

Non-Culminating Accomplishments (NCAs) and Grammatical Aspect – Linguistics and Processing

► Accomplishments express composite, telic events

(1) Der Junge verspeiste die Pizza.
The boy ate the pizza.

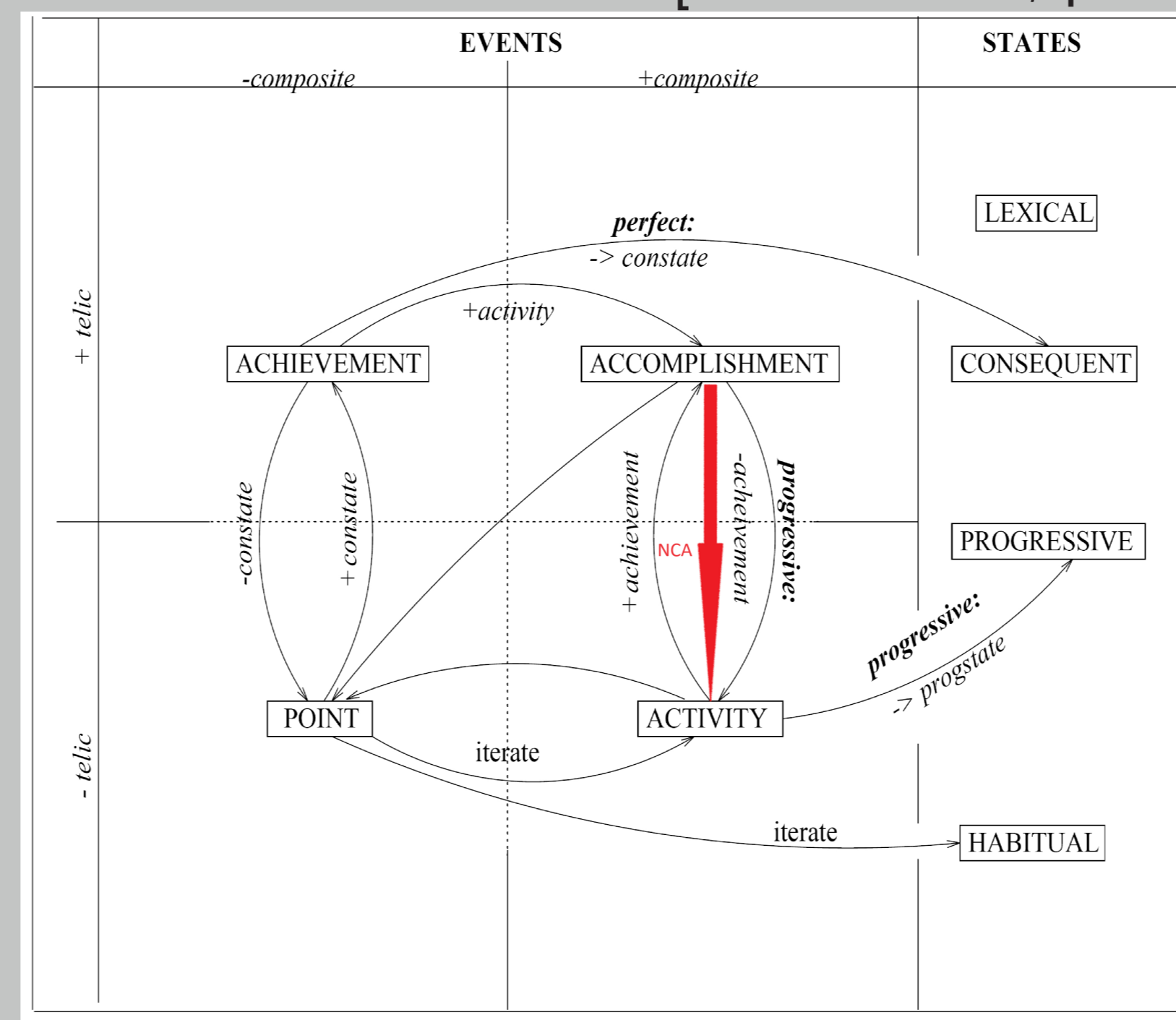
► They are therefore generally odd in combination with *for*-adverbials [1]

► However, non-culminating accomplishments (NCAs) have been observed even in languages marking the perfective [2,3,i.a.]

(2) The boy ate (#up) the pizza for five minutes.

► Cross-linguistic differences between aspect and non-aspect languages? [4,5,6,7,i.a.]

