

Agentivity: The view from semantic typology

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*Recent Approaches to (Non-)Agentivity
in Natural Language*

National University of Singapore

May 1-2, 2019

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SYNOPSIS

- ▶ Introducing CAL
- ▶ Agentivity and the CAL Clips
- ▶ Study I: Urdu
- ▶ Study II: Semantic typology
- ▶ Study III: Responsibility assignment
- ▶ Agentivity and the future of CAL

INTRODUCING CAL

- ▶ Causality Across Languages
 - ▶ NSF Award #BCS-1535846; PI J. Bohnemeyer
- ▶ a new horizon in semantic typology: causality
 - ▶ first ever large-scale *meaning-based* crosslinguistic study of the representation of causality



- ▶ subprojects



TODAY'S
FOCUS

- ▶ *The semantic typology of causality*

- ▶ how are causal chains semantically categorized across languages for the purposes of linguistic encoding?

- ▶ *Causality in language and cognition*

- ▶ how are causal chains cognitively categorized across cultures and what role does language play in this variation?

- ▶ *The representation of causality in discourse*

- ▶ how are causal chains represented in narratives across languages?

- ▶ *Causality at the syntax-semantics interface*

- ▶ how much variation is there across languages in form-to-meaning mapping in the representation of causal chains?

▶ the sample



Figure 1.1. Big map, lotsa languages, southern void

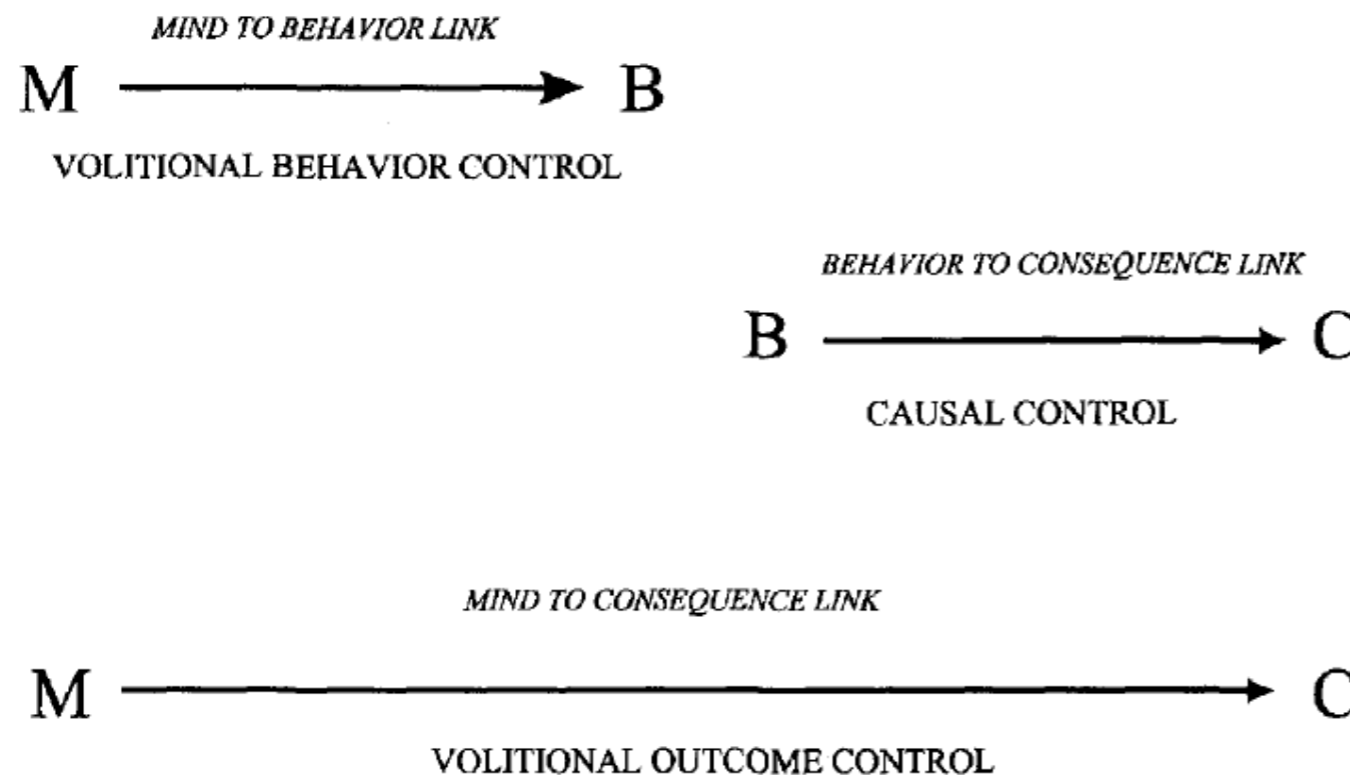
- ▶ objectives of this talk
 - ▶ present preliminary CAL findings regarding crosslinguistic variation in the grammar of agentivity
 - ▶ brainstorm some possible directions for a follow-up project focused on the crosslinguistic study of agentivity

