

# Do you speak American?

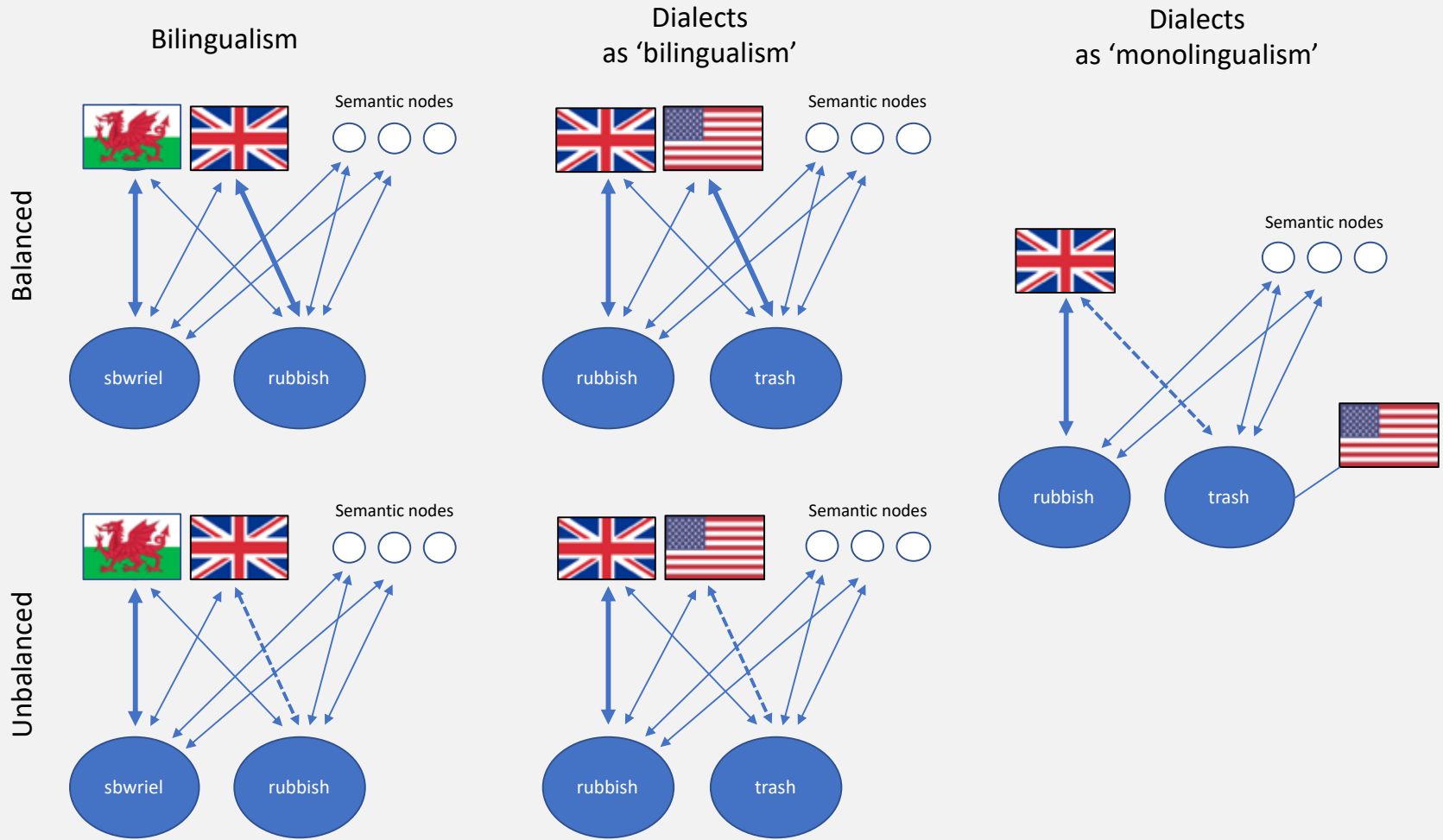
## Dialect entrainment in word production indicates language-like tagging

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Do speakers represent the elements of dialects as ad hoc assemblages, identified only upon effortful etymological evaluation, or as coherent categories, capable of priming other elements via dialect associations?



