

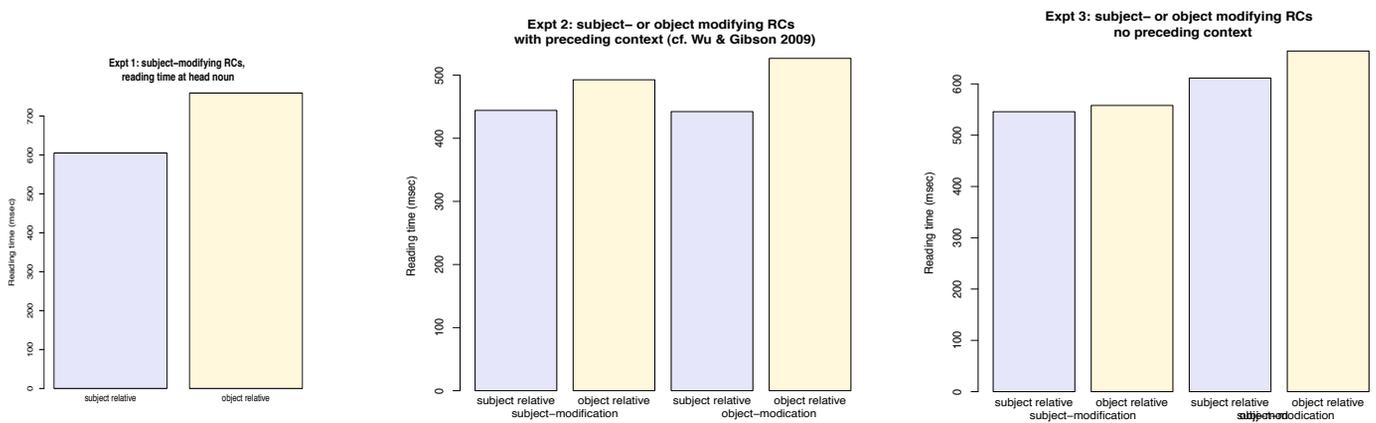
# Integration cost or structural frequency? The evidence from Chinese relative clauses

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## Question 1: Are subject relatives harder to process than object relatives in Chinese, as Hsiao & Gibson (2003) and others claim? Four self-paced reading studies show this may not be true.

- [SR subj. mod.] **GAP** shushi furen de jingli yujian le mushi  
knows tycoon manager met priest  
The manager who knows the tycoon met the priest.
- [OR subj. mod] furen shushi **GAP** de jingli yujian le mushi  
tycoon knows manager met priest  
The manager who the tycoon knows met the priest.
- [SR obj. mod.] mushi yujian le **GAP** shushi furen de jingli ...  
priest met knows tycoon manager
- [OR obj. mod.] mushi yujian le furen shushi **GAP** de jingli...  
priest met tycoon knows manager

**Results of Expts 1-3:  
We uniformly find faster reading times at head noun in subject RCs compared to object RCs, regardless of whether the RC is preceded by context or not.**

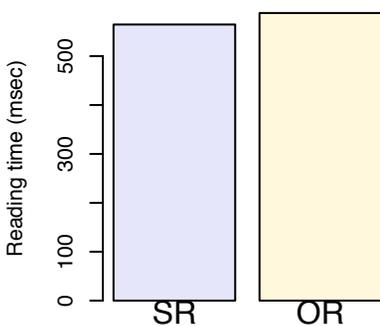


## Question 2: Is there any evidence in Chinese RCs for integration cost as defined in DLT (Gibson 2000)? Expt 4 suggests yes.

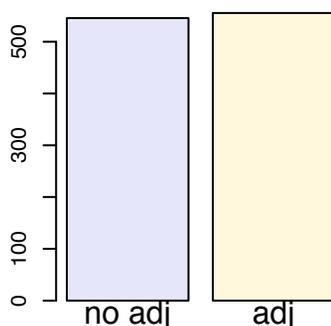
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|--|--|
| <p>A. OR, no <b>adjective</b> intervener<br/>chusede jiaoshou renshi <b>GAP</b> de zuojia<br/>outstanding professor know writer<br/>The writer who the outstanding prof. knows</p> | <p>B. OR, <b>adjective</b> intervener<br/>jiaoshou renshi <b>GAP</b> de chusede zuojia<br/>professor know outstanding writer<br/>The outstanding writer who the prof. knows.</p> |
| <p>C. OR, no <b>PP</b> intervener<br/>chelide jiaoshou renshi <b>GAP</b> de zuojia<br/>in car professor know writer<br/>The writer who the prof. in the car knows</p>              | <p>D. OR, <b>PP</b> intervener<br/>jiaoshou renshi <b>GAP</b> de chelide zuojia<br/>professor know in car writer<br/>The writer in the car who the prof. knows.</p>              |
| <p>E. SR, <b>adjective</b> not modifying head-noun<br/><b>GAP</b> verb <b>adjective</b> object de <b>subject</b></p>   | <p>F. SR, <b>adjective</b> modifying head-noun<br/><b>GAP</b> verb object de <b>adjective</b> subject</p>  |
| <p>G. SR, <b>PP</b> not modifying head-noun<br/><b>GAP</b> verb <b>PP</b> object de <b>subject</b></p>   | <p>H. SR, <b>PP</b> modifying head-noun<br/><b>GAP</b> verb object de <b>PP</b> subject</p>  |

**Results of Expt 4:  
Consistent with DLT's predication, adjective interposition did not cause a slowdown at head noun, but PP insertion did. However, no OR advantage was found.**

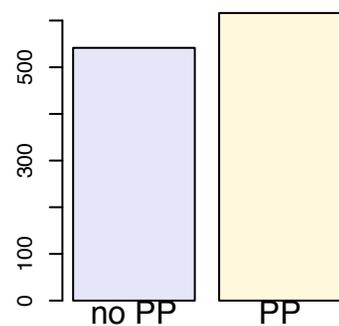
Expt 4: SR vs OR



Expt 4: Adj. insertion, ORs



Expt 4: PP insertion, ORs



### Conclusions:

- Subject RCs are easier to process than object RCs, contra Hsiao & Gibson 2003.**
- This result holds even when context is provided (contra Wu & Gibson, submitted).**
- The subject RC advantage can be explained in terms of structural frequency; the integration account makes the wrong prediction.**
- Nevertheless, Expt 4 presents evidence consistent with the claim (Gibson 2000) that introducing a discourse referent between dependencies makes integration more difficult.**

### References:

Gibson, E. & Wu, I. (submitted) Processing Chinese relative clauses in context.  
Hsiao, F. & Gibson, E. (2003). Processing relative clauses in Chinese. Cognition.

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