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AGENTIVITY AND THE CAL CLIPS

- ▶ theorizing agentivity
 - ▶ the view from psychology:
Alicke's (2000) *Culpable Control Model*



Combinations of Volitional Behavior Control, Causal Control, and Volitional Outcome Control

Structural linkage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Volitional behavior control	X	X	X	X	—	—	—	—
Causal control	X	X	—	—	X	X	—	—
Volitional outcome control	X	—	—	X	X	—	X	—

Note. X = high level of structural link; — = low level or absence of structural link.

Figure 2.1. Alicke's (2000: 558) *Culpable Control Model* (B - behavioral element; C - consequence element; M - mental element)

Table 2.1. A classification of situation types in terms of the cooccurrence of the variable levels of the *Culpable Control Model* (Alicke 2000: 563)

- ▶ theorizing agentivity (cont.)
 - ▶ Hopper & Thompson (1980): agentivity and transitivity

Table 2.2. *Hopper & Thompson's (1980: 252) proposed semantic predictors of transitivity*

	HIGH	LOW
(1) A. PARTICIPANTS	2 or more participants, A and O. ¹	1 participant
B. KINESIS	action	non-action
C. ASPECT	telic	atelic
D. PUNCTUALITY	punctual	non-punctual
E. VOLITIONALITY	volitional	non-volitional
F. AFFIRMATION	affirmative	negative
G. MODE	realis	irrealis
H. AGENCY	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. AFFECTEDNESS OF O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. INDIVIDUATION OF O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated

- ▶ theorizing agentivity (cont.)
 - ▶ Grimm's (2012) updated model of Dowty's (1991) proto-agent properties

