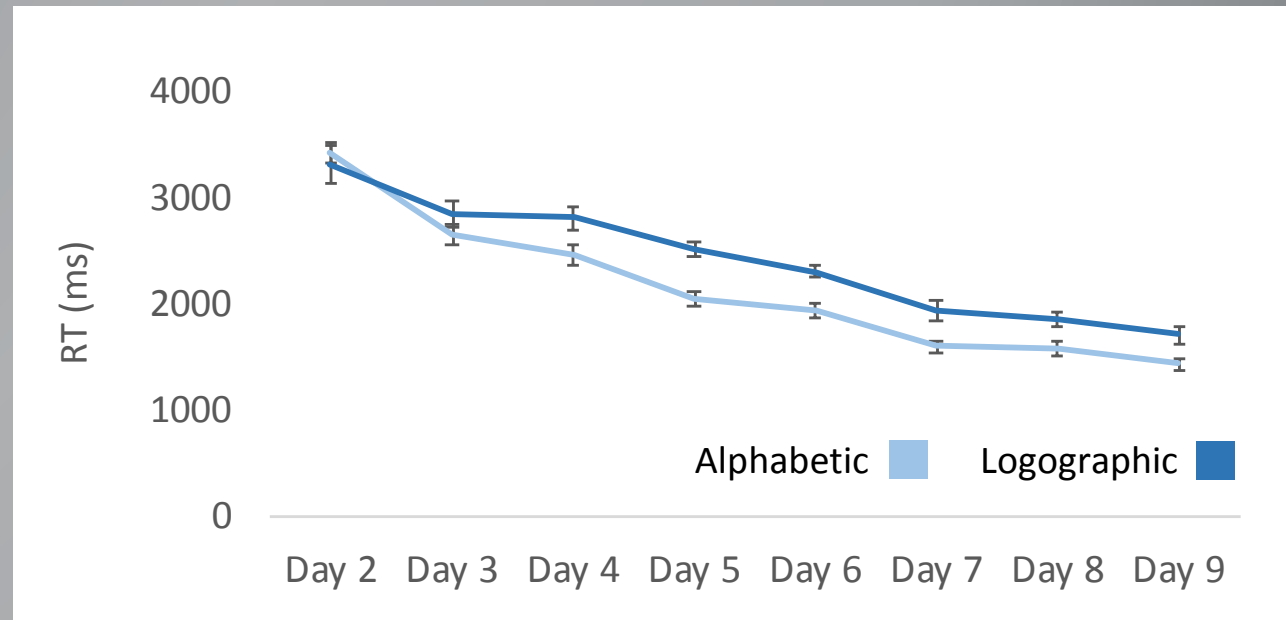
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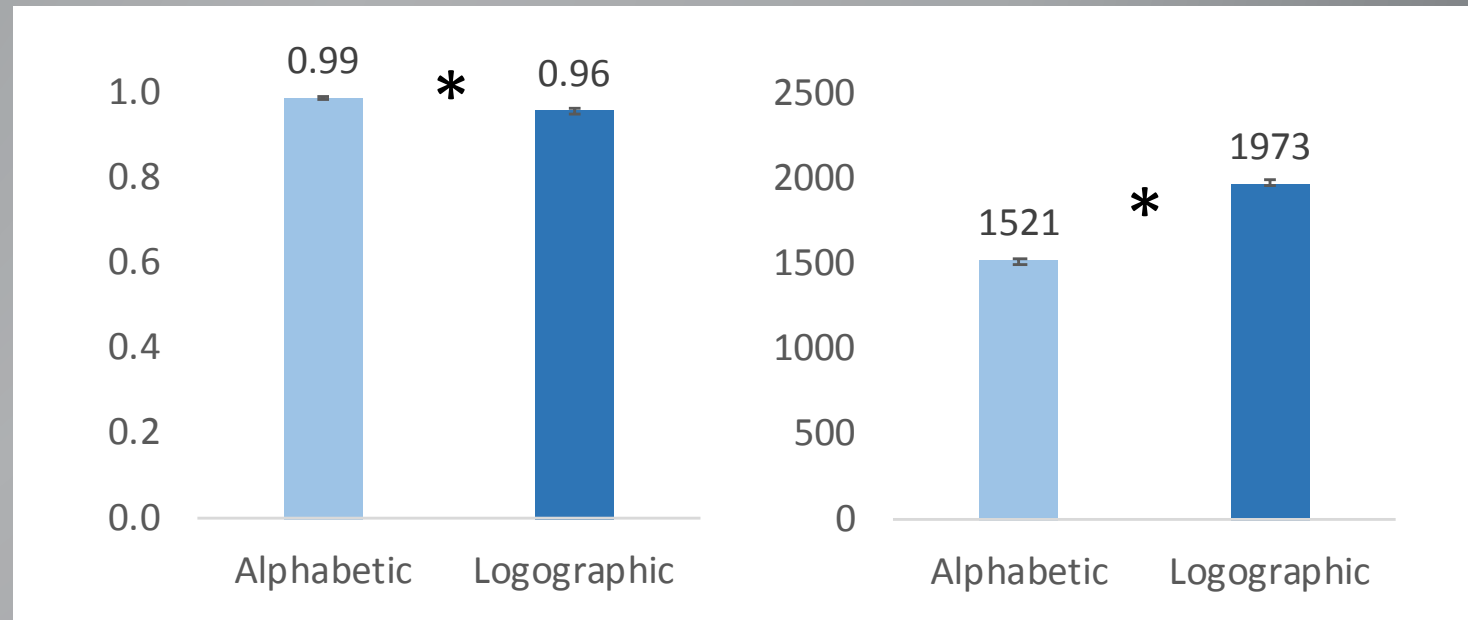
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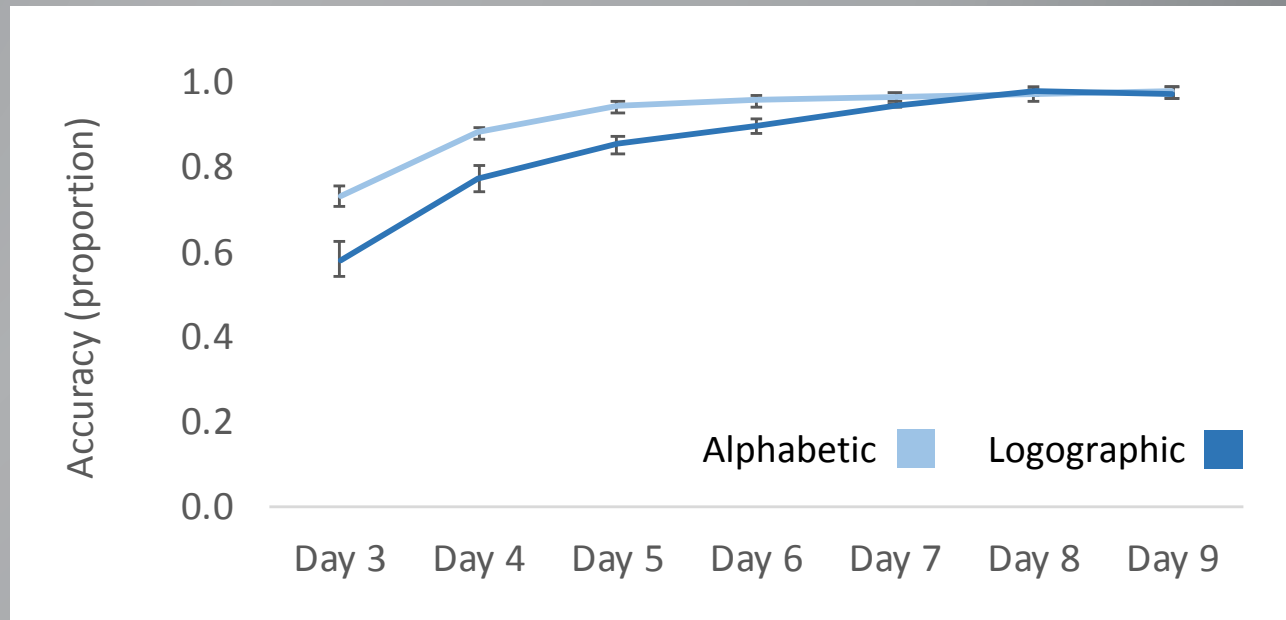
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Saying the Meaning

See trained word  Say meaning "apple"



Alphabetic benefits accuracy but logographic benefits speed during training.
Logographic was faster during testing with no differences in accuracy.



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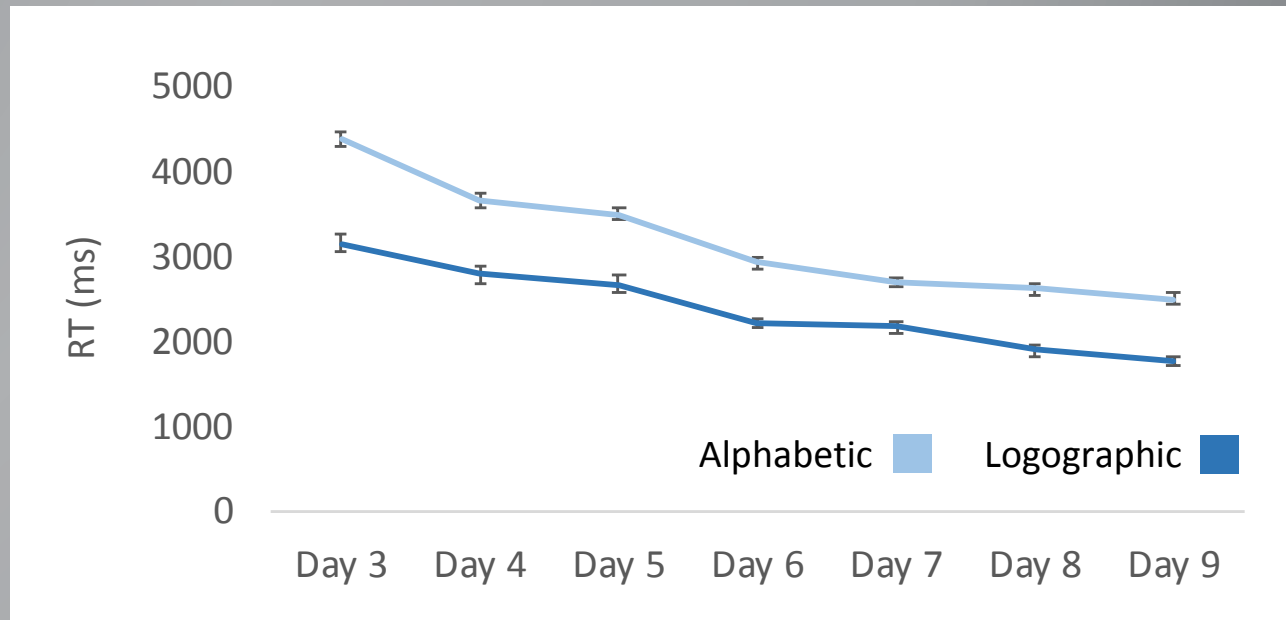
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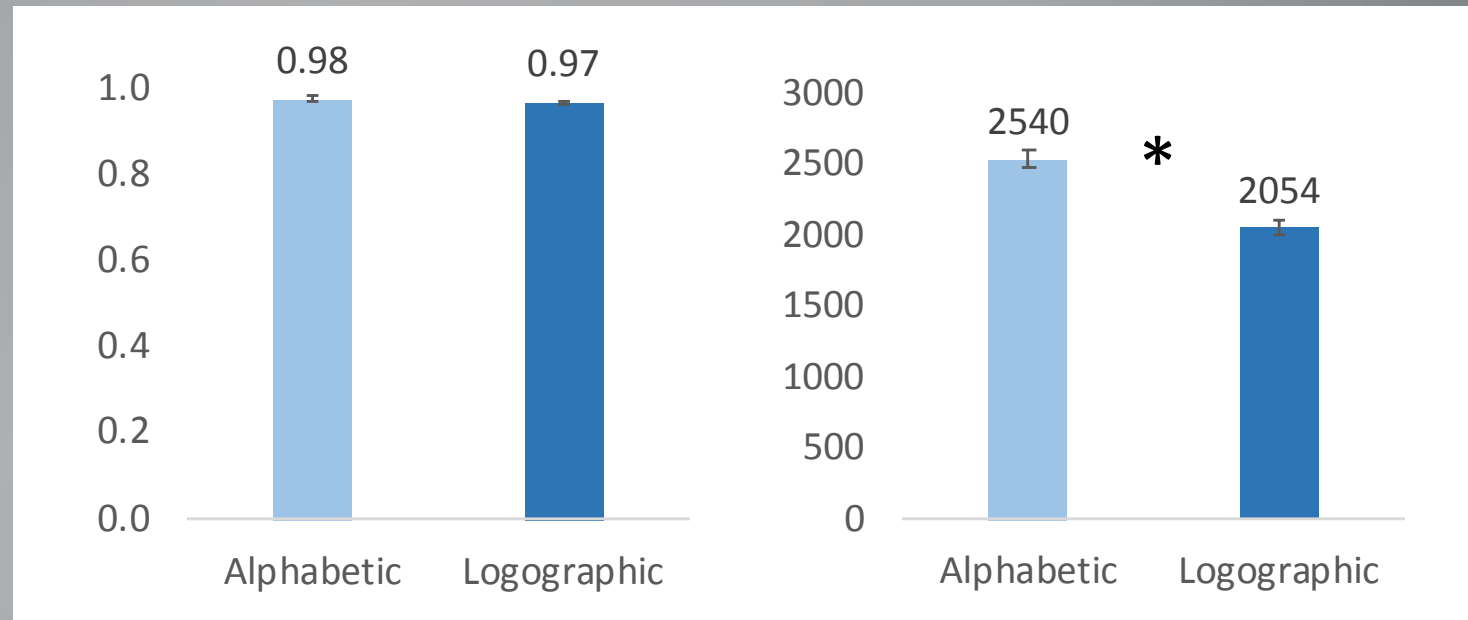
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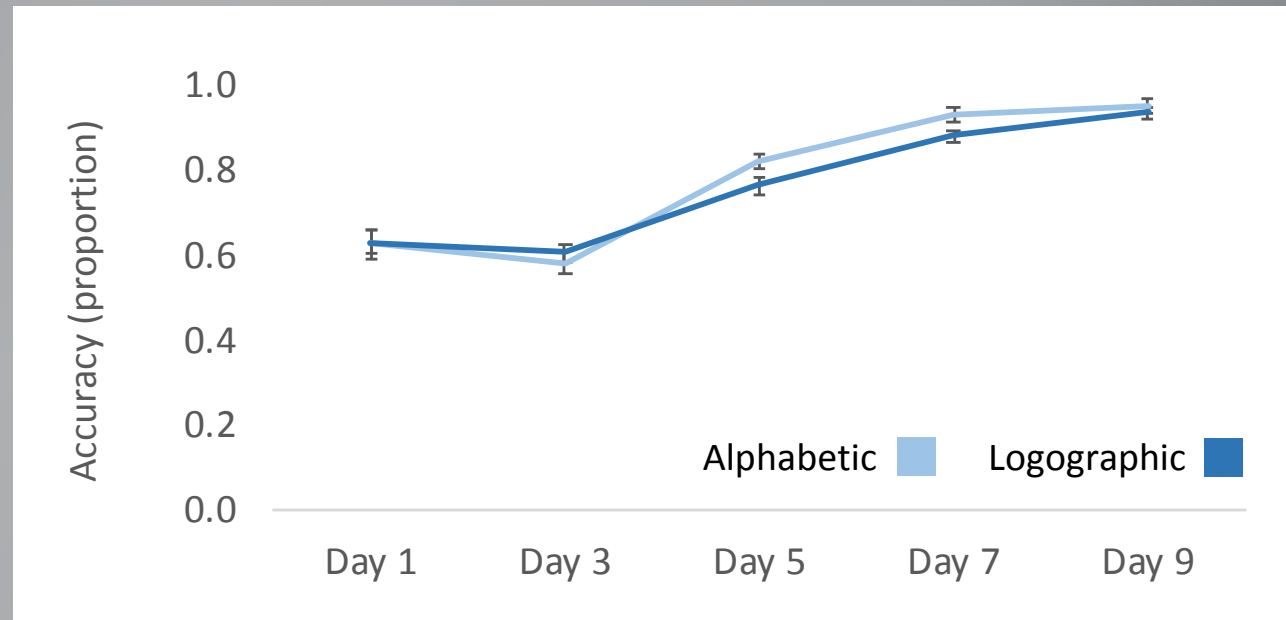
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Picture Naming