- Previous studies have reported inconsistent results when using bilingualism-research-derived paradigms to understand how speakers represent dialects (Melinger, 2018; Dylman & Barry, 2018).
  - But dialect differences are infrequent and often continuous rather than discrete (e.g., in the Americanism 'truck' exists alongside the Britishism 'lorry' in UK English), so it's not clear that language-like representation of dialects should produce language-like behavioural effects.
- Our novel approach uses priming to elicit an **increase** in dialectal usage, better reflecting its natural properties than an all-or-none switch.

How can we test for language-like dialect tagging?

1. Use picture-naming norms to empirically identify lexical differences between UK and US English
2. Add norm-derived feedback to a two-session norming task, to assess whether feedback generalises to affect other word choices
  - a) Assess whether elements of a dialect prime each other in retrieval (Q1, Q3)
  - b) And whether dialect-tagging might generalise to an entire episode in memory (Q2)

### Session 1

Q1: Can dialect-based feedback elicit a generalized increase in dialect use? ✓

Presenting feedback that a picture of a tap<sub>UK</sub> should be named as 'faucet<sub>US</sub>' increases participants' likelihood of naming a subsequent jumper<sub>UK</sub> as 'sweater<sub>US</sub>'

### Session 2

Q2: Do people tag episodes in memory as involving particular dialects? ✗

At the onset of Session 2, participants were more likely to use Americanisms for the specific items that had previously been paired with UK feedback, and Britishisms for the specific items that had previously been paired with UK feedback.

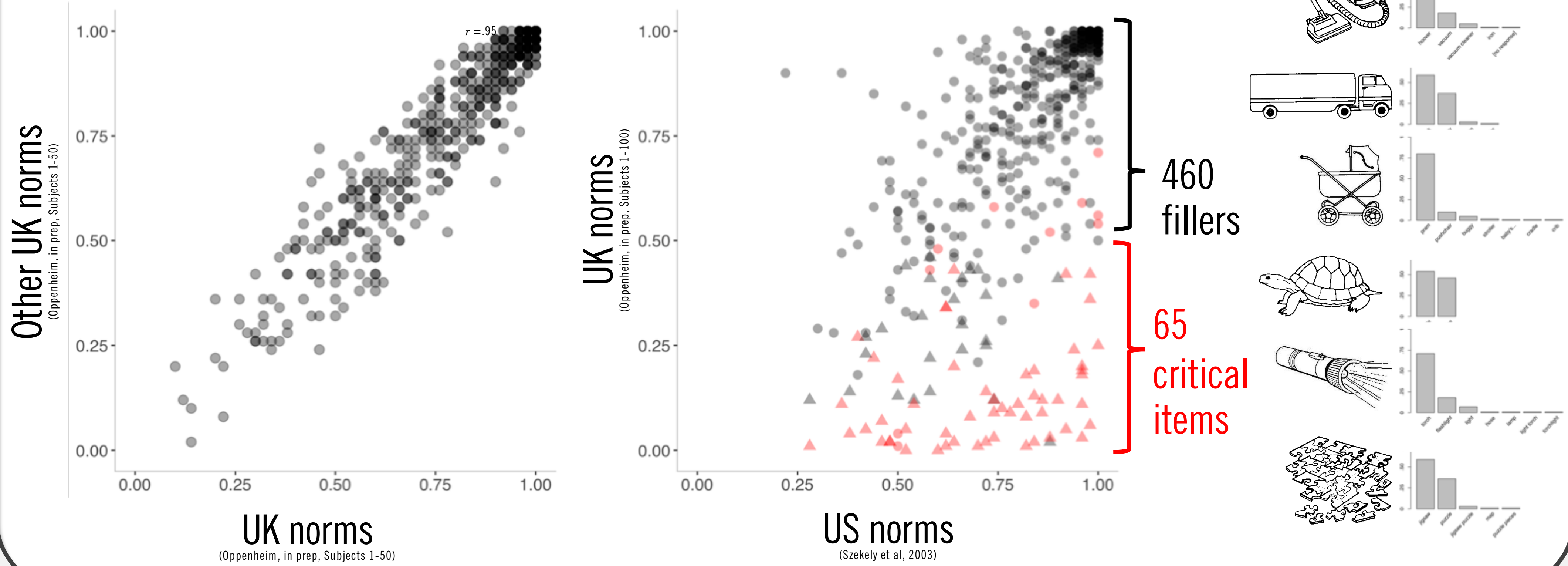
Q3: Do speakers self-prime dialect use during language production? ✓

For items that had previously been paired with UK feedback, participants grew increasingly likely to name them using Americanisms as Session 2 progressed.