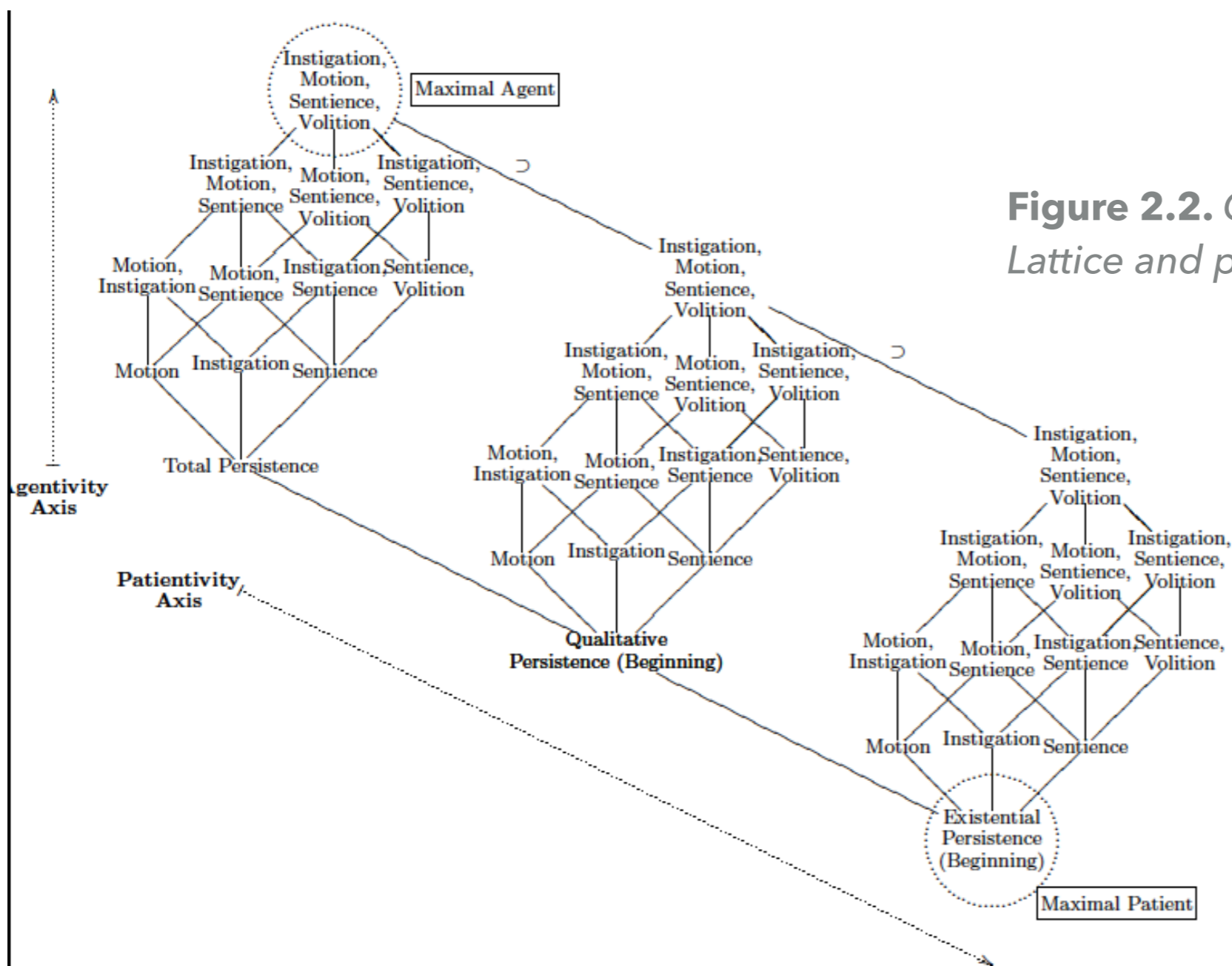


Figure 2.2. Grimm's (2012: 15) Agentivity Lattice and prototypical transitivity

theorizing agentivity (cont.)

- Van Valin & Wilkins (1996): referent properties and eligibility of agent role assignment