See meaning "apple"

Say pronunciation "bev"



No differences in accuracy or speed for Picture Naming during training and testing



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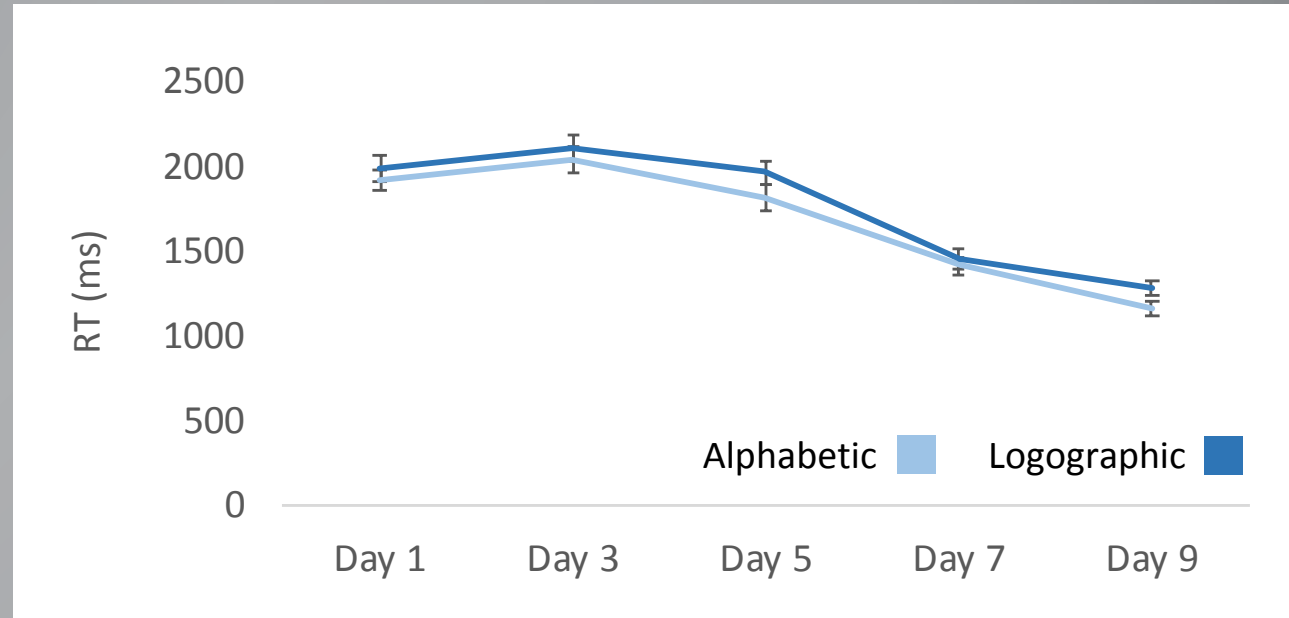
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Picture Naming

See meaning "apple"

Say pronunciation "bev"



No differences in accuracy or speed for Picture Naming during training and testing



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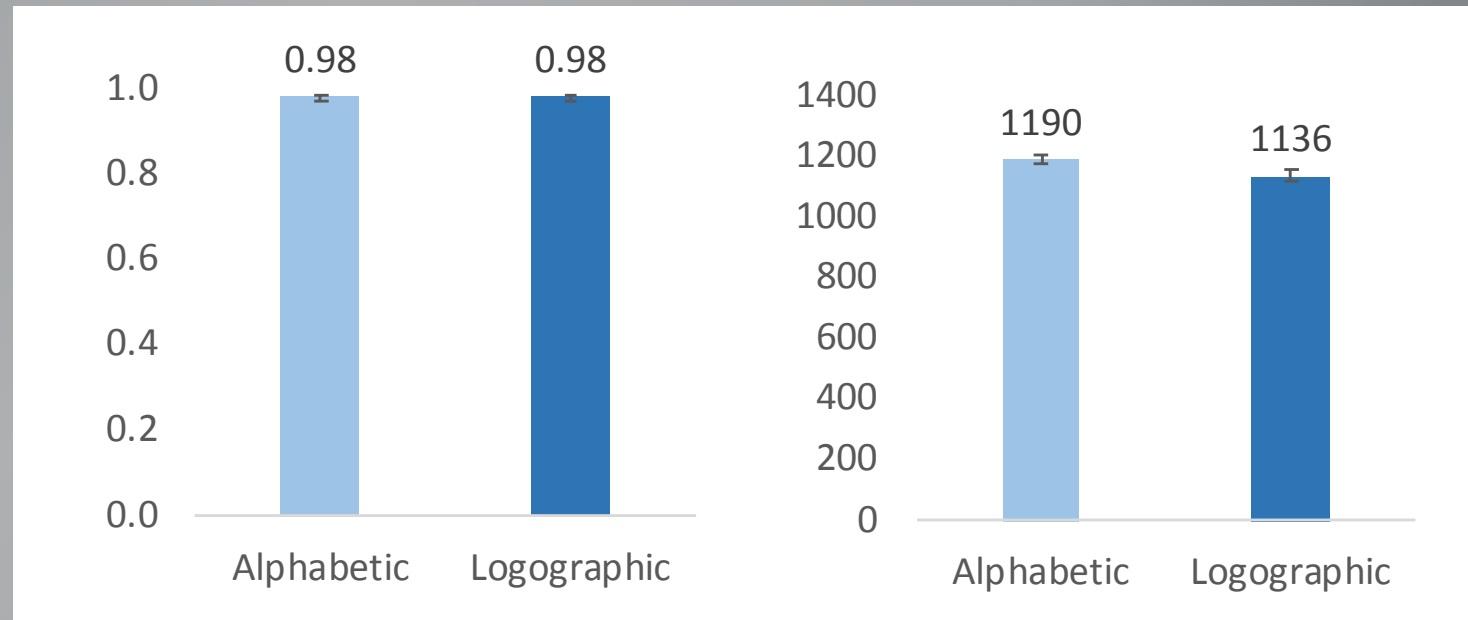
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See meaning "apple"

Say pronunciation "bev"



No differences in accuracy or speed for Picture Naming during training and testing



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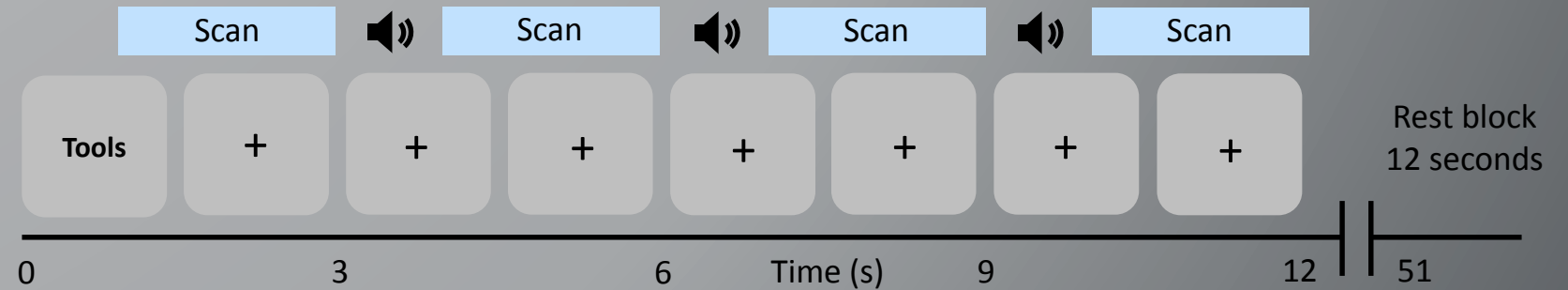
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Visual Semantic Monitoring (TR=2s, TA=2s)



Auditory Semantic Monitoring (TR=3s, TA=2s)





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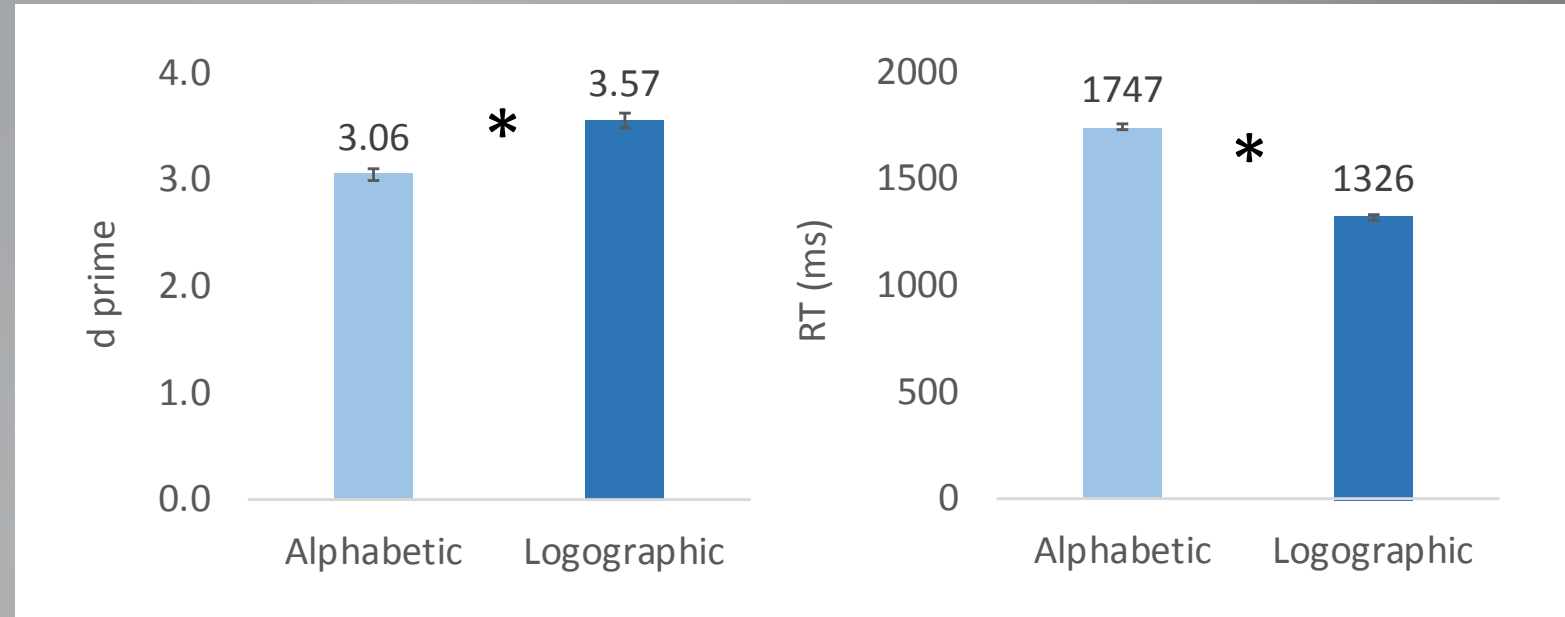
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Visual Semantic Monitoring



