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Spanish Nominalizations and Case Assignment

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Spanish Nominalizations and Case Assignment



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LSA 2019, New York, NY

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1. BASIC DATA and THEORETICAL ACCOUNT

(1) **Verbal nominalization (VN)**: nominative + adverb

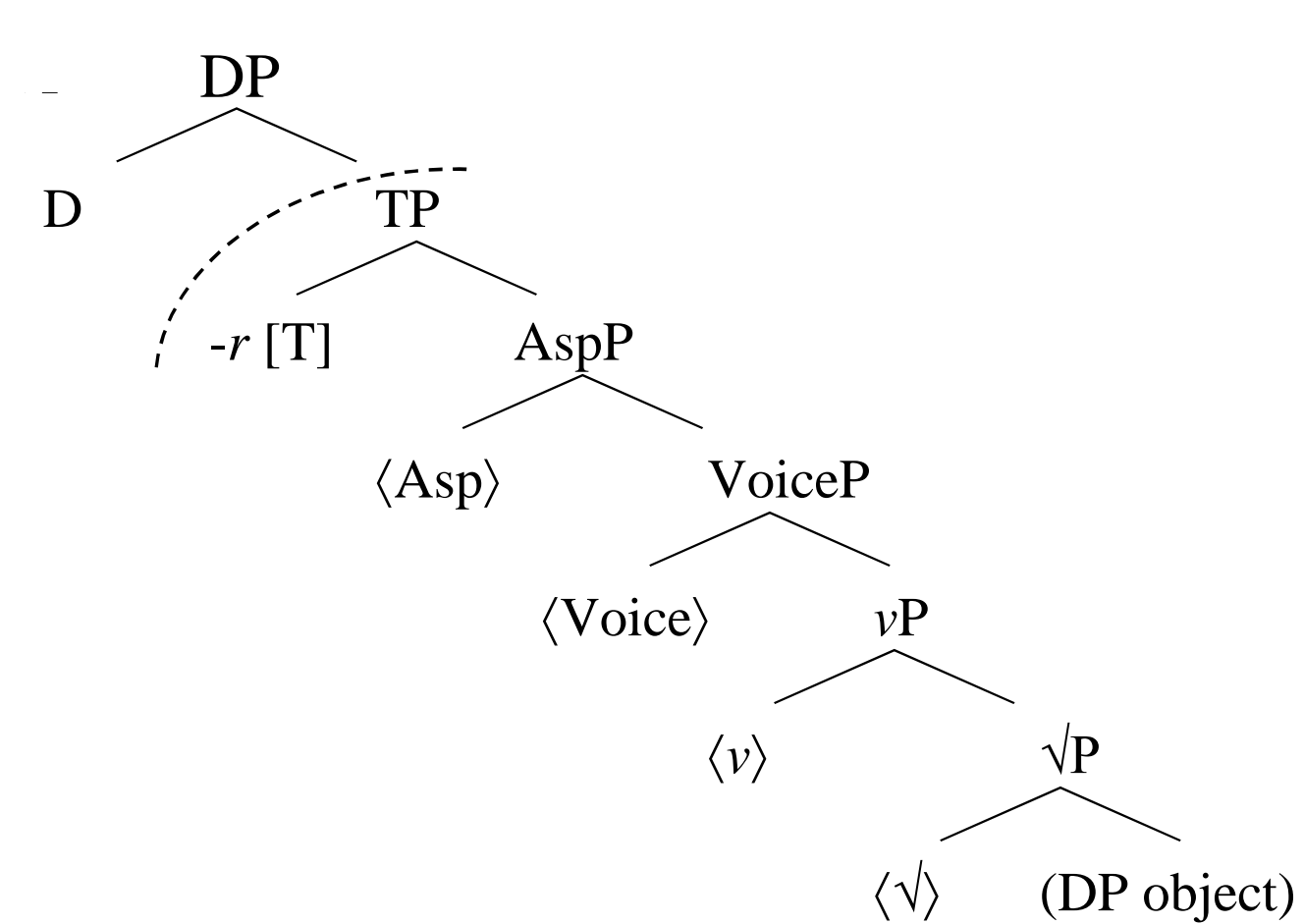
[El and-ar el niño tan tarde] nos preocupa
[the walk-INF the child.NOM so late] us worries
“[The child’s walking so late] worries us.”