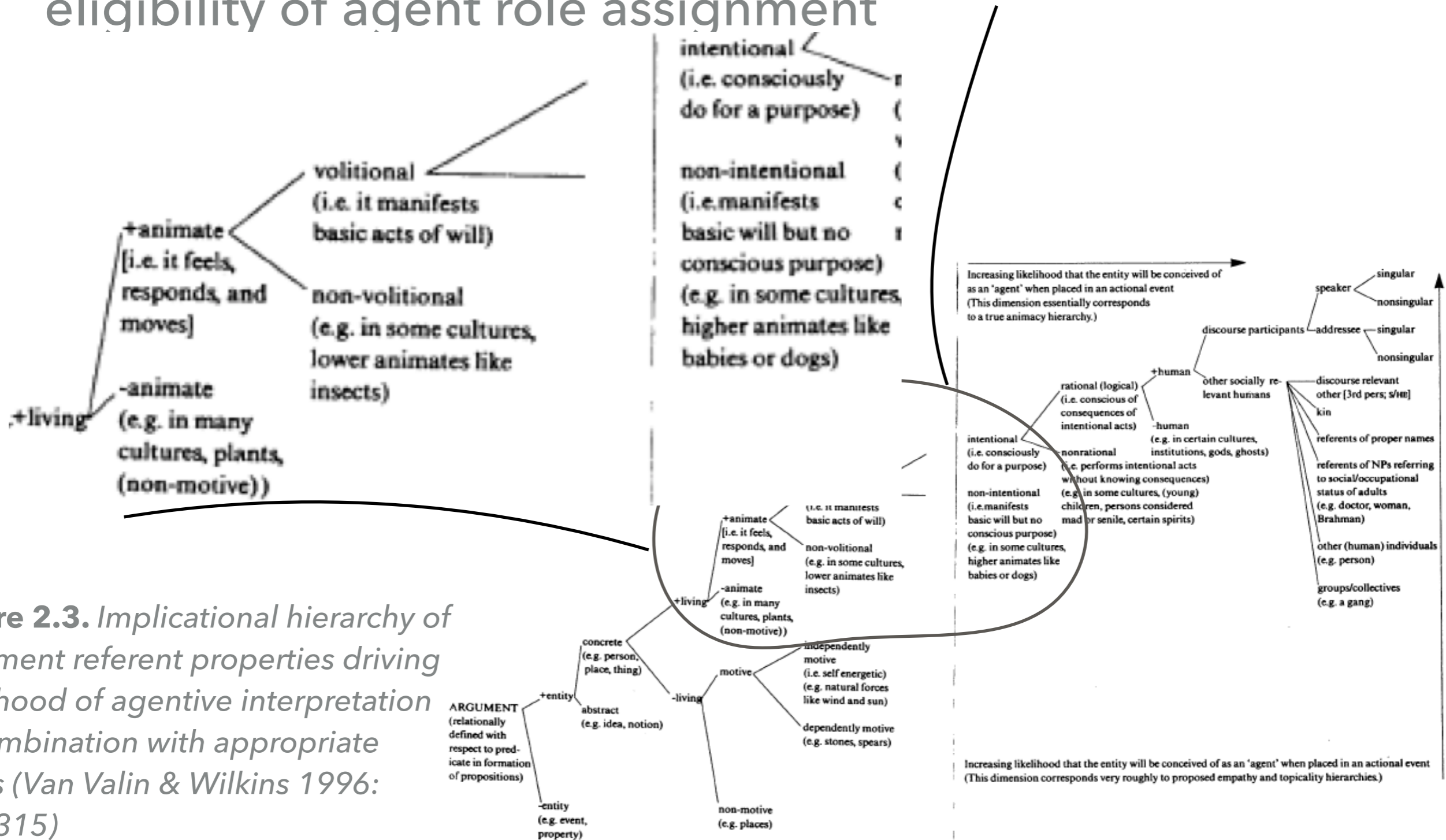


Figure 2.3. Implicational hierarchy of argument referent properties driving likelihood of agentive interpretation in combination with appropriate verbs (Van Valin & Wilkins 1996: 314-315)

- ▶ theorizing agentivity (cont.)
 - ▶ CAL: a graph model of semantic roles defined in terms of 'etic grid' variables