Logographic benefits accuracy and speed of visual modality.
Accuracy data possibly due to length of trial; 3s compared to 9s

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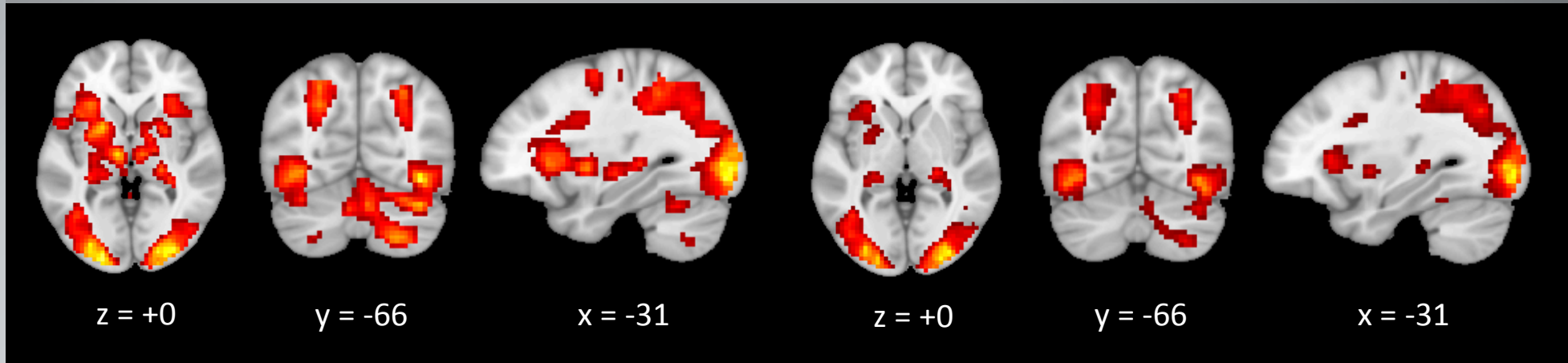
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Univariate contrasts - Visual

Alphabetic > Baseline

Logographic > Baseline



Shared activity in bilateral occipitotemporal and parietal cortices. Left precentral gyrus (PrG) and superior parietal lobule (SPL) more active for alphabetic. Left superior frontal gyrus and bilateral angular gyrus (AnG) and middle occipital gyrus (MOG) more active for logographic.

$p < .001$ uncorrected, $p < .05$ cluster-level corrected

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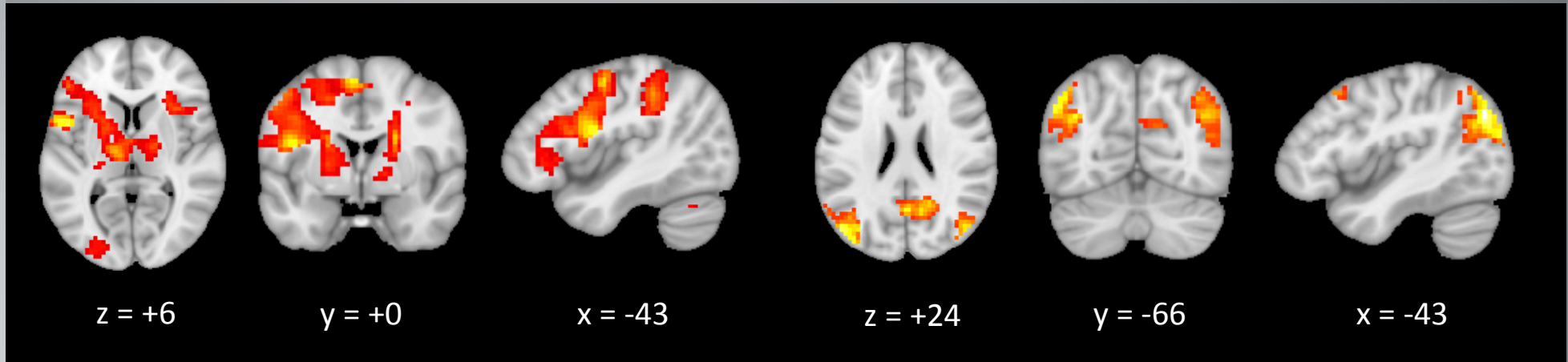
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Logographic > Alphabetic



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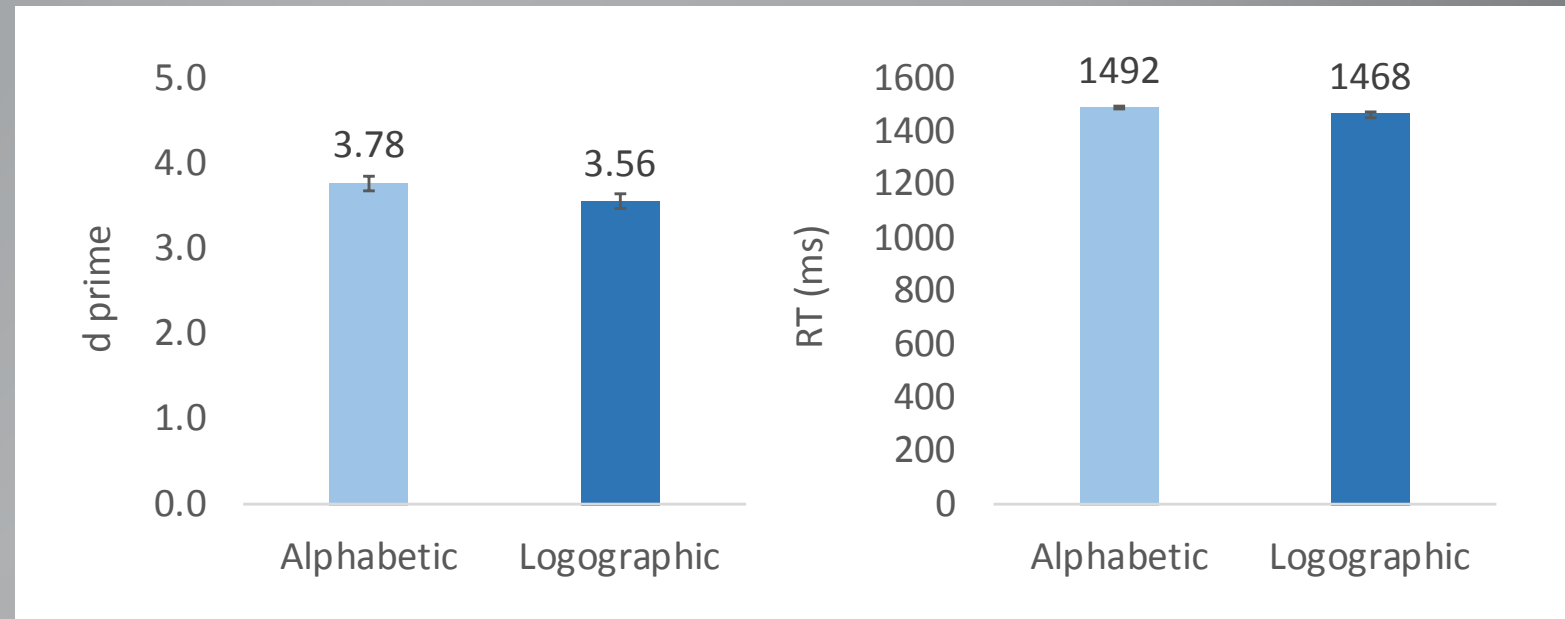
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No differences in accuracy or speed for auditory modality

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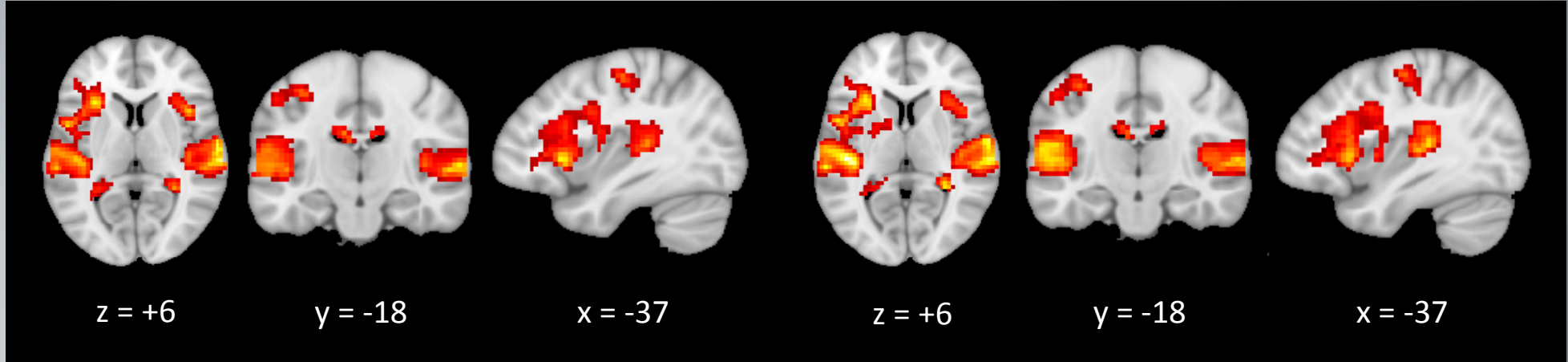
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Univariate contrasts - Auditory

Alphabetic > Baseline

Logographic > Baseline



Shared activity in left frontal and bilateral temporal cortices, including left precentral and postcentral gyrus, bilateral anterior insula, frontal operculum, superior temporal gyrus, and transverse temporal gyrus. No brain areas more active for alphabetic/logographic system.

$p < .001$ uncorrected, $p < .05$ cluster-level corrected



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Investigate whether neural patterns differ between trained writing systems

When participants read written/hear spoken trained words, are the evoked neural representations more sensitive to phonemic structure (phoneme identity and position) and/or orthographic structure for the alphabetic compared to the logographic script?



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Visual | Auditory

**Semantic
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Visual | Auditory



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Visual | Auditory
Alphabetic | Logographic