(2) **Nominal nominalization (NN)**: genitive + adjective

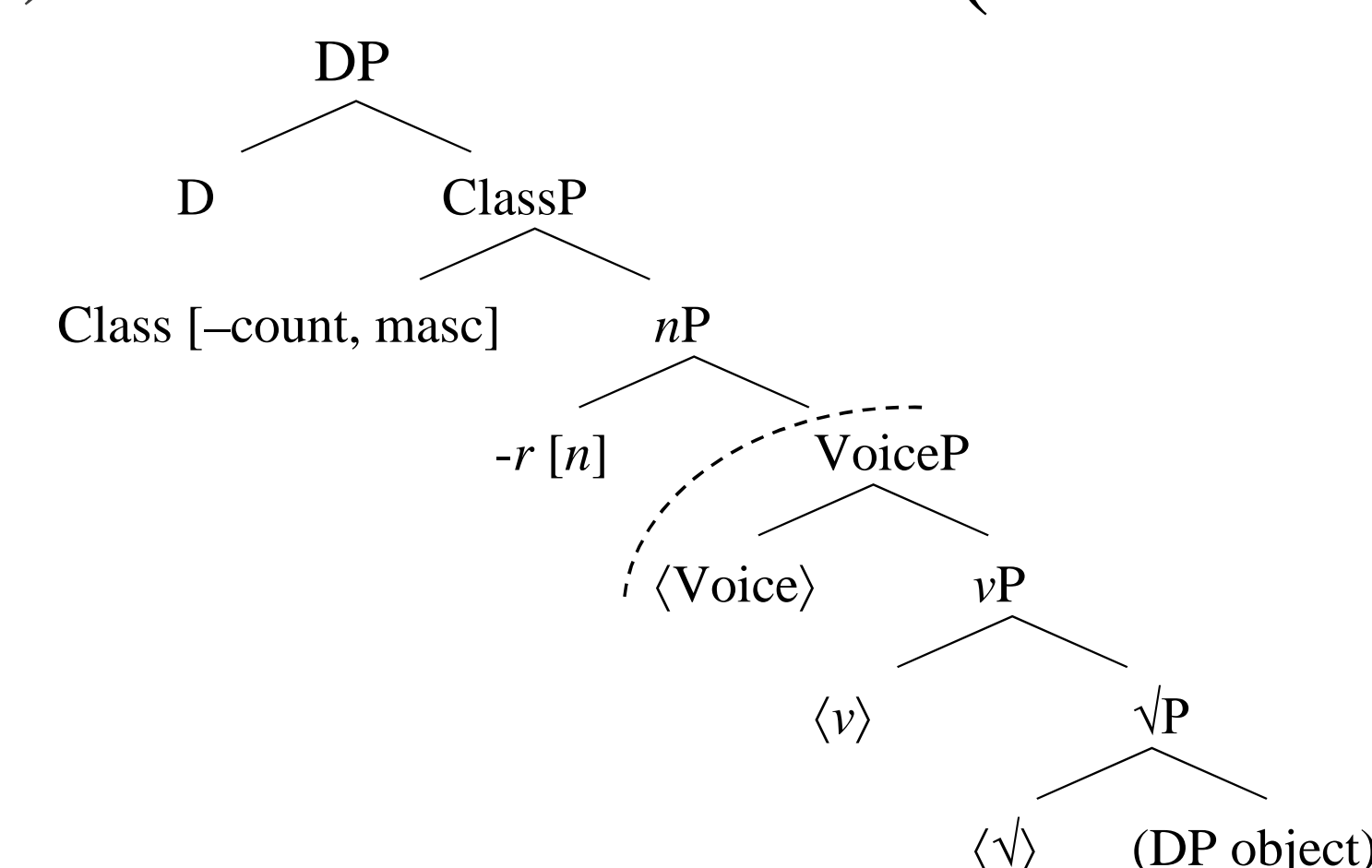
[El constante fum-ar de Juan] es molesto
[the constant smoke-INF GEN Juan] is bothersome
“[Juan’s constant smoking] is bothersome.”

(de Miguel 1996: 34)

(3) VN



(4) NN



(Alexiadou et al. 2011: 13)

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (How) Do the proposed structures account for the co-occurrence of (subject) case and adverbial or adjectival modifiers in each type of nominalization?
- How can the following apparent contradiction be explained?:

(5) [Su continuo conducir camiones imprudentemente] representa un peligro
“[Her/his continuous careless truck-driving] presents a danger.”

(Ramírez 2003: 122)