Eventualities & Coercion [mod. from 8, p. 97]



Summary **NCAs aren't taxing**, pro underspecification

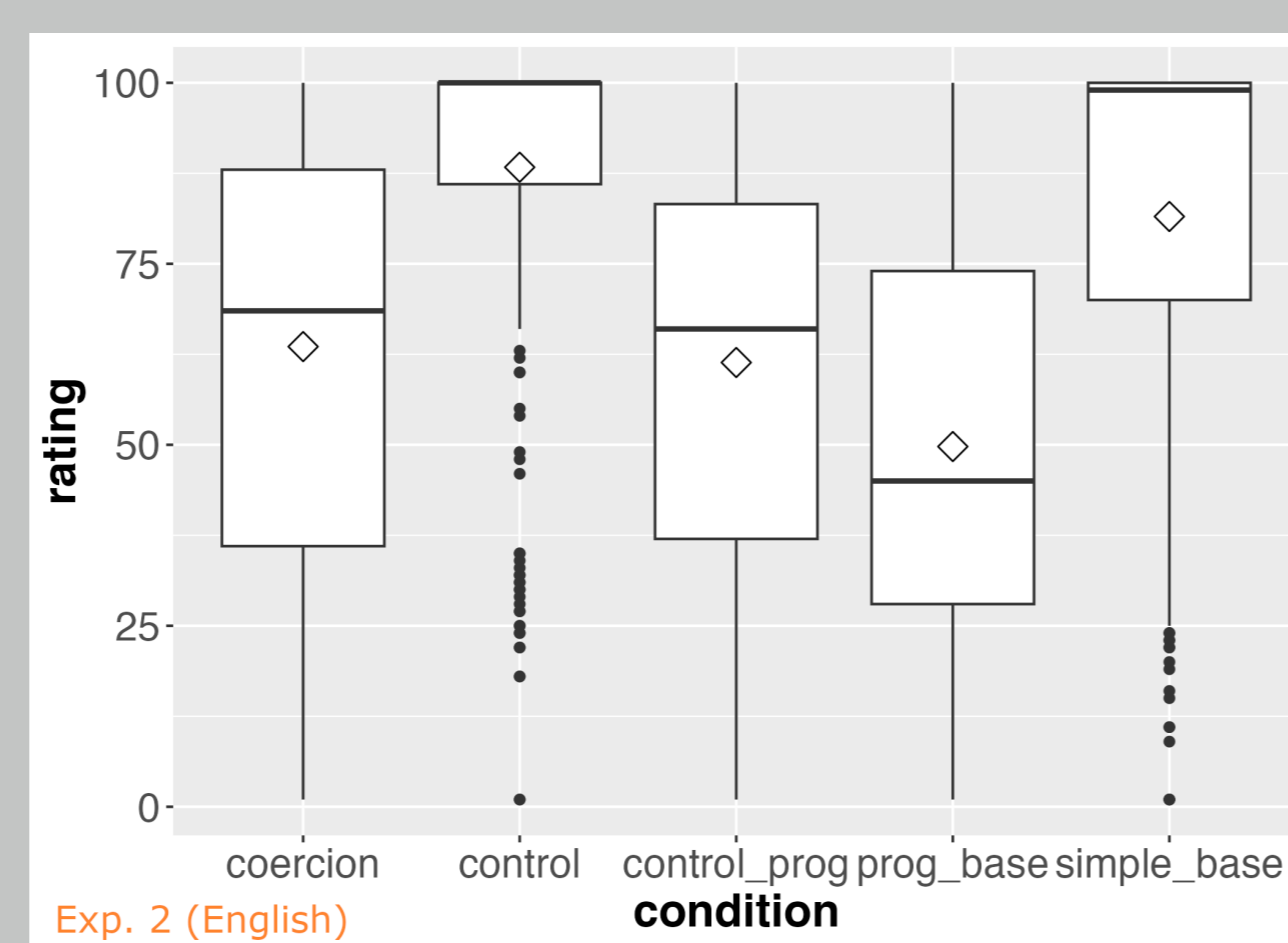
- Coercion induces processing cost [9,10, among many others]
- Within sentences but also in discourse [11]
- Cross-linguistic self-paced reading study on English and German NCAs [4]
 - ▷ Perfective NCAs cause difficulty in English but not in German
- Explanation in [4]: Competition with imperfective form leads to pragmatic strengthening, hence telic interpretations, in English. German lacks grammatical aspect marking resulting in underspecification
- However, conclusions based on different verbs/items
- ▷ Present study: Conceptual replication (attempt) in a preregistered study employing [4]'s English items