**Semantic
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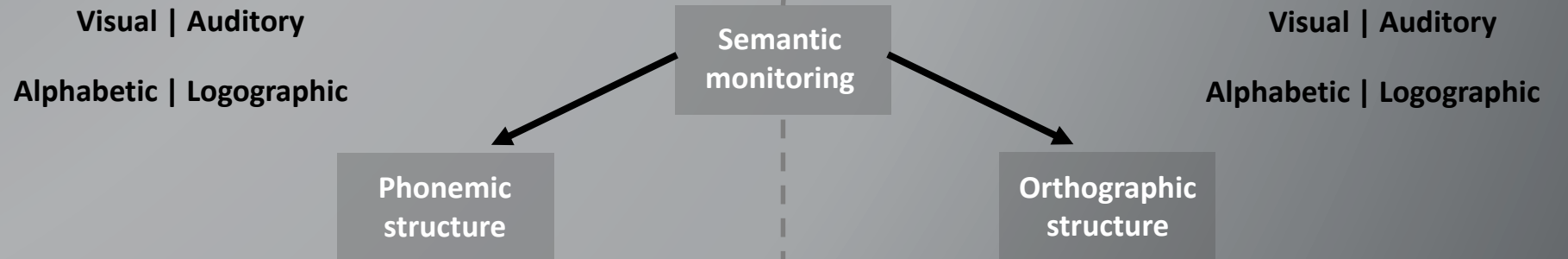
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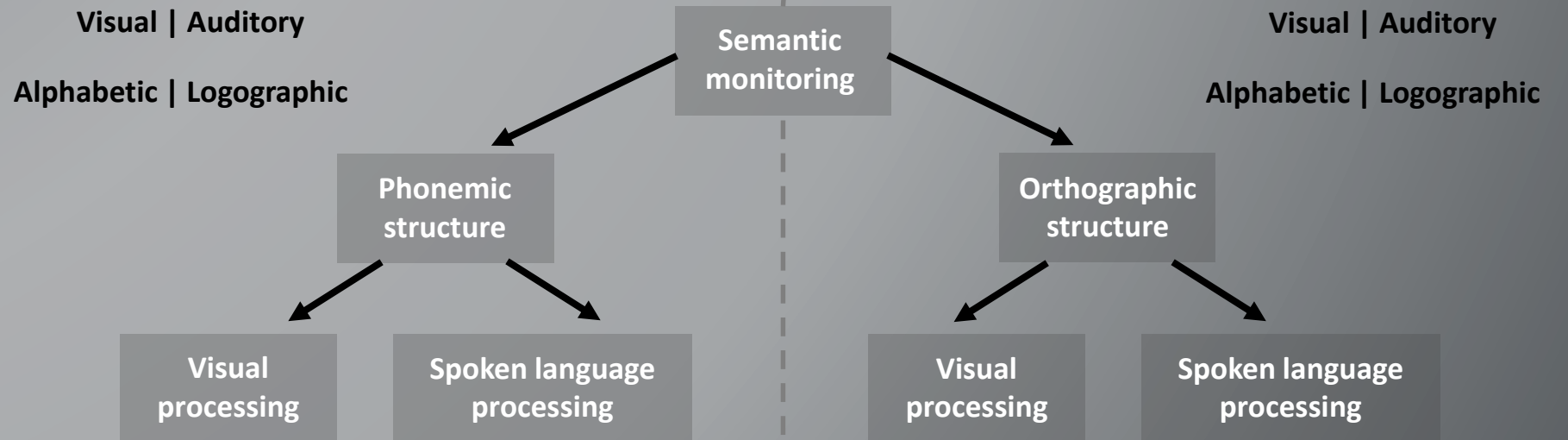
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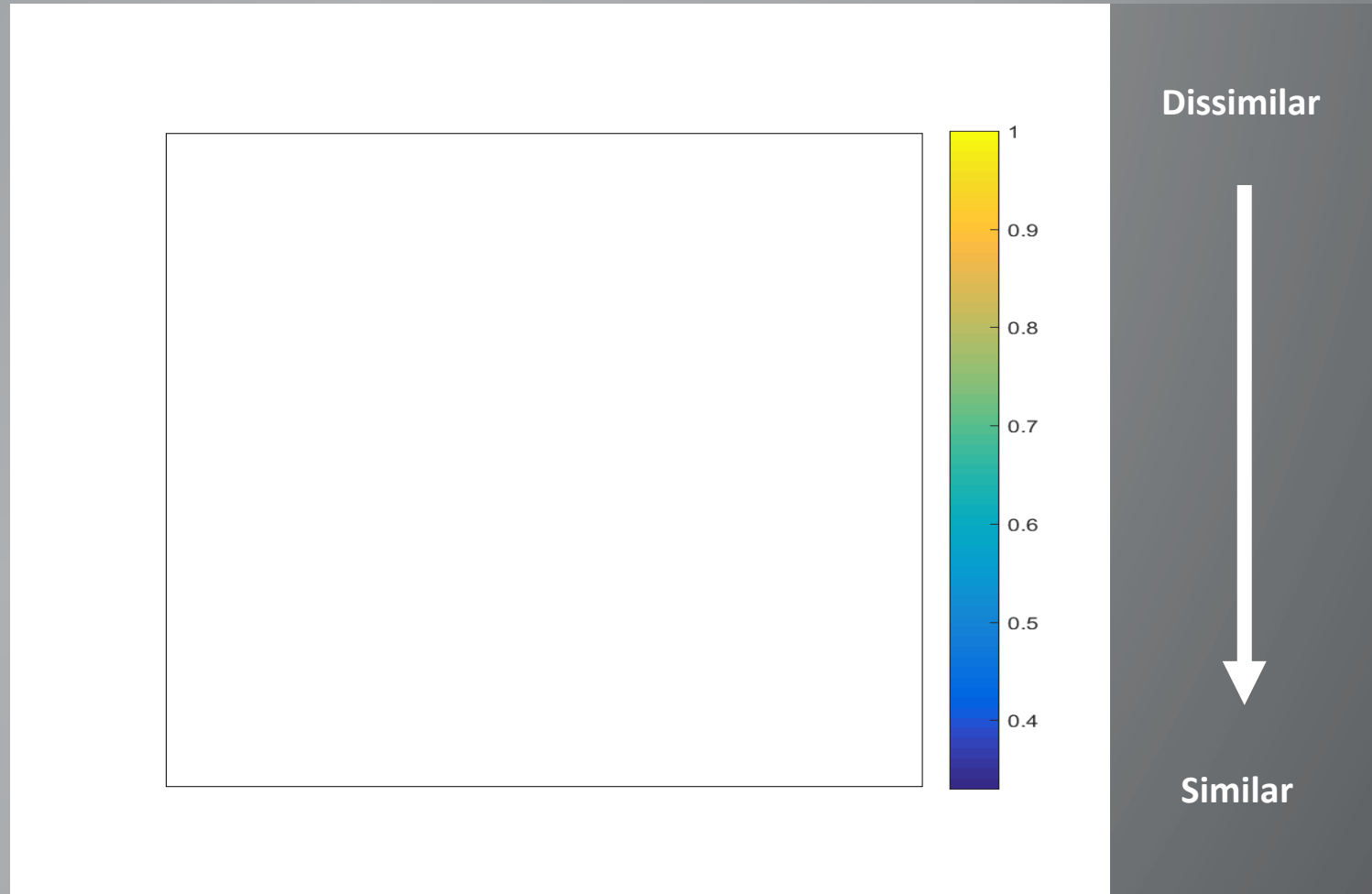
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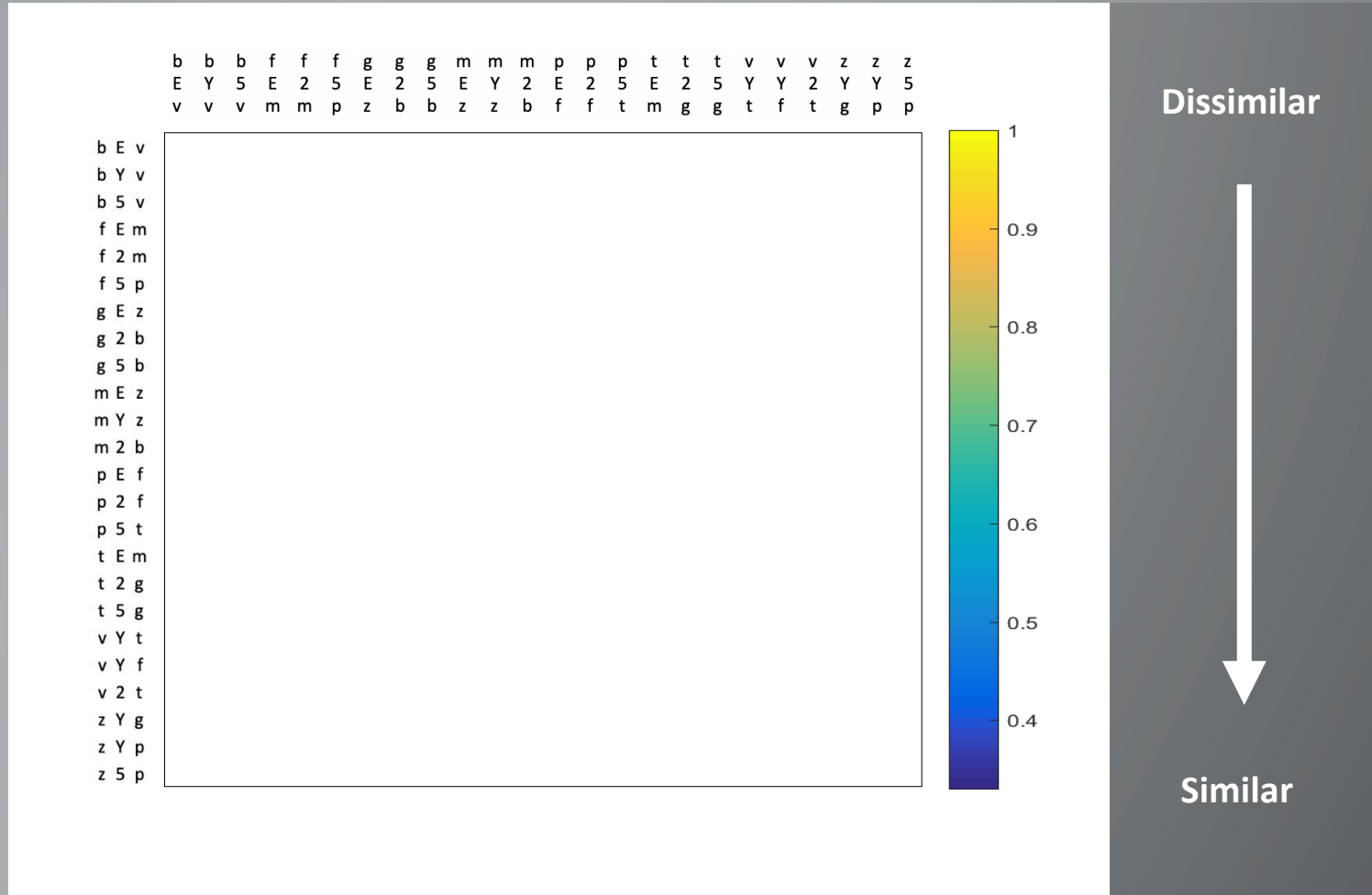




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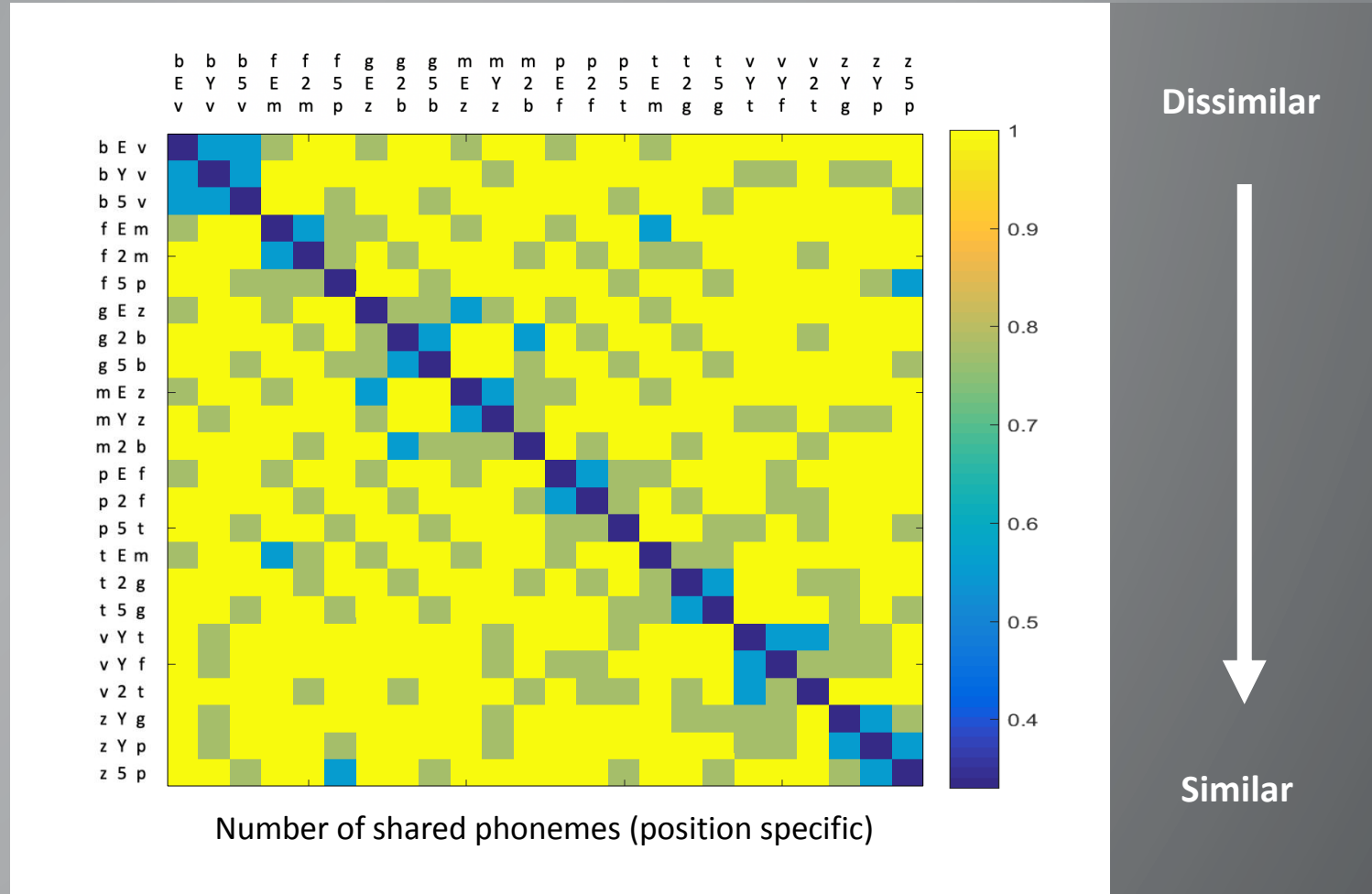