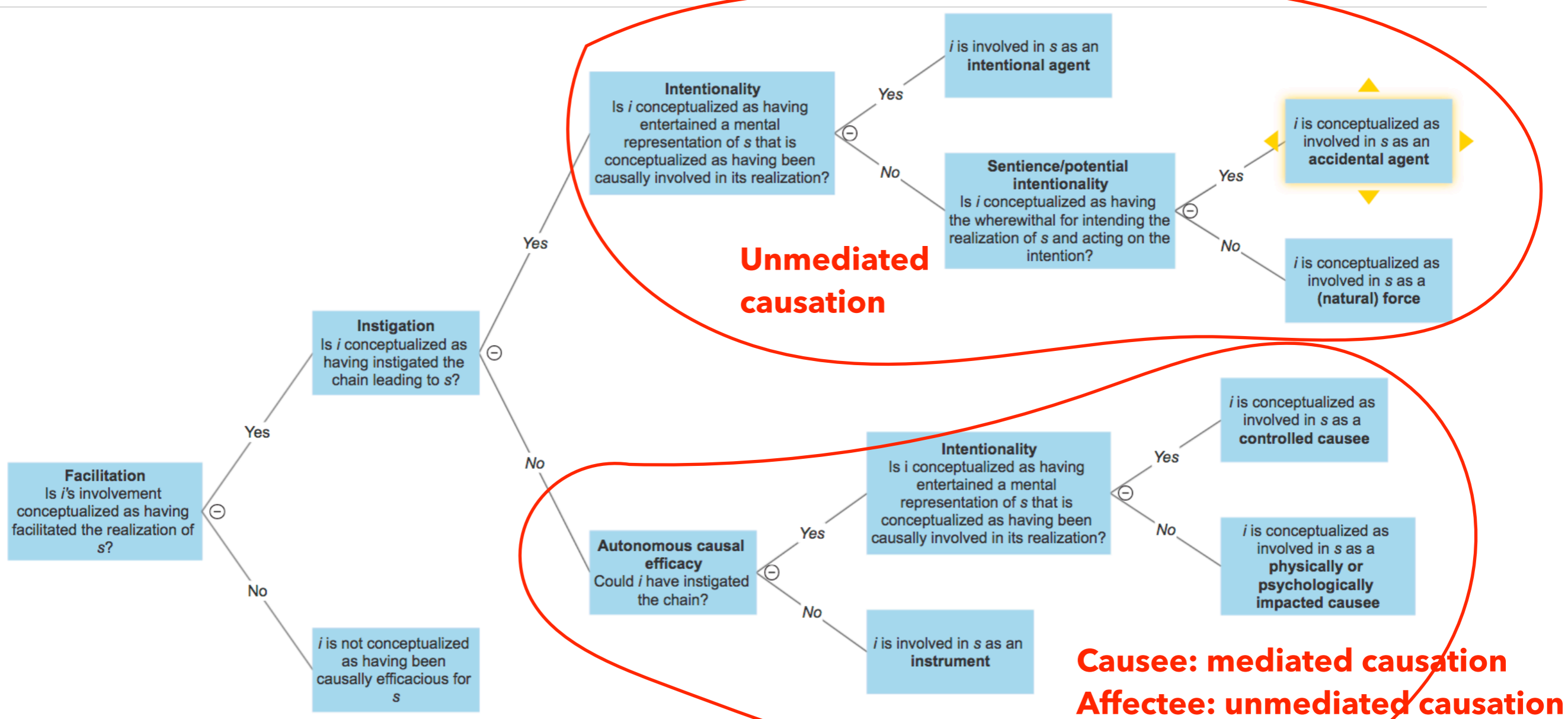


Figure 2.4. Decision tree model decomposing agent and related semantic roles in terms of 'etic' semantic variables

- ▶ variables and stimuli: The CAL Clips
 - ▶ design: E. Bellingham; J. Bohnemeyer
 - ▶ 58 short video clips featuring everyday causal chains
 - ▶ most staged/enacted, a few found on the internet
- ▶ variables manipulated
 - ▶ **causer (CR)** type: volitional vs. accidental vs. force
 - ▶ **causee (CE;** = intermediate participant in the chain) type
 - ▶ volitional/controlled
 - ▶ vs. involuntary response to psychological impact
 - ▶ vs. involuntary response to mechanical impact
 - ▶ vs. no CE



- ▶ **affectee (AF) type**
 - ▶ volitional/controlled
 - ▶ vs. involuntary response to psychological impact
 - ▶ vs. involuntary response to mechanical impact
 - ▶ vs. physical object
- ▶ **resulting event type**
physical state change vs. location change vs. process
- ▶ **force dynamics**
 - ▶ causation (43 core + 10 sup.) vs. letting (5 sup. scenes)

- ▶ stimuli: the CAL Clips (cont.)
 - ▶ examples
 - ▶ CR = force; CE = none; AF = mechanically impacted; resultant event = location change; FD = causation



Figure 3.1. NM2_reporter

- ▶ stimuli: the CAL Clips (cont.)
- ▶ examples (cont.)
 - ▶ CR = accidental; CE = volitional/controlled; AF = object; resultant event = location change; FD = letting



Figure 3.2. UCO1_ball

- ▶ stimuli: the CAL Clips (cont.)
- ▶ examples (cont.)
 - ▶ CR = volitional; CE = psychologically impacted; AF = object; resultant event = physical change; FD = letting