Study Design

German	English
Exp. 1: Offline Int.	Exp. 2: Offline Int.
Exp. 3: SPR sentence	Exp. 4: SPR sentence
Exp. 5: SPR discourse	Exp. 6: SPR discourse
Exp. 7: Stops-making-sense task (English)	

- Same linguistic materials, direct translations
- Offline interpretation and self-paced reading
- Coercion within and across sentences
- Manipulation of task demands (SPR vs. SMS)

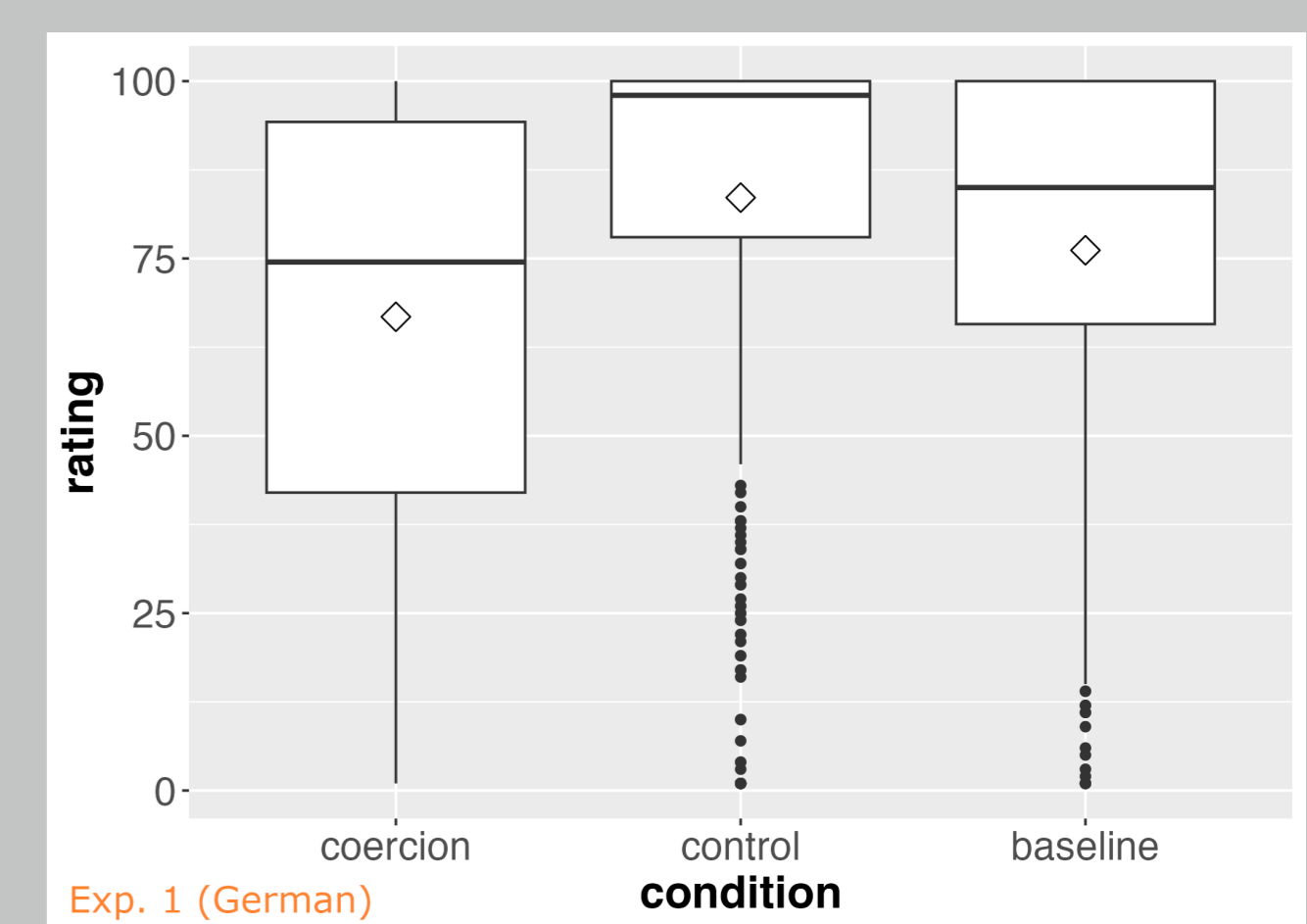
The Interpretation of German and English Accomplishments – Telicity Ratings on a Slider



Does it follow from the sentence that the pizza has been eaten up completely? (0 = no, definitely not, 100 = yes, definitely)