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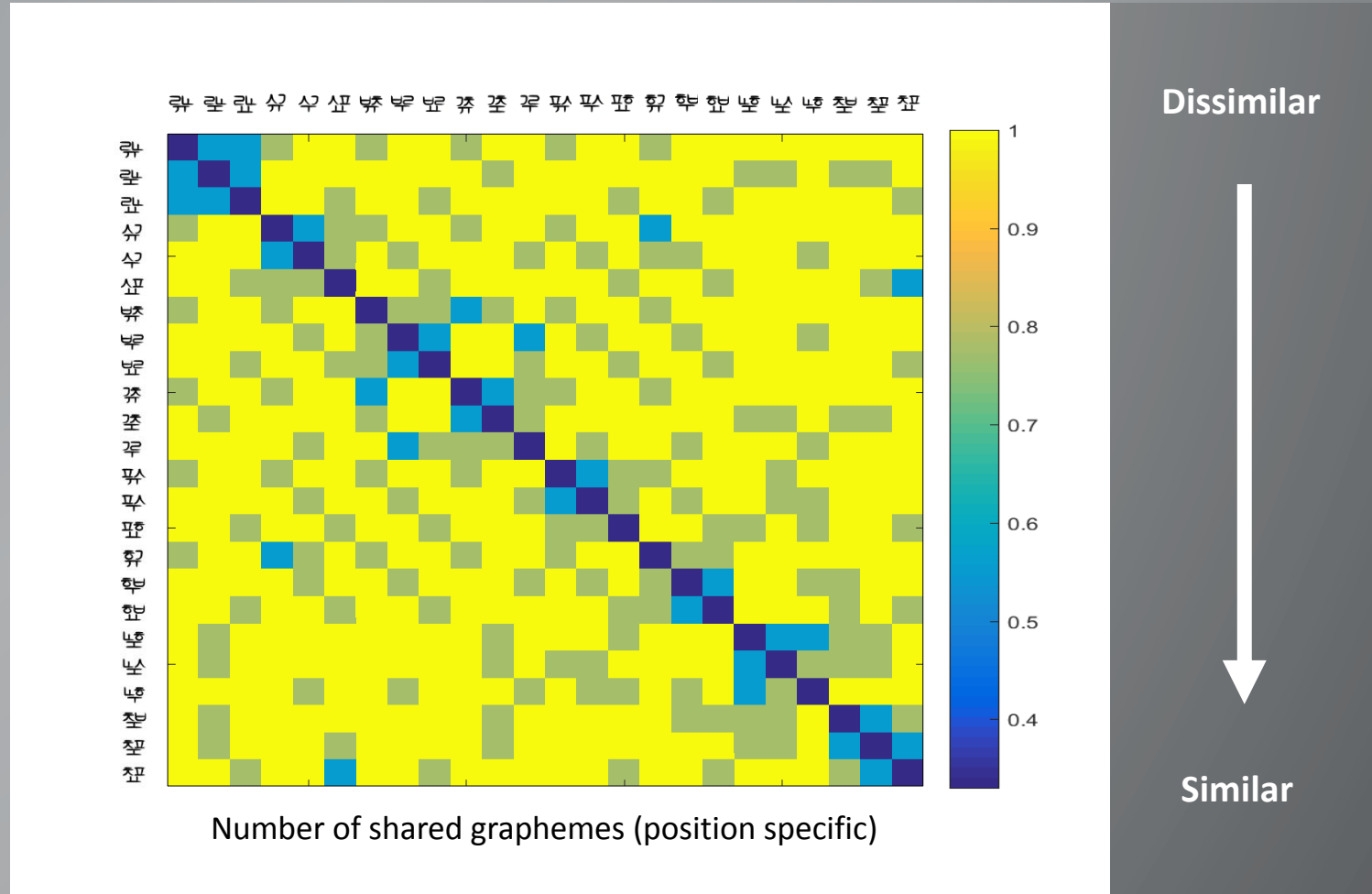




