



Kent Academic Repository

Pocock, Grace, Abbot-Smith, Kirsten, Horst, Jessica and Grassmann, Susanne (2019) *Where does the wug go? How pre-schoolers use sentence context to infer the taxonomic categories of novel words*. In: *Child Language Symposium*, 11th-12th July 2019, Sheffield, UK.

Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/75331/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

This document version

UNSPECIFIED

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

UNSPECIFIED

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in *Title of Journal*, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

'Where does a wug go?'

How pre-schoolers use sentence context to infer the taxonomic categories of novel nouns

Grace Pocock¹, Kirsten Abbot-Smith²,
Jessica Horst³ & Suse Grassmann⁴

¹Royal Holloway, University of London, ²University of Kent, ³University of Sussex, ⁴Independent researcher

USING VERB SELECTIONAL RESTRICTIONS TO INFER NOVEL NOUN MEANINGS

Prior studies.....

- ❑ Only examined inferred semantic categories at very broad level.
 - e.g. animate vs. inanimate.
- ❑ Only required identification of object appearance.
- ❑ Novel object appearance logically connected to verb selectional restrictions.
 - 'the veps is crying' → only 1 obj has eyes.
- ❑ In many studies, learning could have occurred in test phase itself.

METHOD

TRAINING:

- 36 4-yr-olds, all exposed to 1 novel food AND 1 novel clothing
- Objects shapes did not indicate category
- Story-book context
- Each frame had a target AND a foil.

DESIGN: (between-subjects)

1. Verb selectional restrictions
 - a) Food: cook X; eat X; spill X; feed baby X
 - b) Clothes: iron Y; wear Y; put on Y; take off Y
2. Label-only: 'is with X; 'X is there'; there is the X'

TEST:

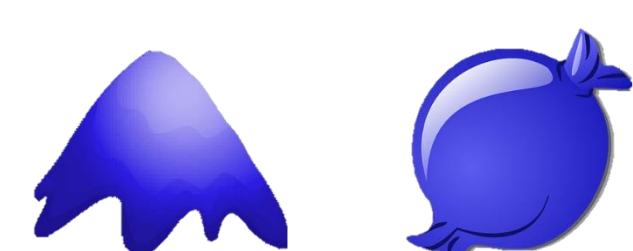
1. Taxonomic categorisation

'Where does a wug go?'