English conditions (48 items N=31)

- Coerc) Bo ate up the pizza for 5 min.
 - Ctrl) Bo ate up the pizza in 5 min.
 - P-Ctrl) Bo was eating up the pizza for 5 min.
 - Base) Bo ate/was eating up the pizza
- German conditions (48 items; N=30)
- Coerc) Bo verspeiste die Pizza 5 Min. lang
 - Ctrl) Bo verspeiste die Pizza in 5 Min.
 - Base) Bo verspeiste die Pizza



Interim Summary – Aspectual Interpretation in German and English

Baseline & Control conditions:

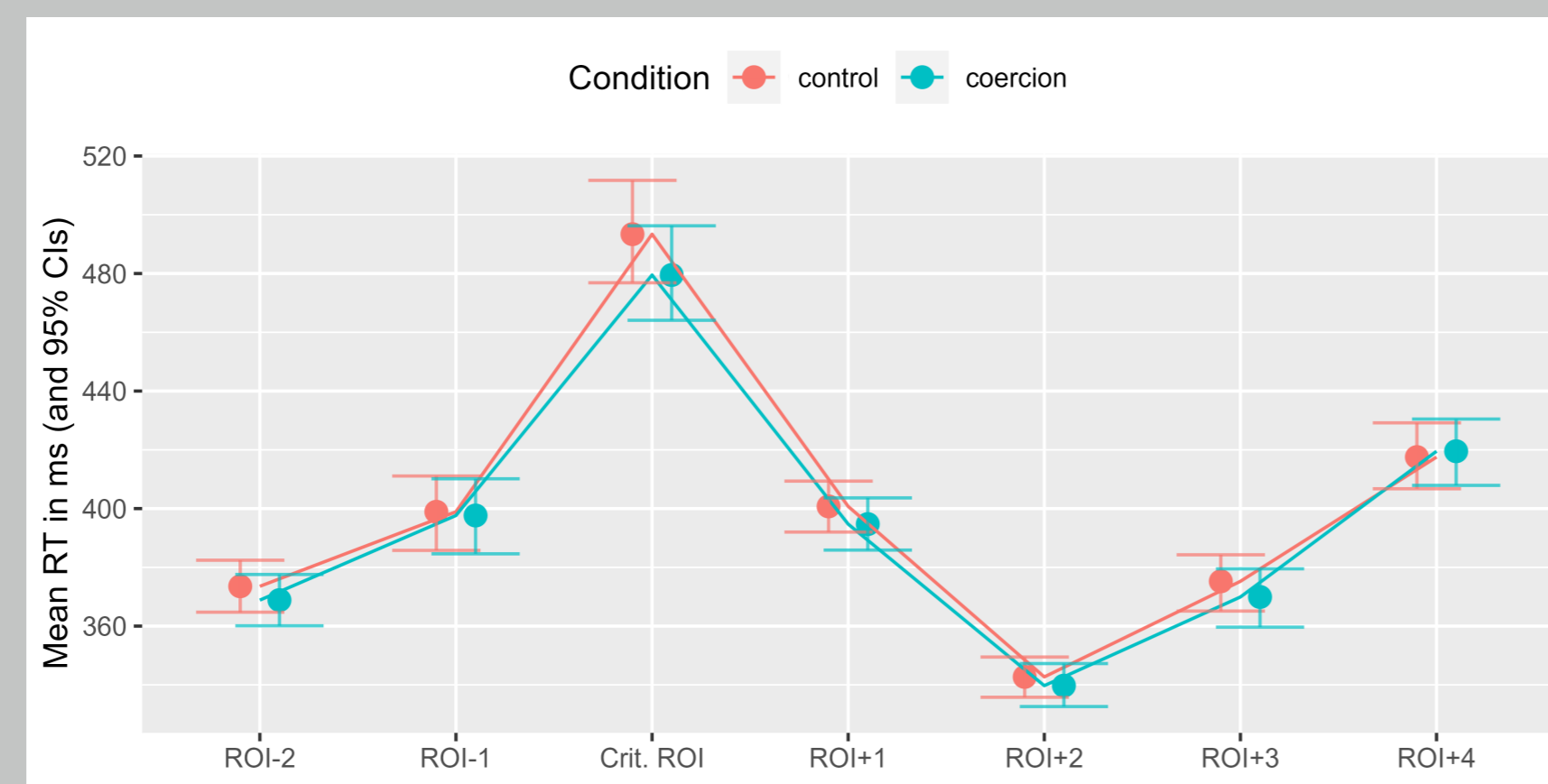
- In both languages, the (perfective) baseline conditions interpreted as telic
- No difference in English between (perfective) baseline and telic controls