### Conclusion

Gradual generalisation within sessions suggests functional organisation of dialects as coherent, primable, categories, similar to distinct languages. Though speakers might consciously detect and adapt to a non-native feedback in Session 1, similar priming emerged in Session 2, where its only possible source was the participants' own productions, consistent with the idea that speakers use language-like dialect tagging to constrain lexical retrieval.

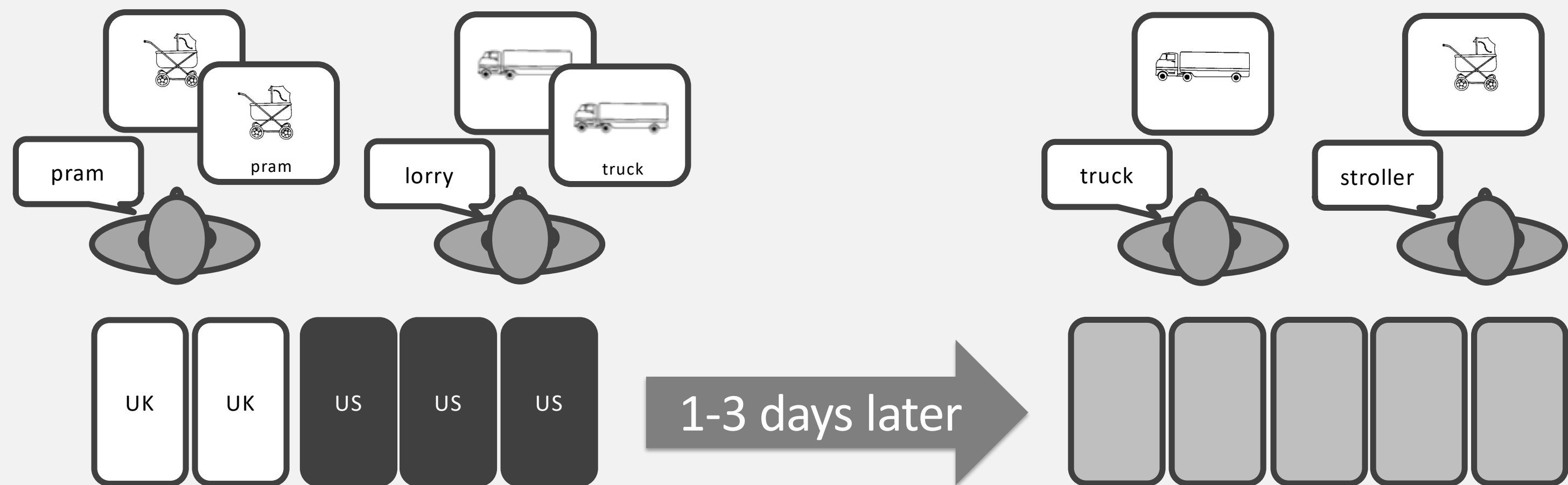
## Dialect differences emerge in picture naming norms



### Session 1

#### Simple picture naming with immediate feedback

- No actual mention of dialects at any point
- Basic norming procedure adapted from the International Picture Naming Project (Bates et al., 2003)
  - 525 black-and-white line drawings:
    - 65 dialect critical items (12.4%, see above), 460 dialect-agnostic fillers
    - Each picture presented once per session per subject
  - Feedback after each trial + instruction to remember for a later test
    - UK or neutral feedback in Blocks 1-2
    - US or neutral feedback in Blocks 3-5
- 26 native UK English-speaking Bangor University students



### Session 2

#### Picture-cued name recall without feedback

- 1-3 days after Session 1
- Same stimuli, participants, and procedure as Session 1, but without feedback
  - Instruction to name pictures using feedback from Session 1