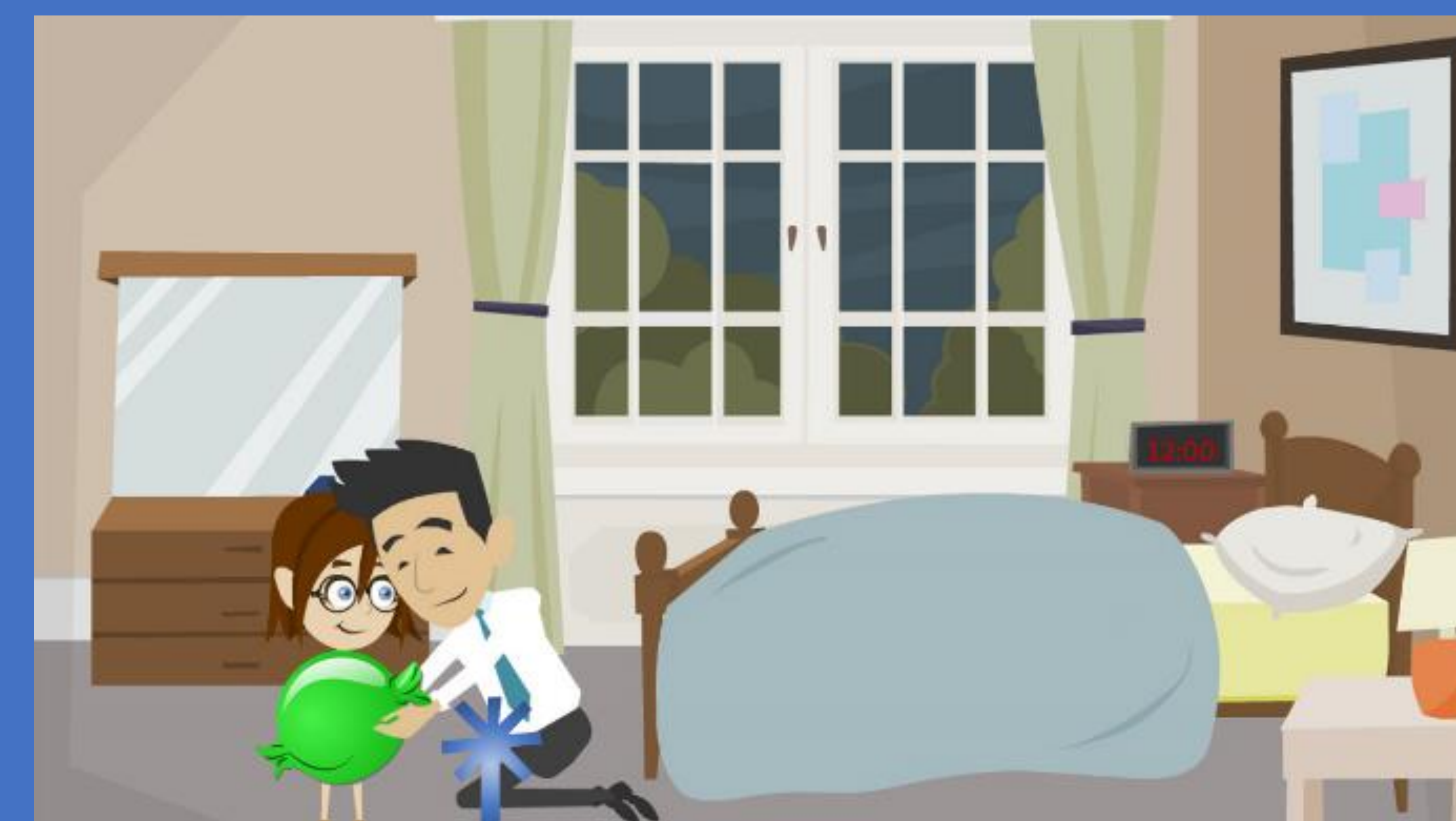
2. Object-label mapping

'Show me the wug!'



Preschoolers can infer object function from sentential context alone

'Where does a wug go?'