Coercion conditions:

- *For*-adverbials significantly weaken this inference (▷ coercion effect)
- Resulting interpretation on a par with English imperfectives modified by *for*

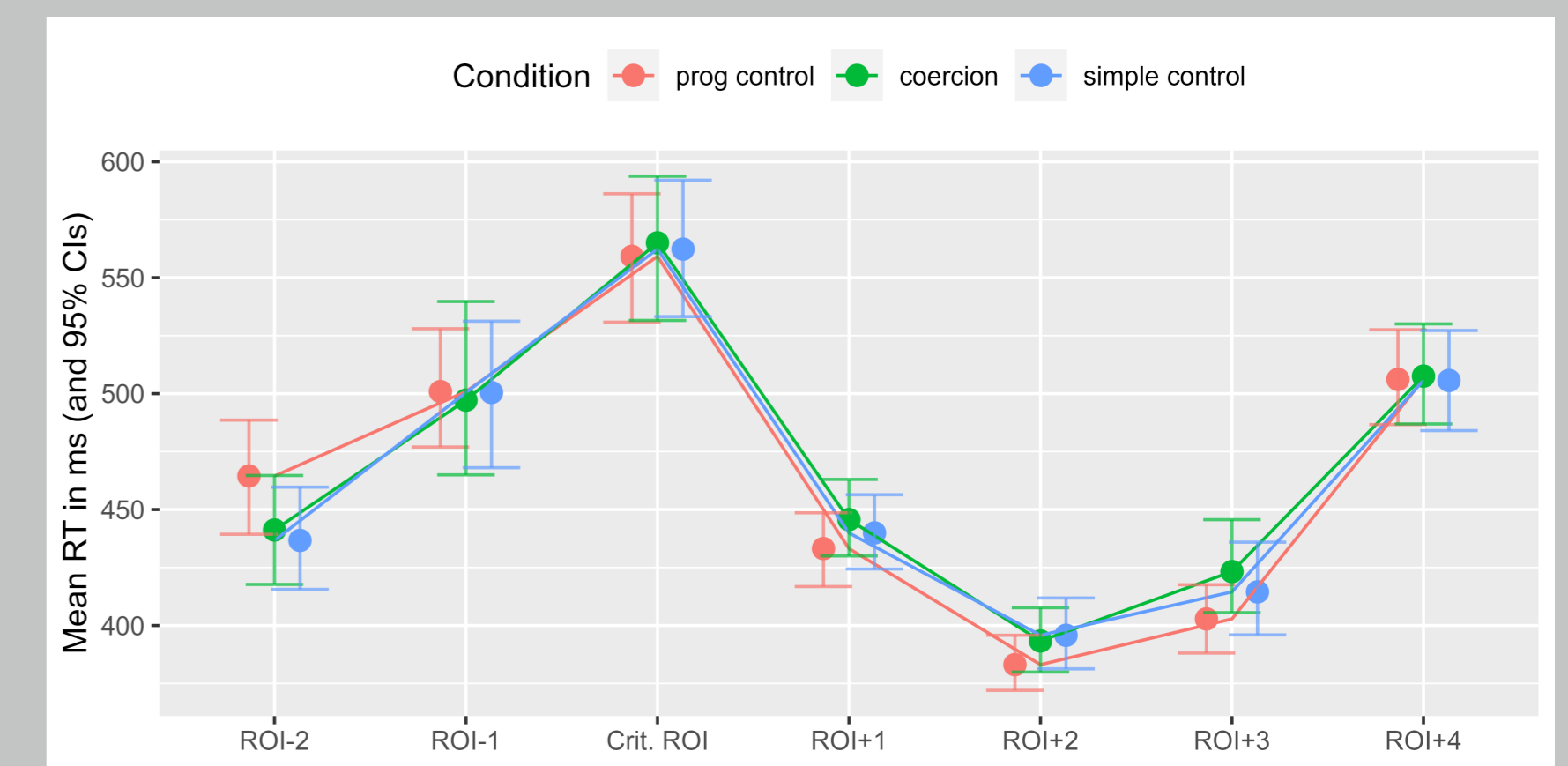
Self-Paced Reading of German Coercion Sentences (Exp. 3)

- 60 participants read 48 items (+ 45 filler sentences)
- Self-paced reading of ACCs:
 - ▷ Coercion: *for*-ADV
 - ▷ Control: *in*-ADV
- ▷ RT (Coercion) = RT (Ctrl)
- ▷ No semantic reanalysis [4]



Self-Paced Reading of English Coercion Sentences (Exp. 4)

- 60 participants read the same sentence materials
 - ▷ Coercion: *for*-ADV
 - ▷ Perfective Ctrl: *in*-ADV
 - ▷ Progressive Ctrl: *for*-ADV
- ▷ RT (Coercion) = RT (Ctrls)
- ▷ No coercion effect [contra 4]



Non-Culminating Accomplishments are easy to interpret when Coercion occurs within the Sentence – What about NCAs in Discourse?