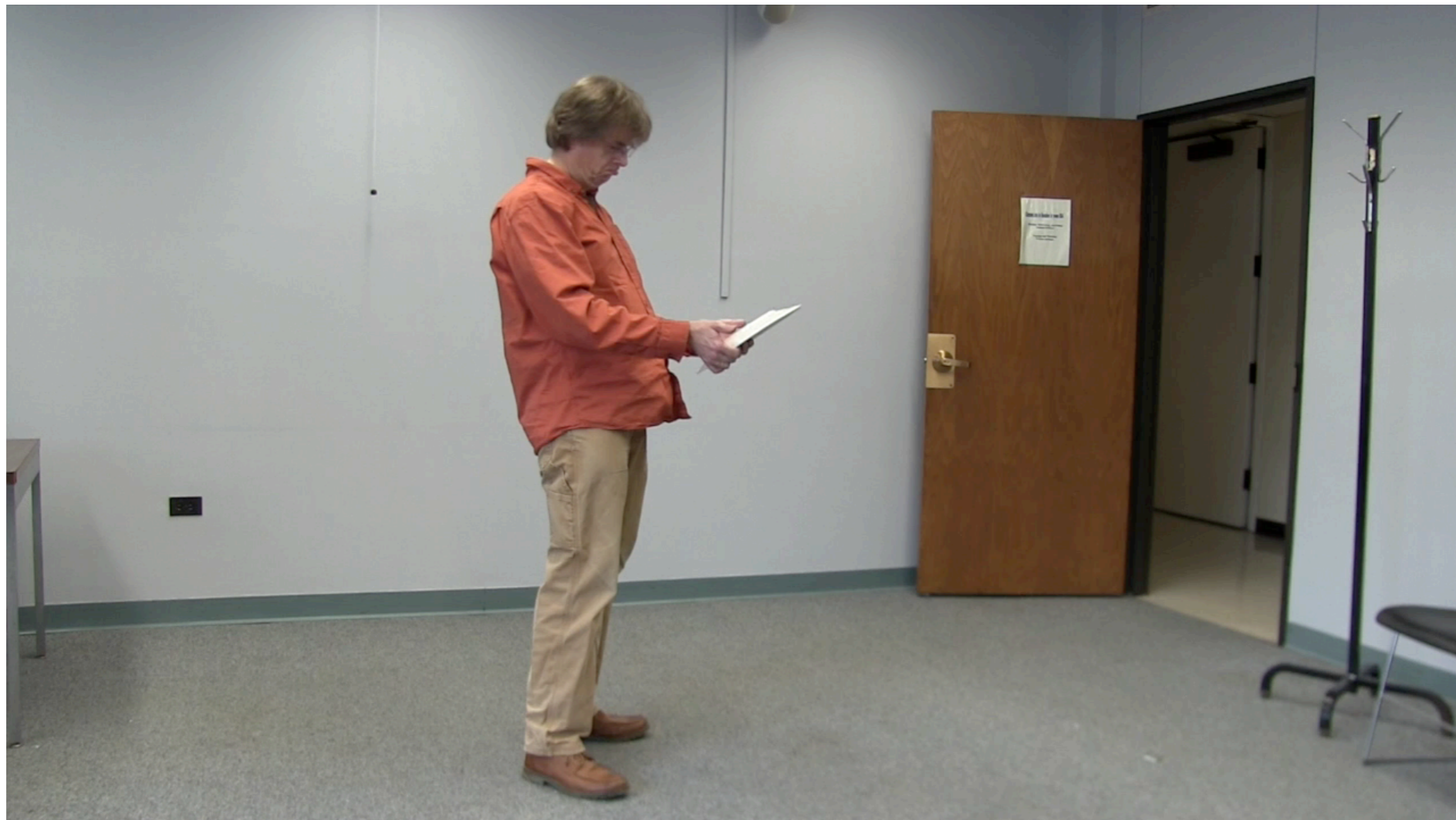


Figure 3.3. HUO1_plate

- ▶ stimuli: the CAL Clips (cont.)
 - ▶ examples (cont.)
 - ▶ CR = volitional; CE = volitional/controlled; AF = object; resultant event = process; FD = causation