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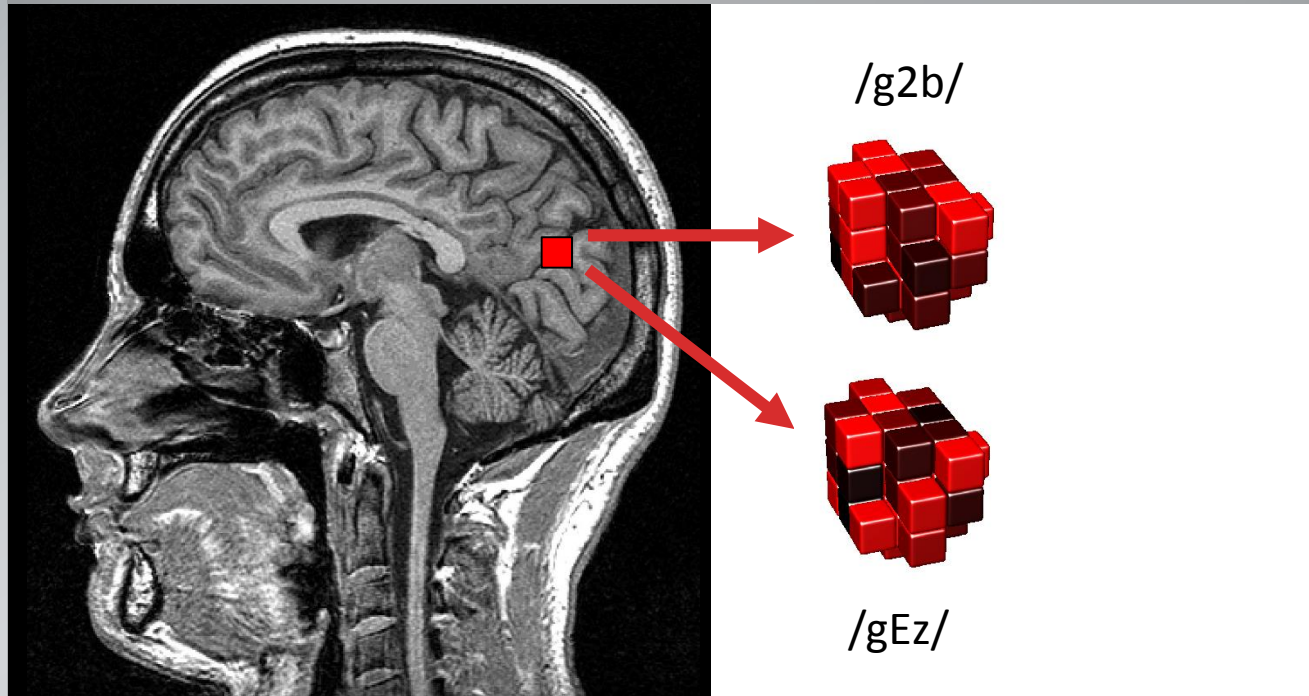
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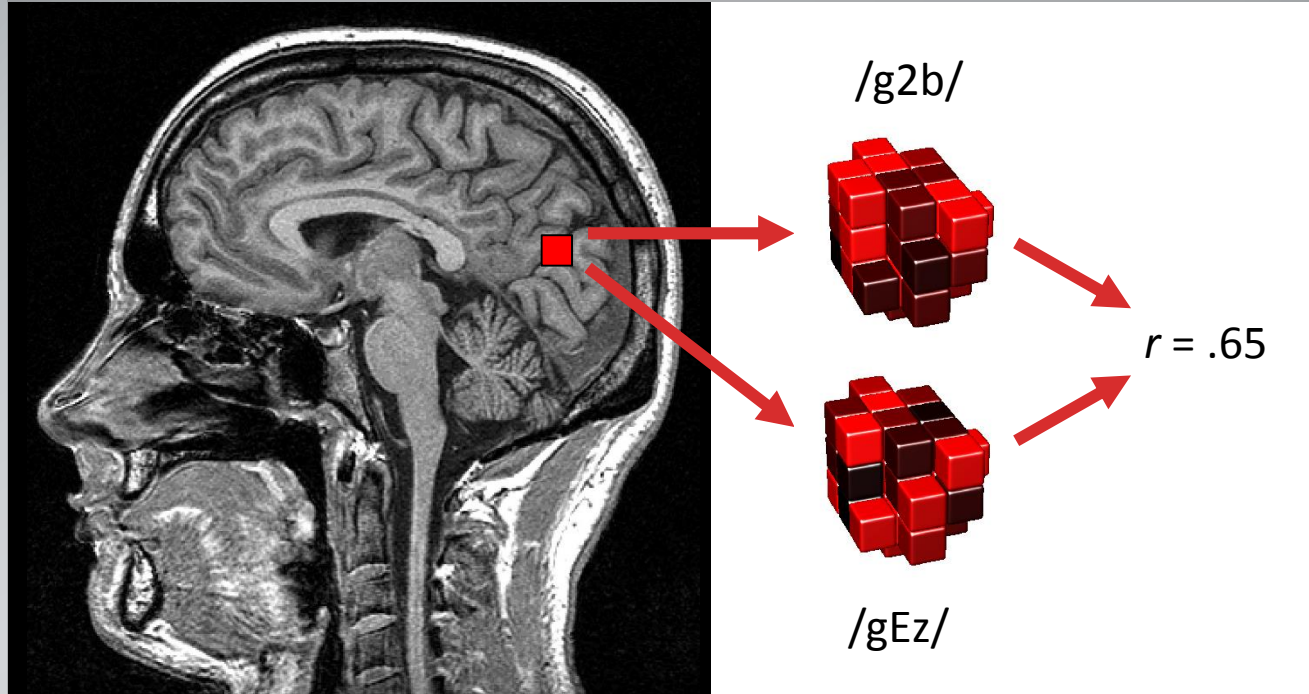
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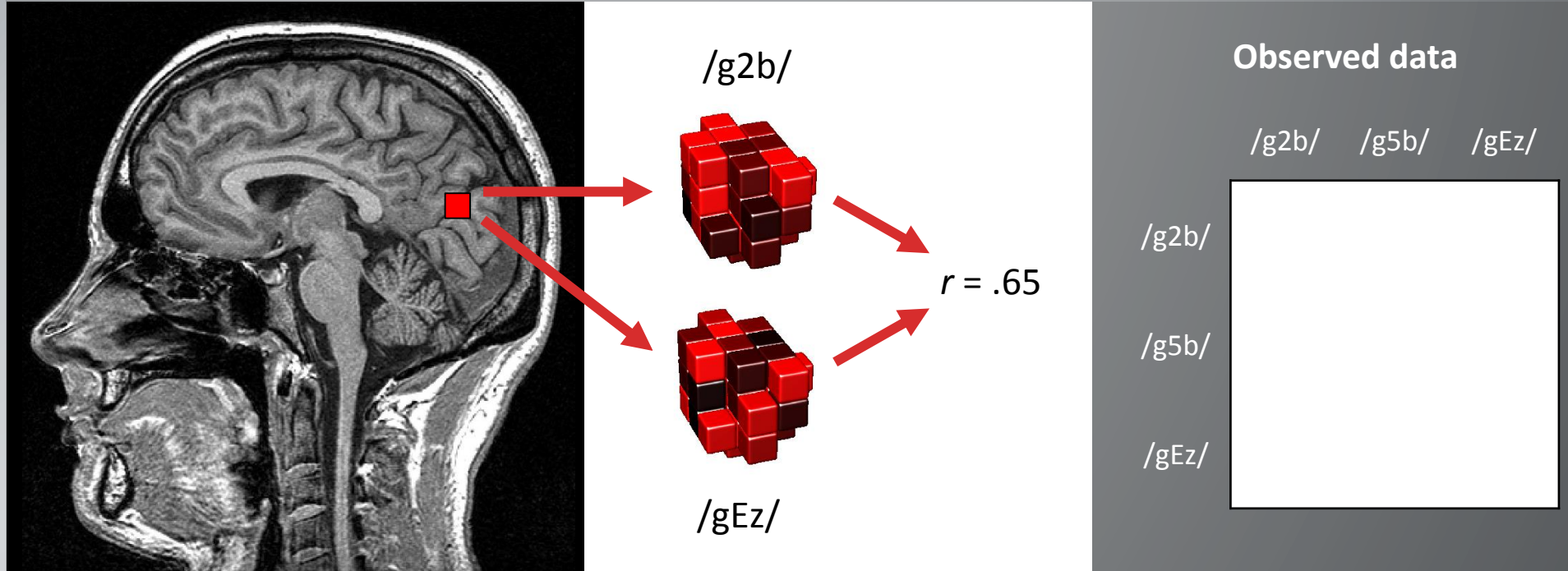
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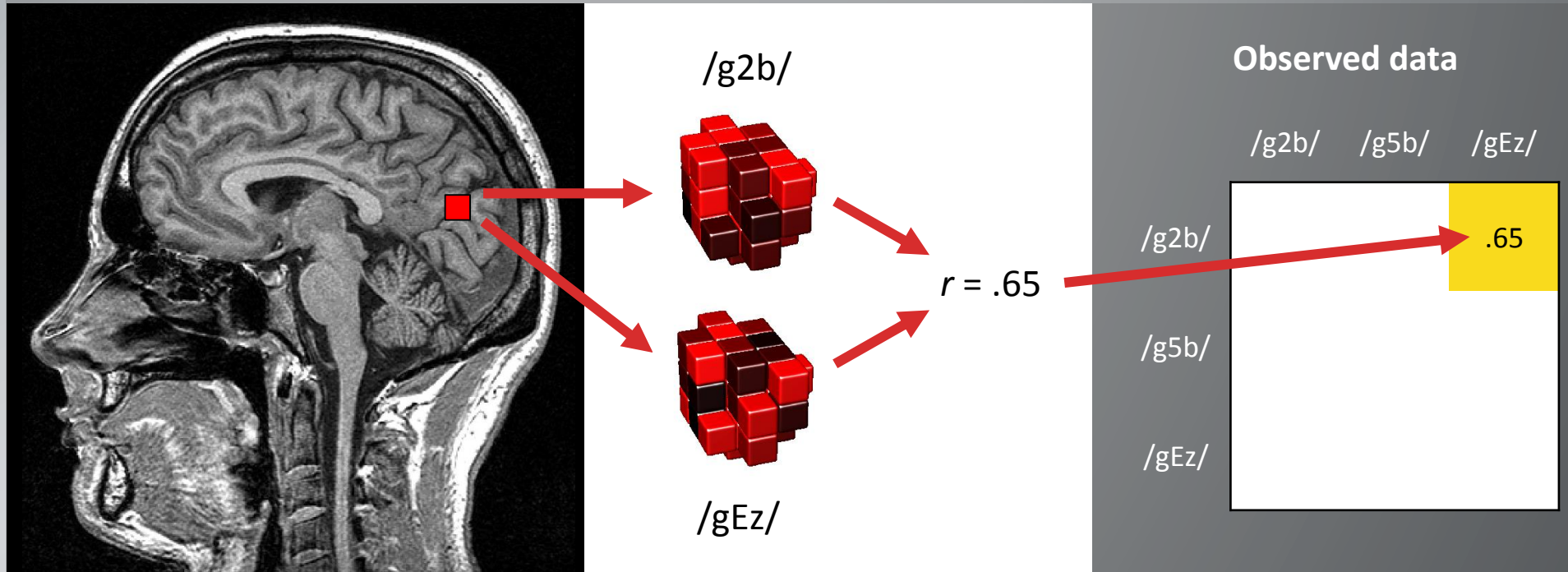
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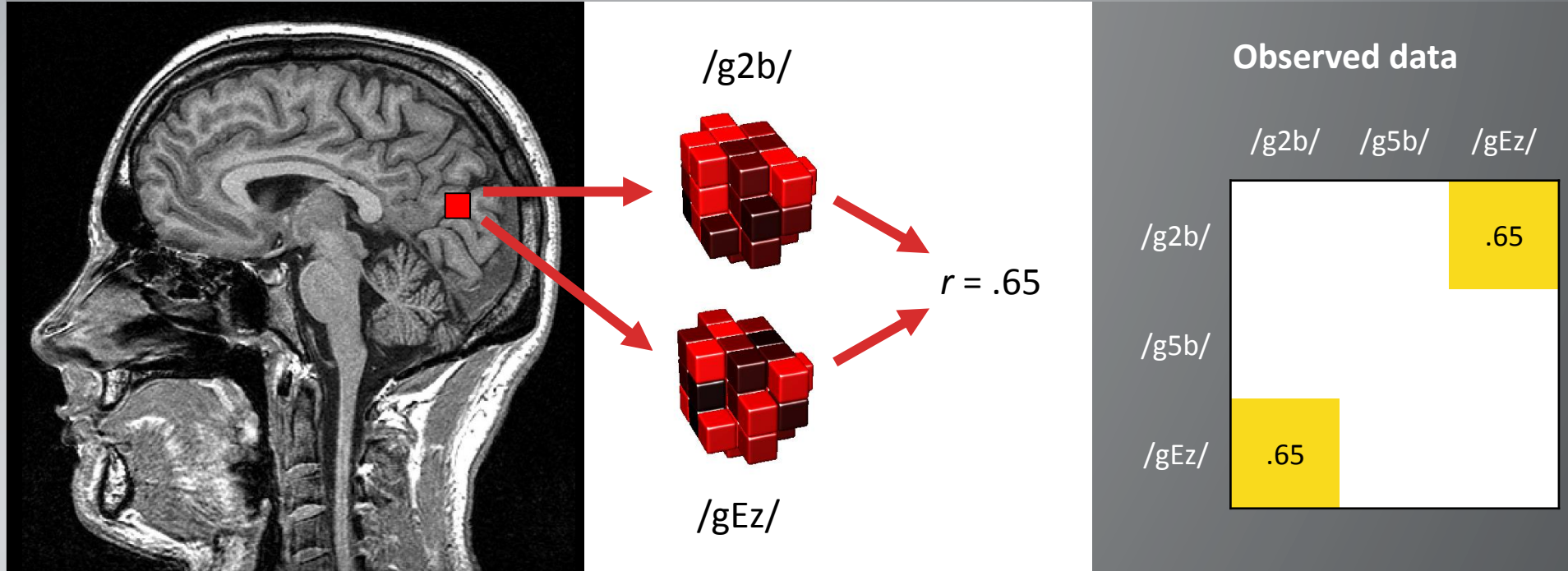
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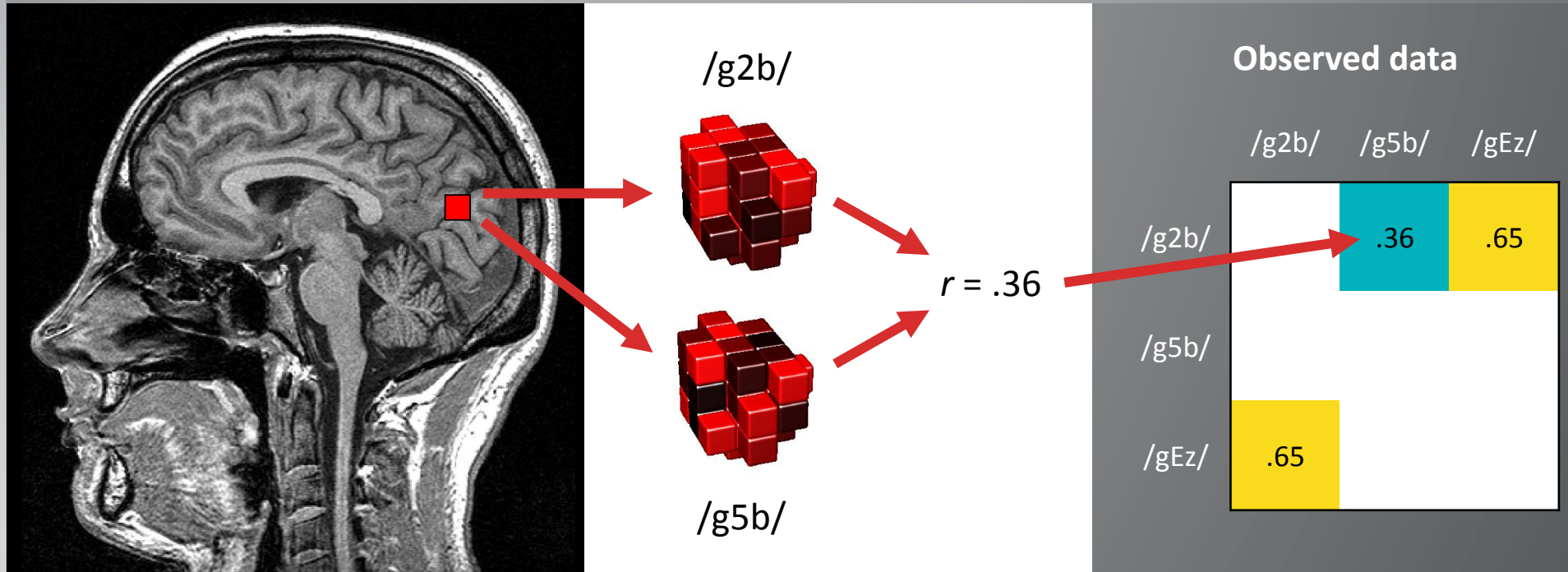
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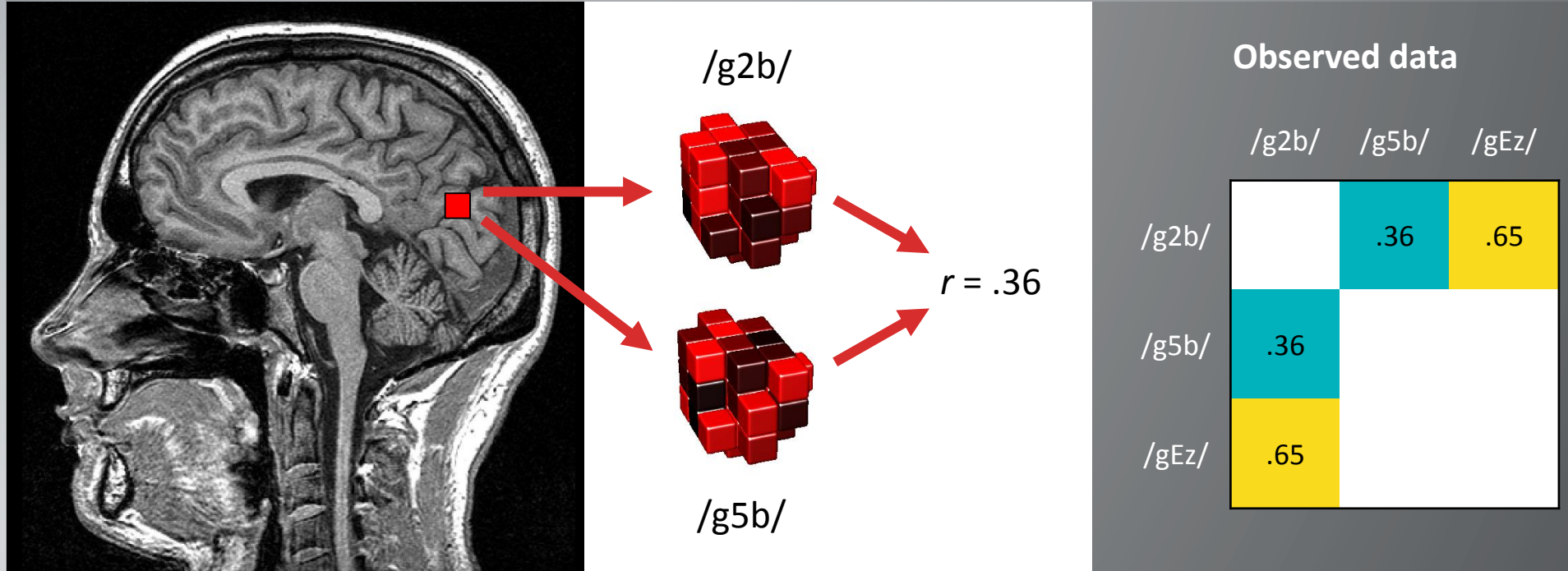
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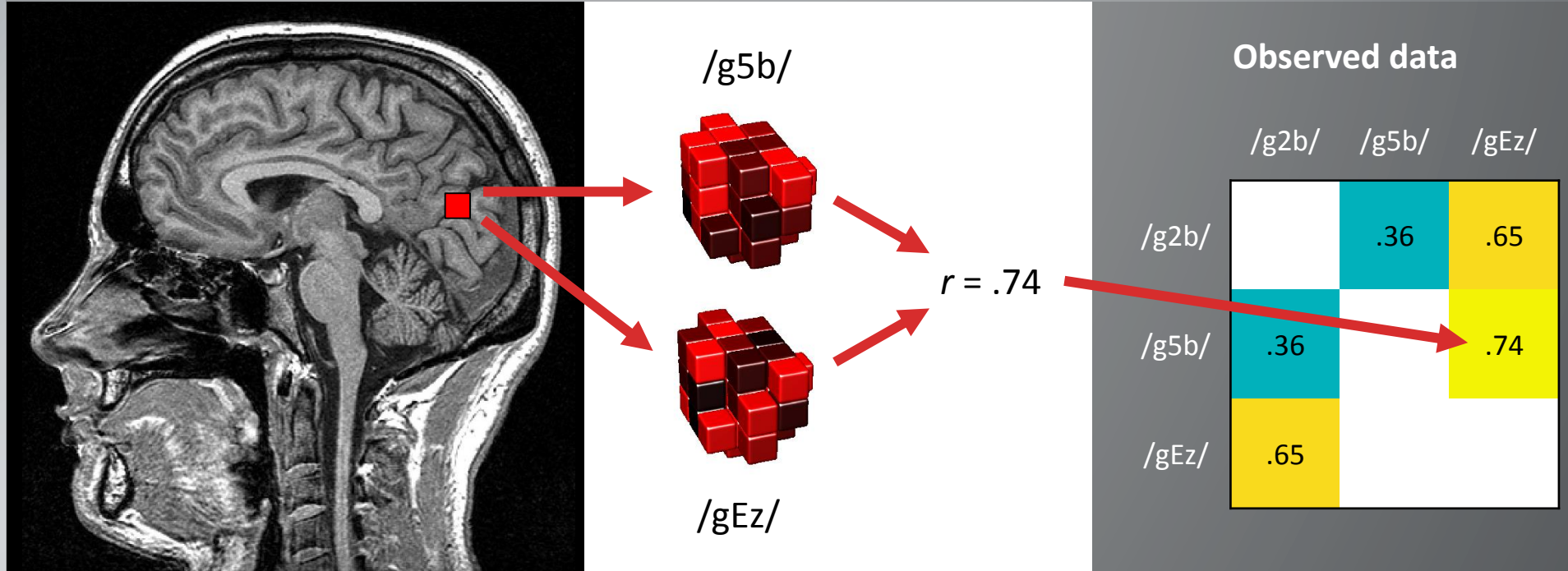
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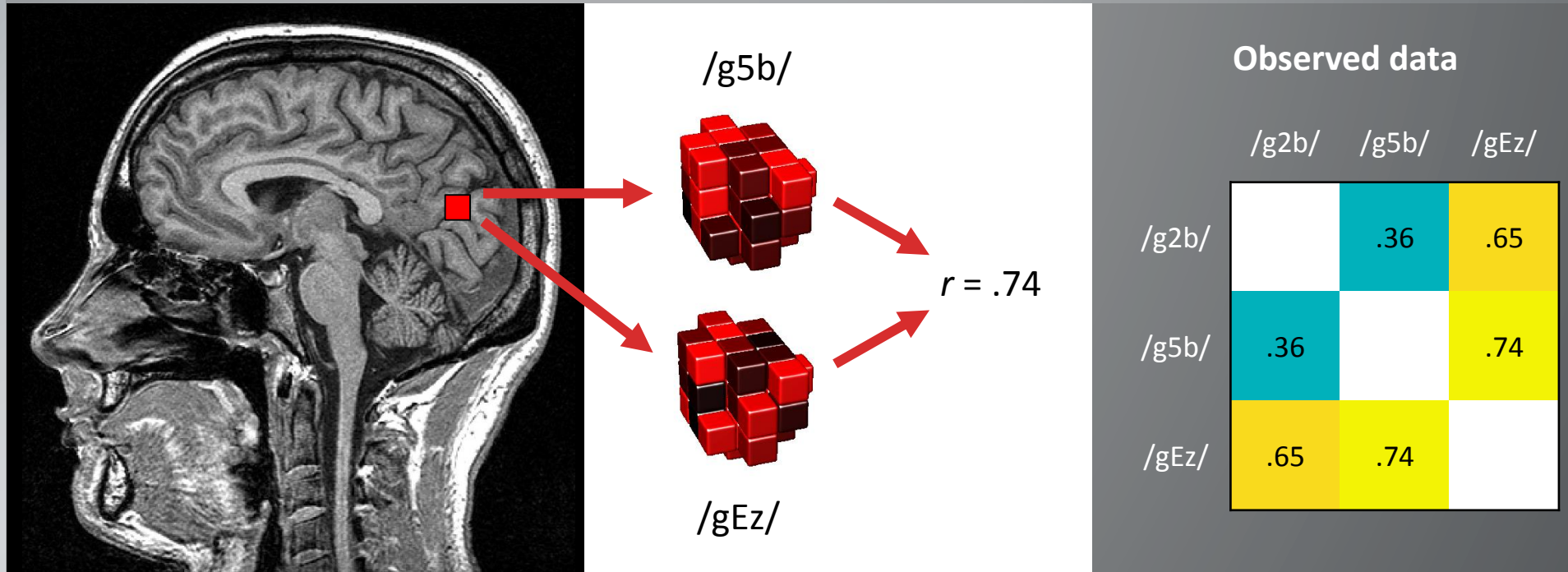