Introductory Context Conditions:

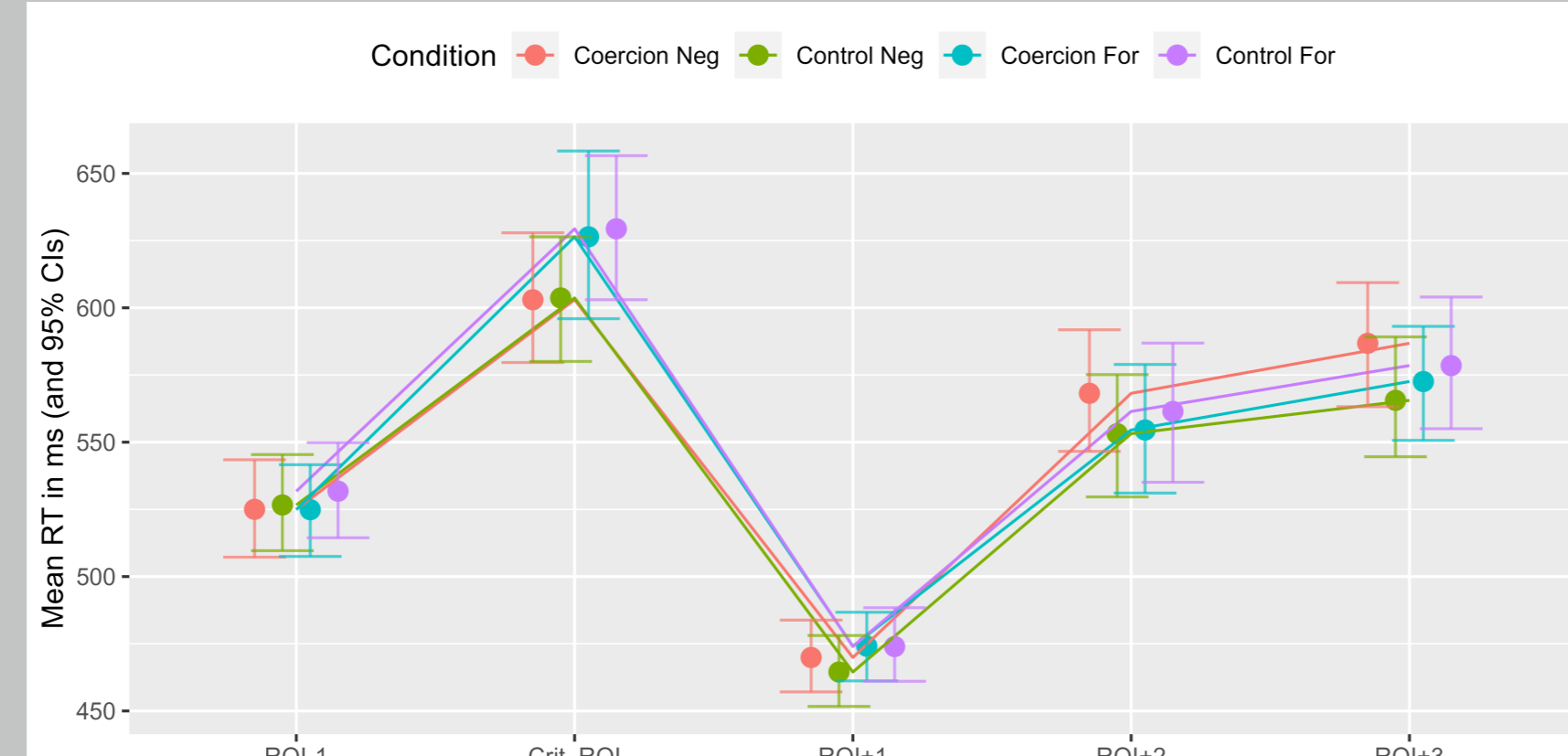
- Telic context: Bo ate up the pizza after it had been delivered to his place.
- NCA context with aspectual verb: Bo began eating up the pizza after [...].