Figure 3.4. HCOproc1_swing



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STUDY I: URDU

- ▶ a new approach to the semantic typology of causality

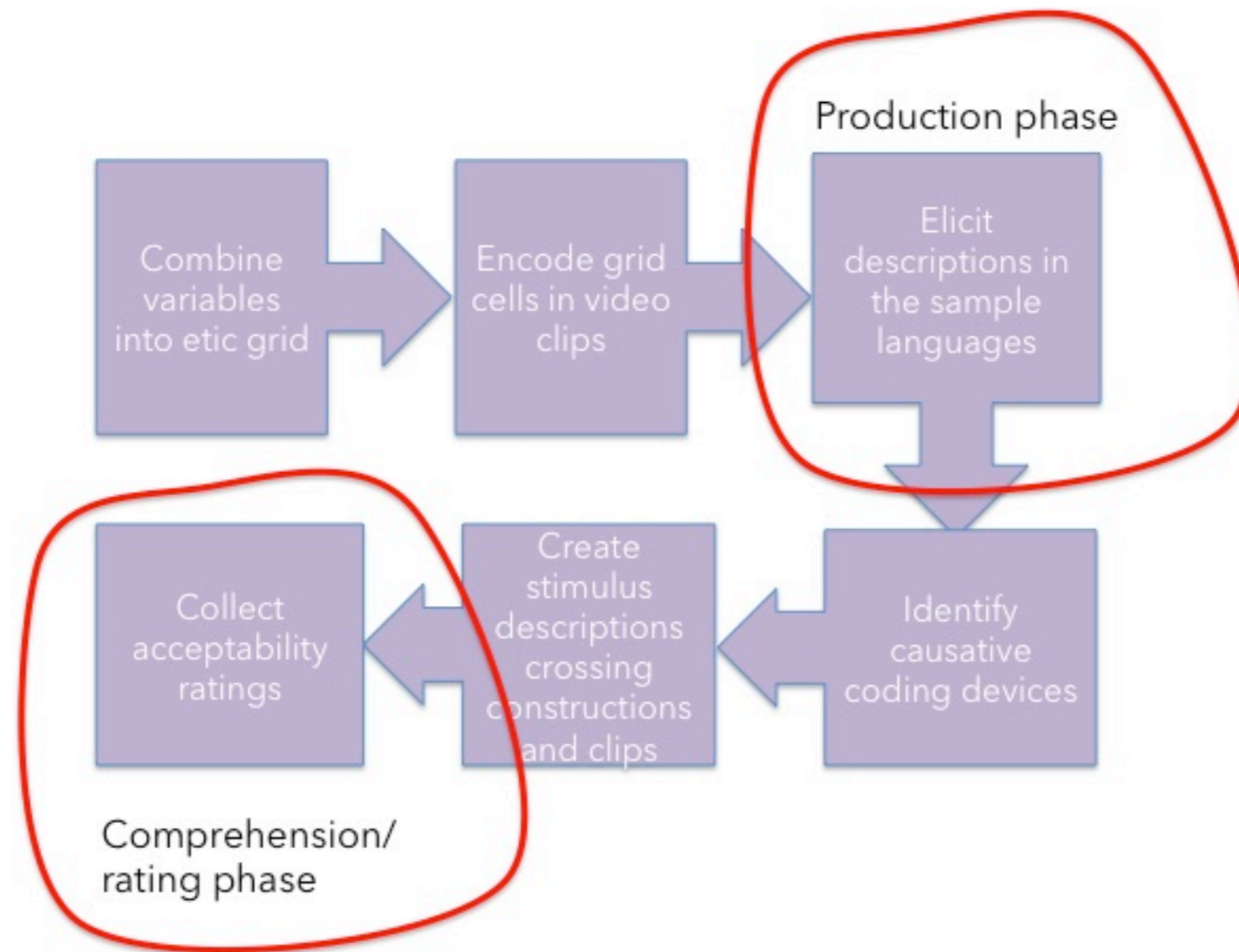


Figure 3.1. *A hybrid study design for semantic typology*

- ▶ advantages of this hybrid design type
 - ▶ vis-à-vis corpus studies
 - ▶ applicable to languages for which (large) corpora are unavailable
 - ▶ provides both positive and negative evidence
 - ▶ gives direct access to the scene being described
 - ▶ vis-à-vis traditional elicited production studies (the staple in contemporary semantic typology)
 - ▶ allows rapid data collection and analysis from a larger number of speakers
 - ▶ provides both positive and negative evidence

