

CROSS-LINGUISTIC GENDER INTERFERENCE EFFECTS IN L2 LEARNERS: THE EFFECT OF TYPOLOGICAL DISTANCE, COGNATE STATUS AND GENDER CONGRUENCY



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Background

- In early acquisition stages, retrieval and access to L2 representations are strongly linked to L1
- **Cross-linguistic interference** occurs when linguistic properties of the two languages interfere with processing mechanisms
- **Our study systematically investigates cross-linguistic interference effects in three bilingual populations of varying typological distance: Dutch-Spanish, German-Spanish and Italian-Spanish**
- Participants complete a production picture naming task and a comprehension task (violation paradigm) while their EEG is recorded

Research Questions

- What is the role of language similarity on cross-linguistic interference effects?
- Does cross-linguistic interference occur as a function of cognate status, or the interaction with gender-congruency across the two languages?
- How do cognate status and gender congruency modulate cross-linguistic interference?

Methods and Design

Experiments

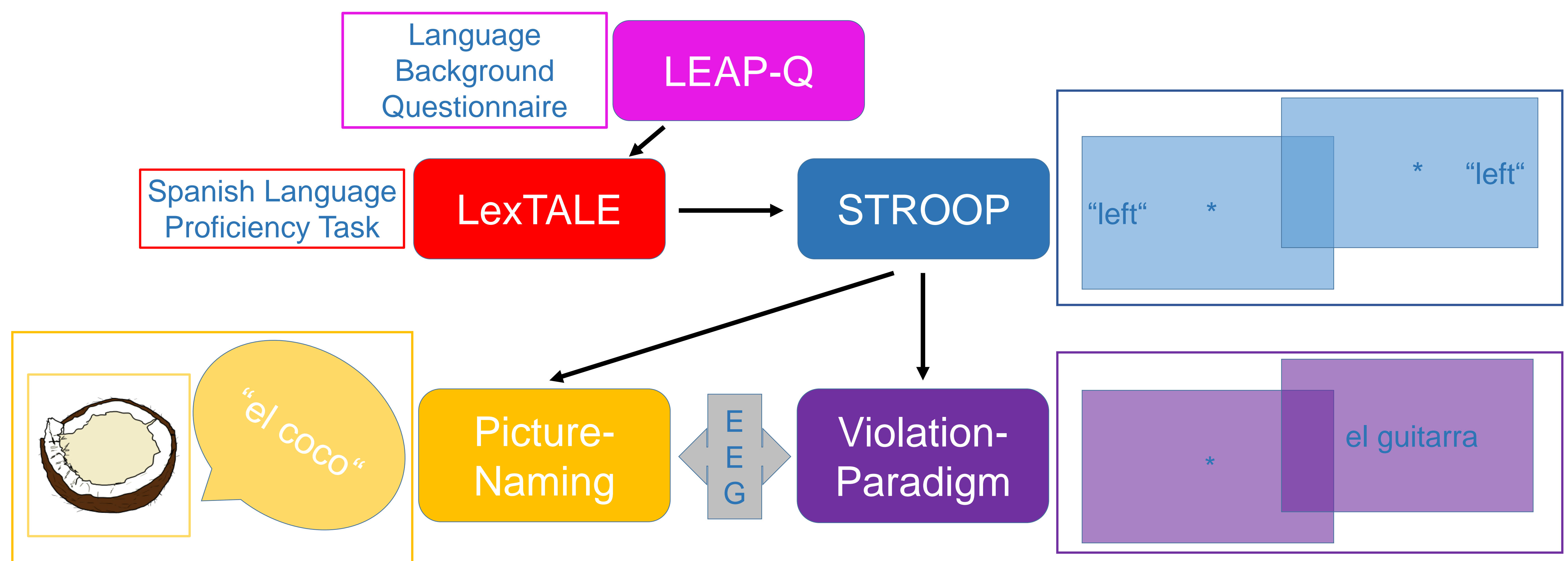
- Experiment 1:** Dutch-Spanish L2 Learners
- Experiment 2:** German-Spanish L2 Learners
- Experiment 3:** Italian-Spanish L2 Learners

Main experimental tasks

- Picture-Naming Task**
- Comprehension Task**

Manipulations

- **Cognate status:** die Gitarre/ la guitarra vs. la cortina/ der Vorhang
- **Gender congruency:** die Gitarre/ la guitarra vs. la cortina/ der Vorhang
- **Violation type:** la guitarra vs. el guitarra



Hypotheses

- **Behavioural evidence for cross-linguistic interference:**
 - Shorter processing latencies for cognates (cognate facilitation effect)
 - Shorter processing latencies for gender-congruent items (gender-congruency effect)?
- **Electrophysiological (ERP) evidence for cross-linguistic interference:**
 - Production Task - N200 reflecting response inhibition and L1 suppression as a function of cognate status and gender-congruency
 - Comprehension Task – P600 reflecting syntactic and semantic violations as a function of cognate status and gender-congruency

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