Target Sentence Conditions:

- Explicit cancellation: He could | not finish it, however, | as | he received a call.
- Cancellation due to *for*: He did this | for about five minutes, | until | he ...

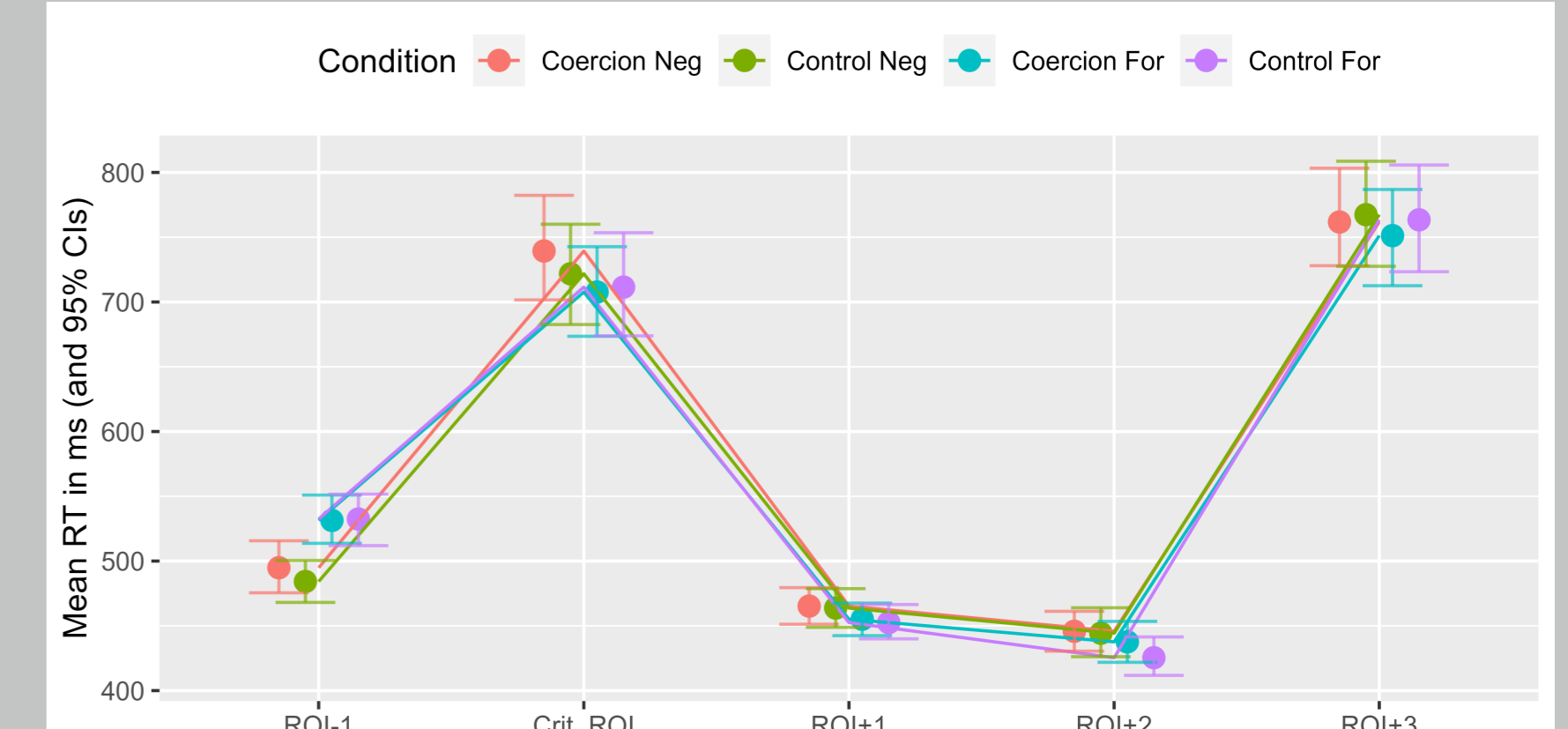
Self-Paced Reading of German Discourses with NCAs (Exp. 5)

- 90 participants read discourses in a 2x2 design
- Contexts with *begin* may give rise to non-actuality implicatures [12]
- ▷ No CONTEXT effects
- ▷ Telic inference easy to cancel