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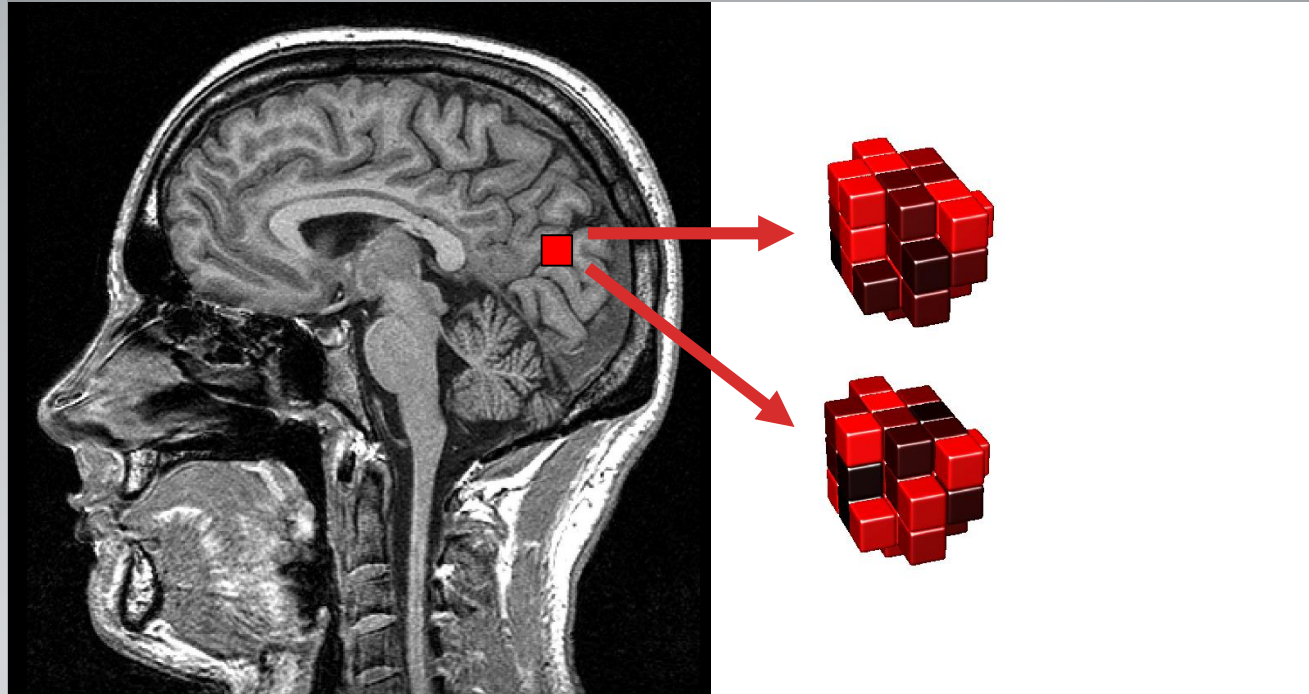




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Observed data

	/g2b/	/g5b/	/gEz/
/g2b/	NaN	.36	.65
/g5b/	.36	NaN	.74
/gEz/	.65	.74	NaN



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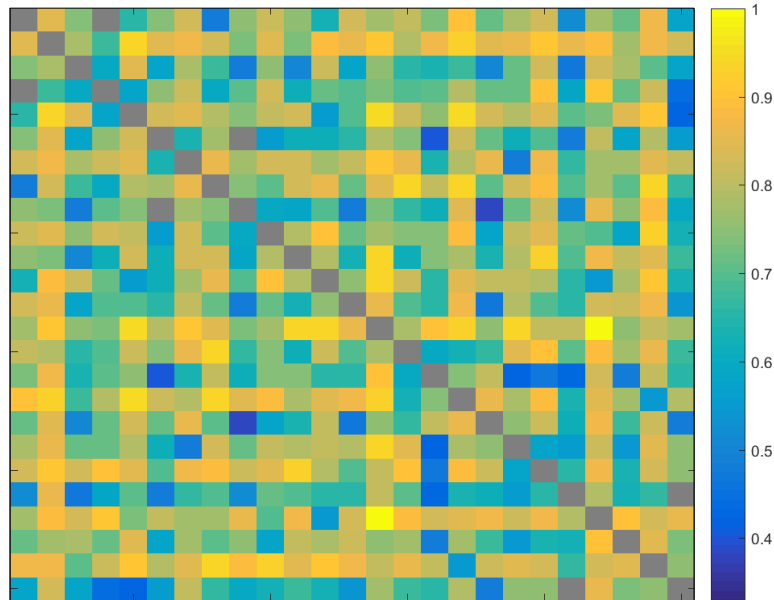
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Correlate fit of prediction matrices

Observed data



Correlate fit of prediction matrices

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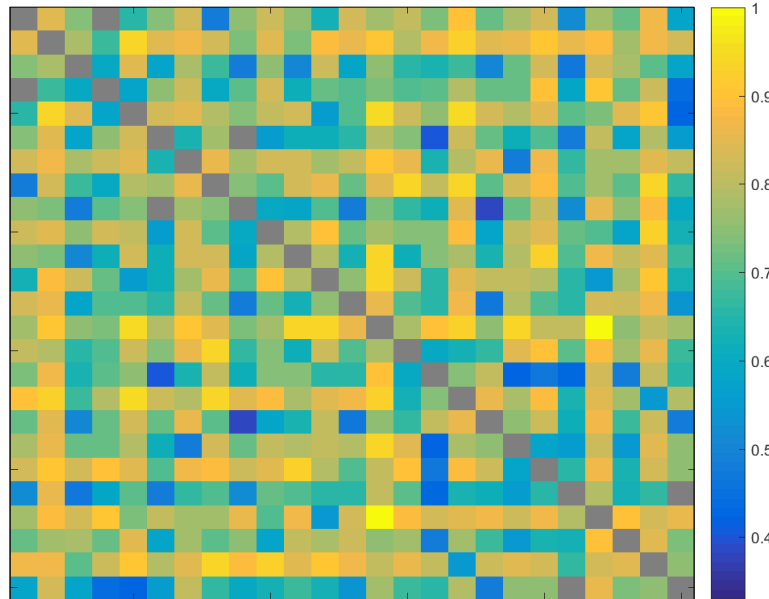
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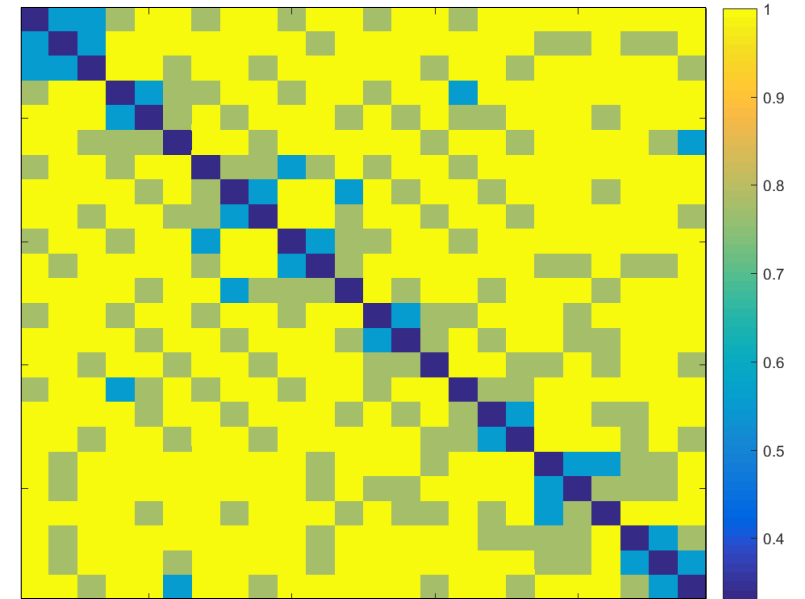
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Prediction matrix (phonological)



$r = 0.23$

Correlate fit of prediction matrices

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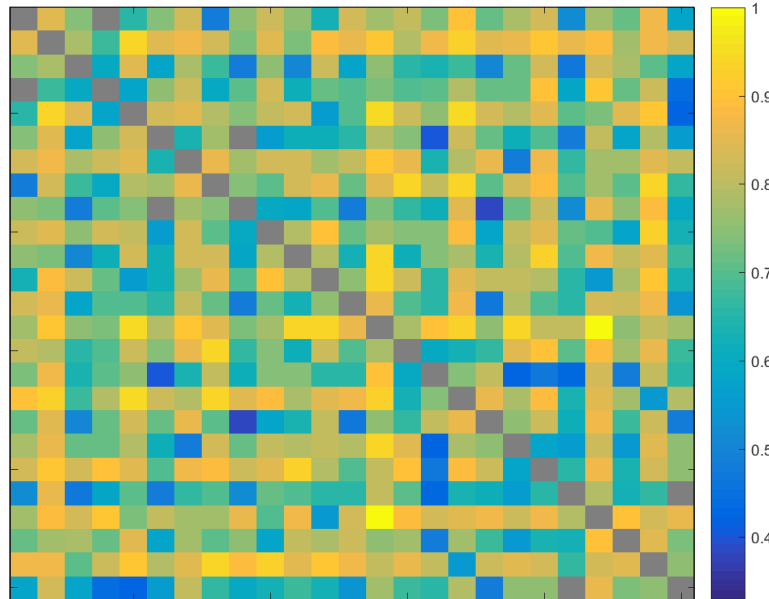
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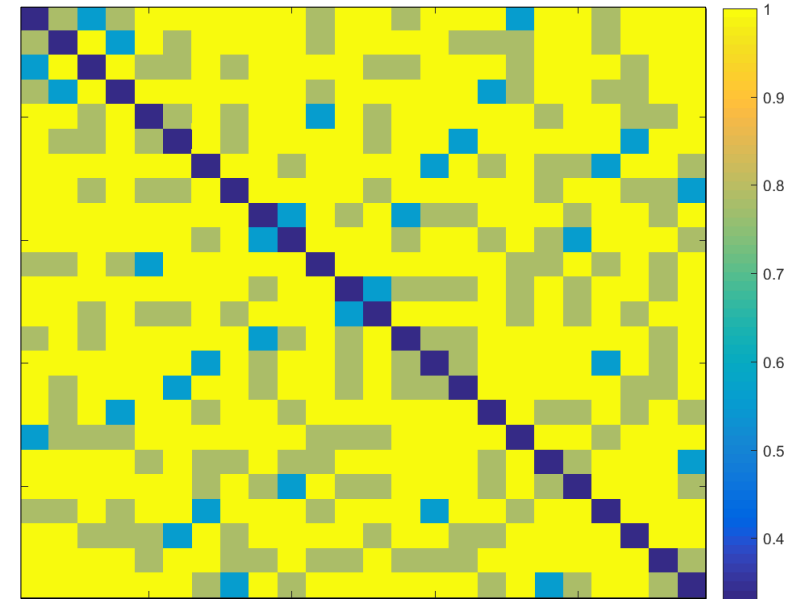
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Prediction matrix (orthographic)