3. PARTICIPANTS

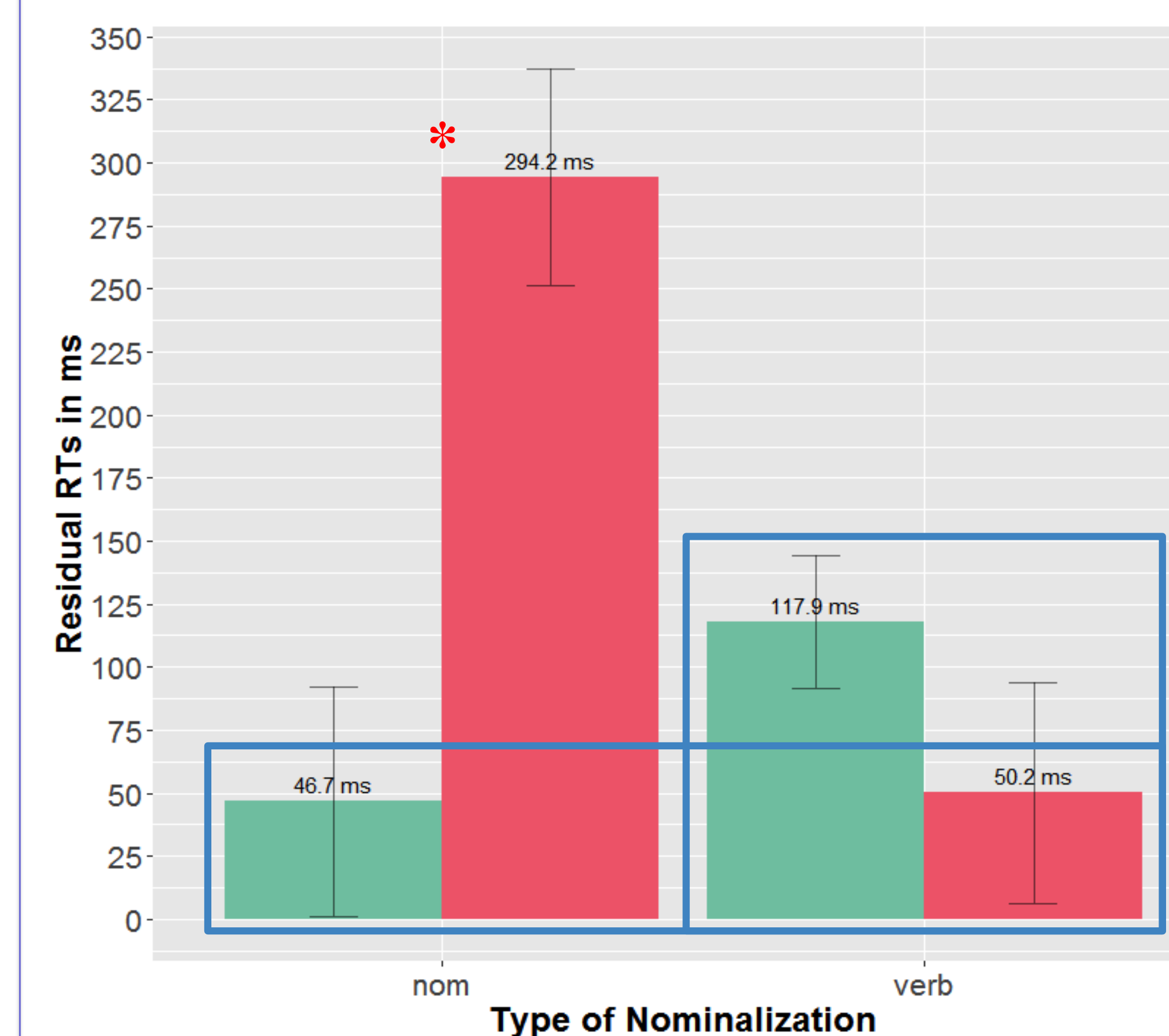
- 42 monolingual Spanish speakers (24 women, 18 men)
- Mean age: 30.04 years (SD 10.17 years)
- Minimal formal study of other languages (self-reported >1 year English)
- No (self-reported) auditory or visual impairments
- Tested at computer laboratory at University of Guanajuato, Mexico

4. METHODOLOGY

- Self-paced reading via moving, non-cumulative, word-by-word display
- Each participant saw 40 constructed sentences + 40 fillers
- Presentation of each experimental token was randomized
- Latin square, four lists (each participant saw one version of each item)
- 2x2 design: nominalization type (nominal/verbal) and grammaticality
- Control: length, frequency, animacy, definiteness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
a.*	Pues yo	creo que	el constante susurrar			Mario	fue	insultante
b.	Pues yo	creo que	el constante susurrar		de	Mario	fue	insultante
c.	Pues yo	creo que	el susurrar	constantemente		Mario	fue	insultante
d.*	Pues yo	creo que	el susurrar	constantemente	de	Mario	fue	insultante

5. RESULTS



- mixed-effect model (lme4, R)
- main effect of **grammaticality** ($\beta=-90.71$, $SE=37.24$, $t=-2.436$, $p=0.014$) and **type** of nominalization ($\beta=120.65$, $SE=26.32$, $t=4.585$, $p<0.0001$)
- modulated by an interaction between **grammaticality and type** ($\beta=-157.4$, $SE=37.17$, $t=-4.234$, $p<0.0001$)

	Estimate	SE	df	t ratio	Pr> t
nominal gram. vs. ungram.	-248.11	52.92	1415.52	-4.689	<0.0001
verbal gram. vs. ungram.	66.69	52.31	1413.27	1.275	0.5791

6. CONCLUSIONS

- Both **grammatical** combinations (NN: adj. + gen.; VN: adv. + nom.) were read faster by participants (relatively lower RTs)
- Ungrammatical NN** combination (*adj. + nom.) read slower by participants (higher RTs), as expected.
- However, **ungrammatical VN** combination (*adv. + gen.) read comparably fast (low RTs indistinct from grammatical conditions).