RESULTS

Fig.1. Post-test Performance Across Groups

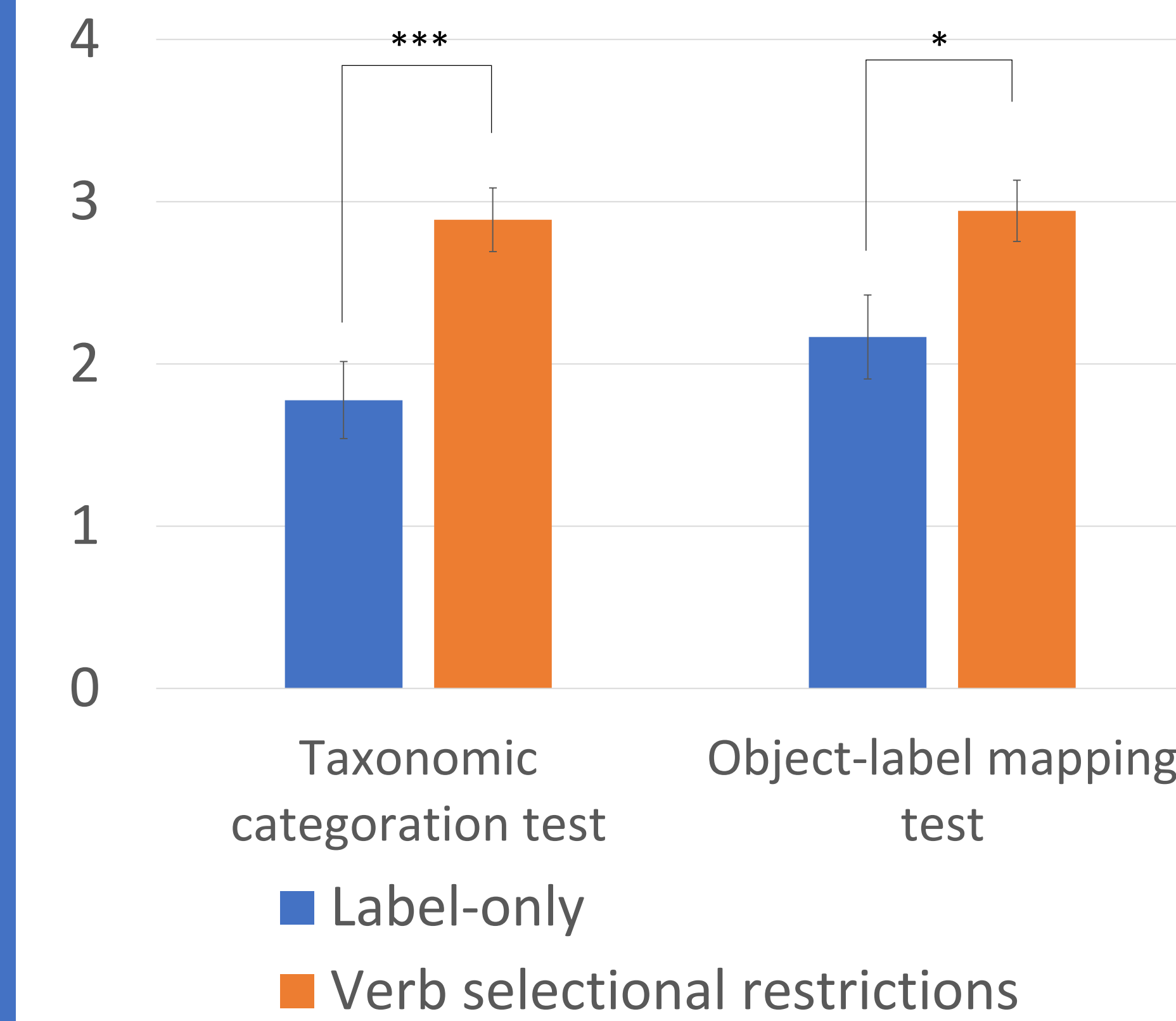
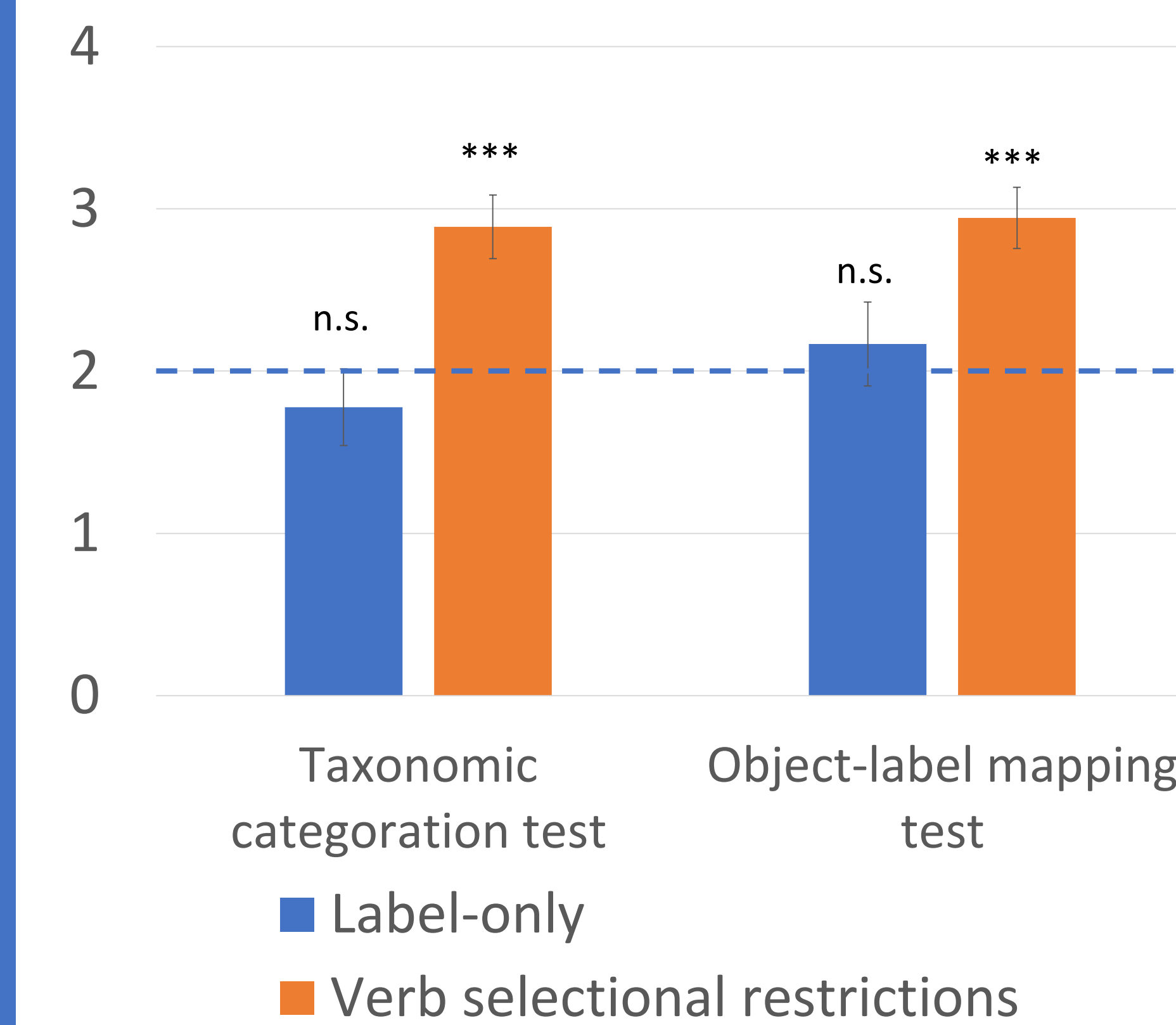


Fig.2. Post-test Performance Against Chance



Contact:

Grace.Pocock.2013@rhul.ac.uk

K.Abbot-Smith@kent.ac.uk

Jessica@Sussex.ac.uk