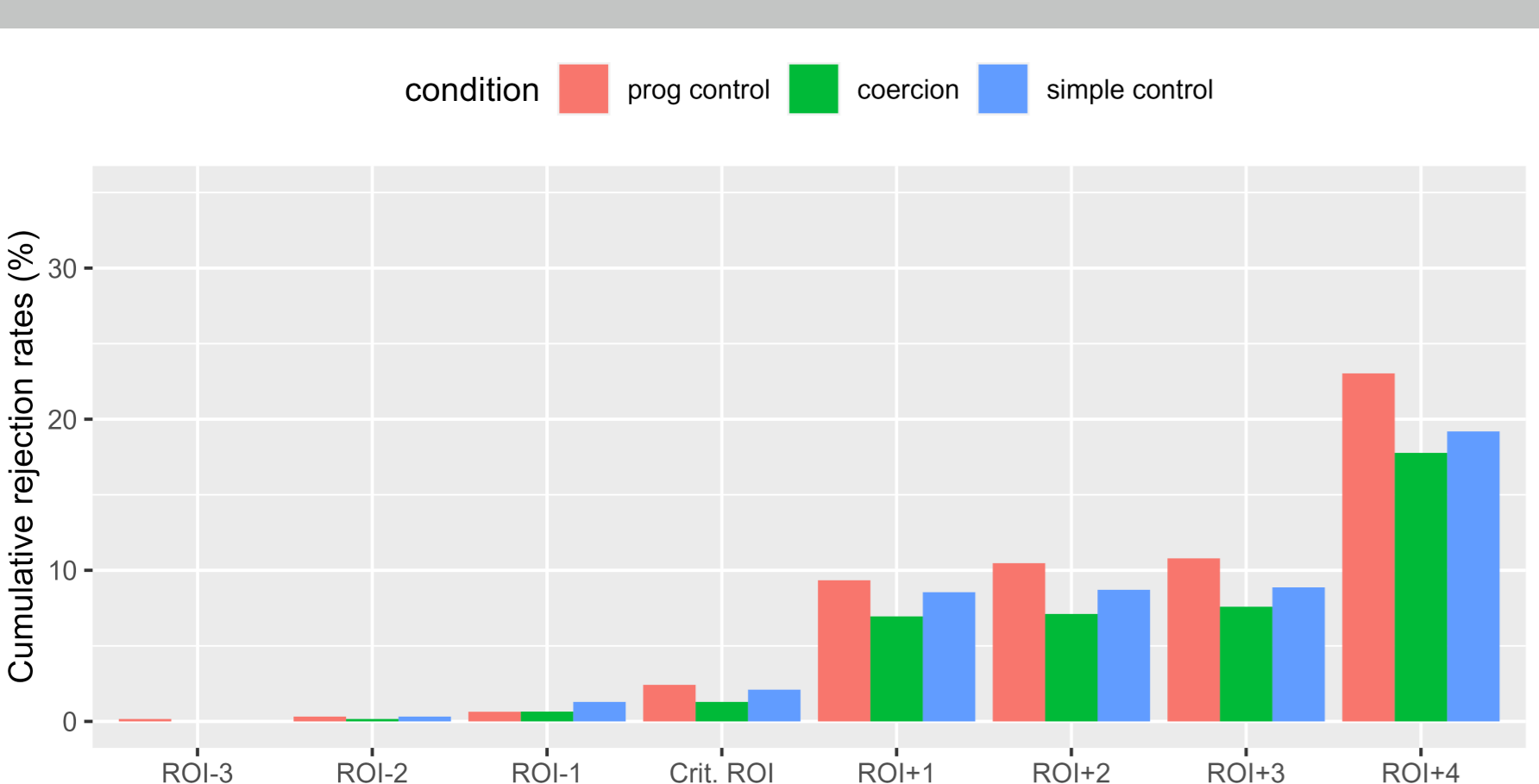


Self-Paced Reading of English Discourses with NCAs (Exp. 6)

- 90 participants read discourses in the same 2x2 design
- ▷ Again, no CONTEXT effects
- ▷ Culmination inference easy to cancel even for perfective accomplishments



Stops-Making Sense Task on English NCAs (Exp. 7)



- Lack of coercion effect due to shallow processing [13,14,i.a.]?
- Stops-making sense task [15,16] in English, 39 participants
- Materials from Exp. 4 plus 39 non-sensical and 38 sensible fillers
- Analysis of cumulative rejection rates and RTs of *yes*, *go on*
 - ▷ Coercion as acceptable as Ctrls, no difference in rejections
 - ▷ Again, no coercion effect in RTs, computation of NCAs w/o any cost even when continuously checking/evaluating sensicality