$r = 0.12$

Visual modality – Orthographic similarity

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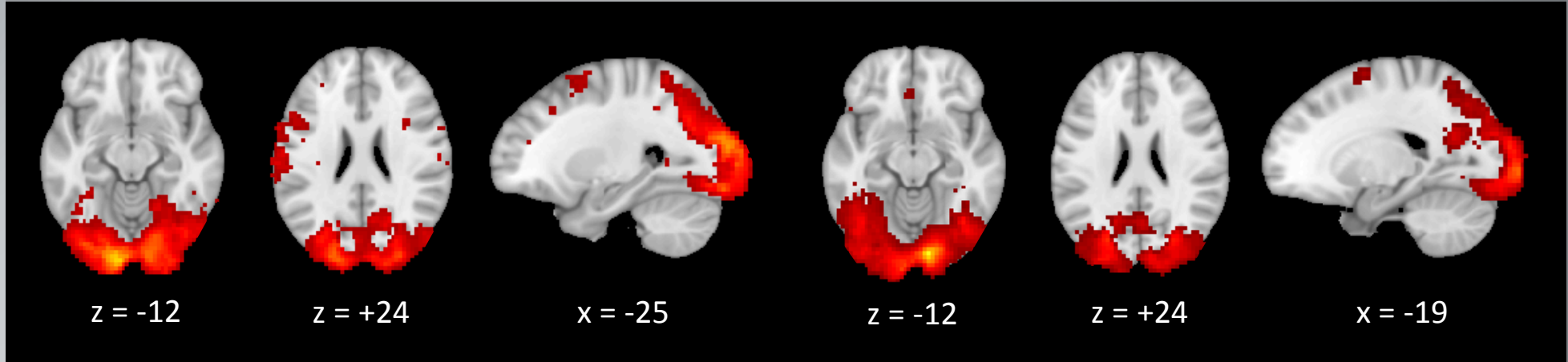
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Alphabetic > 0

Logographic > 0



Orthographically structured representations found in regions that have been associated with written language processing and spoken language processing for alphabetic and logographic languages (very little in regions associated with spoken language processing for logographic)

$p < .001$ uncorrected

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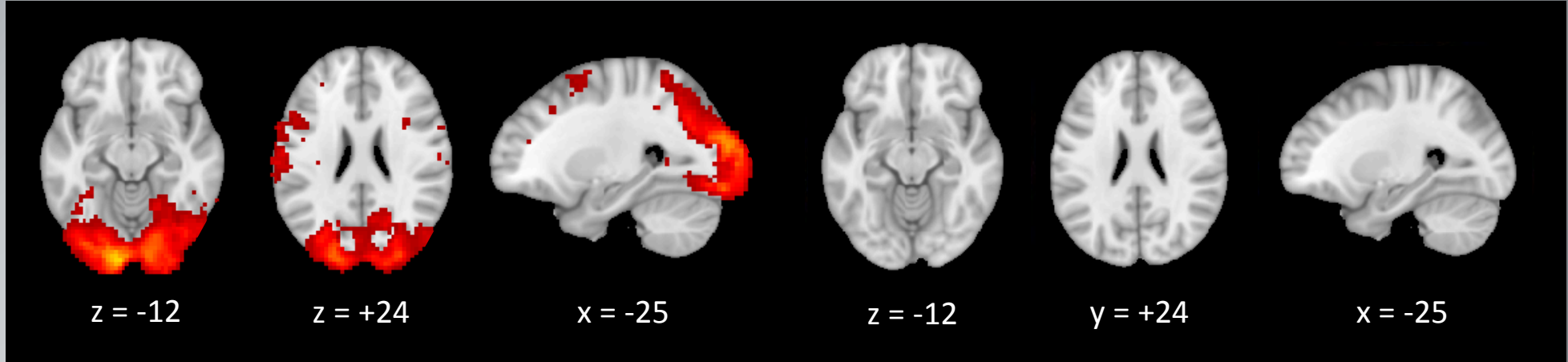
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Visual modality – Phonemic similarity

Alphabetic > 0

Logographic > 0



Phonemically structured representations found in both regions that have been associated with written language processing and spoken language processing areas for alphabetic. No phonemic structure exhibited by representations evoked by the logographic language.

$p < .001$ uncorrected

Auditory modality – Phonemic similarity

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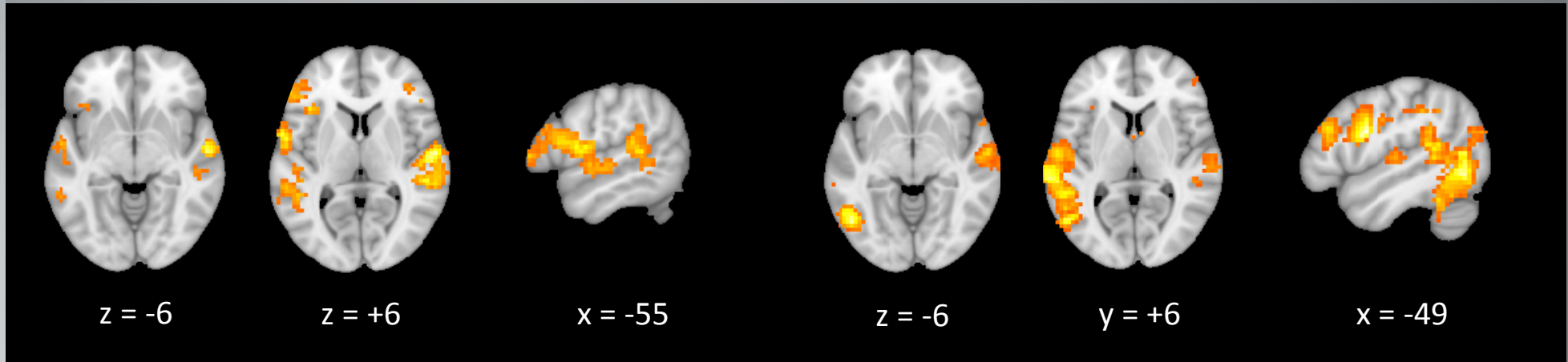
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Alphabetic > 0

Logographic > 0



Phonemically structured representations found in regions that have been associated with spoken language processing for the alphabetic language, and both regions that have been associated with spoken and written language processing for the logographic language.

$p < .001$ uncorrected

Auditory modality – Orthographic similarity

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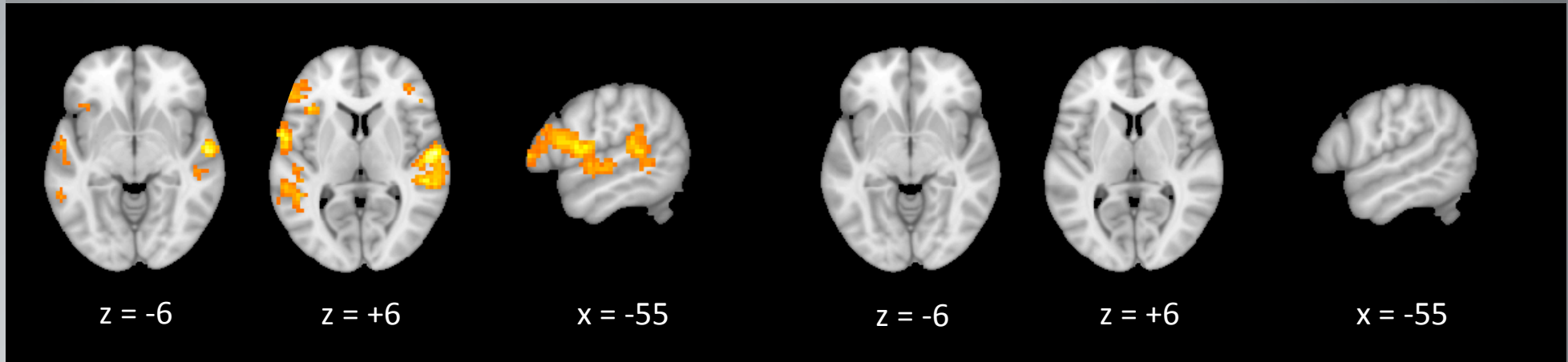
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Summary

Alphabetic > 0

Logographic > 0



Orthographically structured representations found in regions that have been associated with spoken language processing for the alphabetic language. No orthographic structure exhibited by representations evoked by the logographic language.

$p < .001$ uncorrected



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High orthographic transparency strengthens orthography–phonology mapping

- O-P mappings acquired and recalled more efficiently for alphabetic system
- Significantly higher accuracy and faster RT for O-P tasks, slower RT for O-S tasks



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1

High orthographic transparency strengthens orthography–phonology mapping

- O-P mappings acquired and recalled more efficiently for alphabetic system
- Significantly higher accuracy and faster RT for O-P tasks, slower RT for O-S tasks

2

Low orthographic transparency strengthens orthography–semantics mapping

- O-S mappings recalled more efficiently for logographic writing system
- Significantly faster RT for O-S tasks, lower accuracy and slower RT for O-P tasks



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High orthographic transparency strengthens orthography–phonology mapping

- O-P mappings acquired and recalled more efficiently for alphabetic system
- Significantly higher accuracy and faster RT for O-P tasks, slower RT for O-S tasks

2

Low orthographic transparency strengthens orthography–semantics mapping

- O-S mappings recalled more efficiently for logographic writing system
- Significantly faster RT for O-S tasks, lower accuracy and slower RT for O-P tasks

3

Orthographic transparency does not appear to affect spoken language processing

- No differences between alphabetic/logographic when orthography not present
- Does not support orthographic effect on speech perception²



Neuroimaging data

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Neuroimaging data

1

Left PrG and SPL more active for alphabetic languages when orthography present

- Increased phonological processing for alphabetic writing system⁵



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Left PrG and SPL more active for alphabetic languages when orthography present

- Increased phonological processing for alphabetic writing system⁵

2

Bilateral AnG and MOG more active for logographic system when orthography present

- Increased semantic/phonological lexicon processing for logographic⁵



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Left PrG and SPL more active for alphabetic languages when orthography present

- Increased phonological processing for alphabetic writing system⁵

2

Bilateral AnG and MOG more active for logographic system when orthography present

- Increased semantic/phonological lexicon processing for logographic⁵

3

No difference in activation for spoken language tasks where orthography not present



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Left PrG and SPL more active for alphabetic languages when orthography present

- Increased phonological processing for alphabetic writing system⁵

2

Bilateral AnG and MOG more active for logographic system when orthography present

- Increased semantic/phonological lexicon processing for logographic⁵

3

No difference in activation for spoken language tasks where orthography not present

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Next steps: Paired-samples t-tests and ROIs analyses on RSA searchlight maps



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THANK YOU

Dr Joanne Taylor
Dr Angelika Lingnau
Dr Tibor Auer
Professor Kathy Rastle

Royal Holloway, University of London





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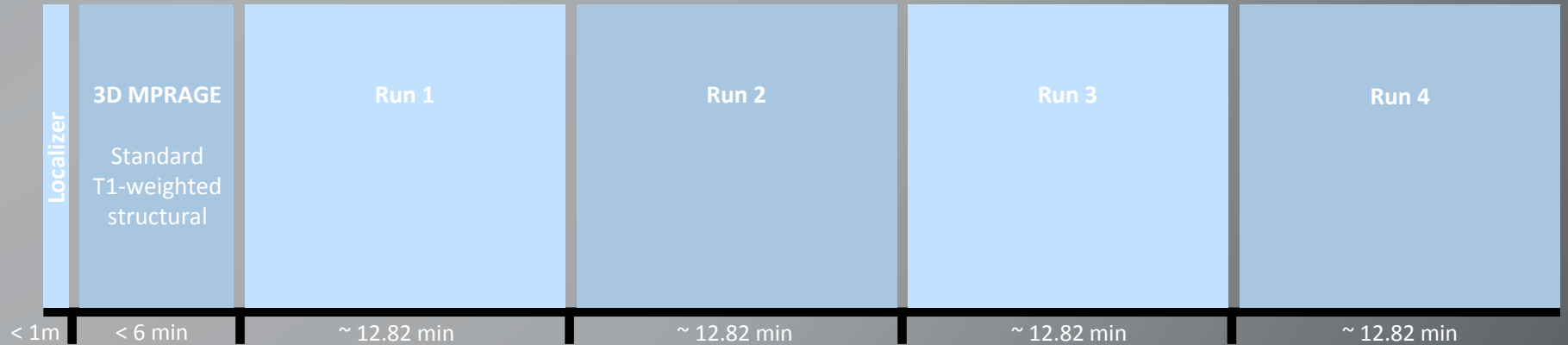
3T Siemens scanner

192 trials per run

Languages include 24 items
Each item presented 4 times

Block-related design

2 sessions including 8 alternating runs
4 runs per session: 2 visual / 2 auditory
12 blocks per run = 16 trials per block
2 languages alternating between blocks
4 target categories x 3 = one per block
2500ms stimuli + 500ms ITI per trial





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Visual Semantic Monitoring

Continuous imaging
TR = 2000ms
TA = 2000ms

Auditory Semantic Monitoring

Sparse imaging
TR = 3000ms
TA = 2000ms