- ▶ Case study I: Urdu -
work by Saima Hafeez (U at Buffalo)
- ▶ 16 speakers rated descriptions
of the 43 core scenes
 - ▶ using an 8-point Likert scale
with 7 being the highest score
- ▶ Urdu distinguishes among three types of causers
 - ▶ through case alternations and light verb selection



- ▶ prototypical agents:
intentional instigators

Figure 3.1. *HO2_egg*

(3.1) Larki=**ne** anda tor-e
 girl(SG)=**ERG** egg(SG.NOM) break-PRV.SG.F
 'A girl broke an egg (intentionally)' [for *HO2_egg*: mean **6.91**; SD 0.3]

(3.2) Larki=**ne** and-a toor
 girl(SG)=**ERG** egg(SG.NOM) break.HV
di-ye / **dal**-e
give.LV-PRV.SG.F **put.LV**-PRV.SG.F

'A girl broke an egg (intentionally)'
 [for *HO2_egg*: mean **7/6.82**; SD 0/0.4]

▶ **intentional** vs. **accidental** instigators



Figure 3.2. *HO2_egg (intentional)*



Figure 3.3. *UO1_egg (accidental)*

(3.3) Larki=**ne** anda toor **di**-e
 girl=**ERG** egg(NOM) break.HV **give.LV**-PRV.SG.F
 'A girl broke an egg (intentionally)'
 [for **HO2_egg**: mean **7**; SD 0; for **UO1_egg**: mean **3.27**; SD 0.79]

(3.4) Larki=**se** anda toor **ge**-a
 girl=**INST** egg(NOM) break.HV **go.LV**-PRV.SG.M
 'A girl broke an egg (accidentally)'
 [for **HO2_egg**: mean **2.27**; SD 0.9; for **UO1_egg**: mean **6.91**; SD 0.3]

- ▶ controlled causees: intentional control w/o instigation



Figure 3.4. *HCO3_egg_new*

(3.5) Larke=**ne** larki=**se** anda tur-**va**-ya.

boy=**ERG** girl=**INSTR** egg break.TRNS-**CAUS**-PRV.SG.M

'A boy made a girl break an egg.'

[for HCO3_egg_new: mean 7; SD 0]

- ▶ controlled causees vs. affectees: instrumental vs. dative/accusative



Figure 3.5. *HC1_leave*

(3.5) Larki=**ne** admi=**ko** kamre=**se** bahar nikal di-ya.
 girl=**ERG** man=**DAT** room=**INST** outside send give-PRV.SG.M

'A girl made a man go out of the room.'

[for HC1_leave: mean 6.27; SD 0.9]

(3.6) Admi=**ko** bahar ja-na par-a.
 man=**DAT** outside go-INF lie.LV-PRV.SG.M

'A man had to go out.'

[for HC1_leave: mean 6.18; SD 1.17]

- ▶ physically/psychologically impacted causees



Figure 3.6. *HMO3_paper*

(3.6) Aik larki=**ne** dosr-i larki=**se** kaghaz
 one girl=**ERG** second-SG.F girl=**INST** sheet.of.paper

phar-va di-a.
 tear.TRANS.MV-CAUS give.TRANS.LV-PERF.SG.M

'A girl made another girl tear a sheet of paper.'

[for HMO3_paper: mean 7; SD 0]

▶ natural force causers



Figure 3.7. *NM4_umbrella*

- (3.7) Hava=**se** chatri ur **ga**-i.
 wind=**INSTR** umbrella(NOM) fly.HV.INTRNS **go.LV**-PRV.SG.M
 'The wind blew an umbrella away.' [for NM4_umbrella: mean 7; SD 0]
- (3.8) Hava=**ne** chatri=ko ura **di**-a.
 wind=**ERG** umbrella=ACC fly.HV.TRNS **give.LV**-PRV.SG.M
 'The wind blew an umbrella away.'
 [for NM4_umbrella: mean 4.82; SD 1.33]

▶ summary of the Urdu strategies

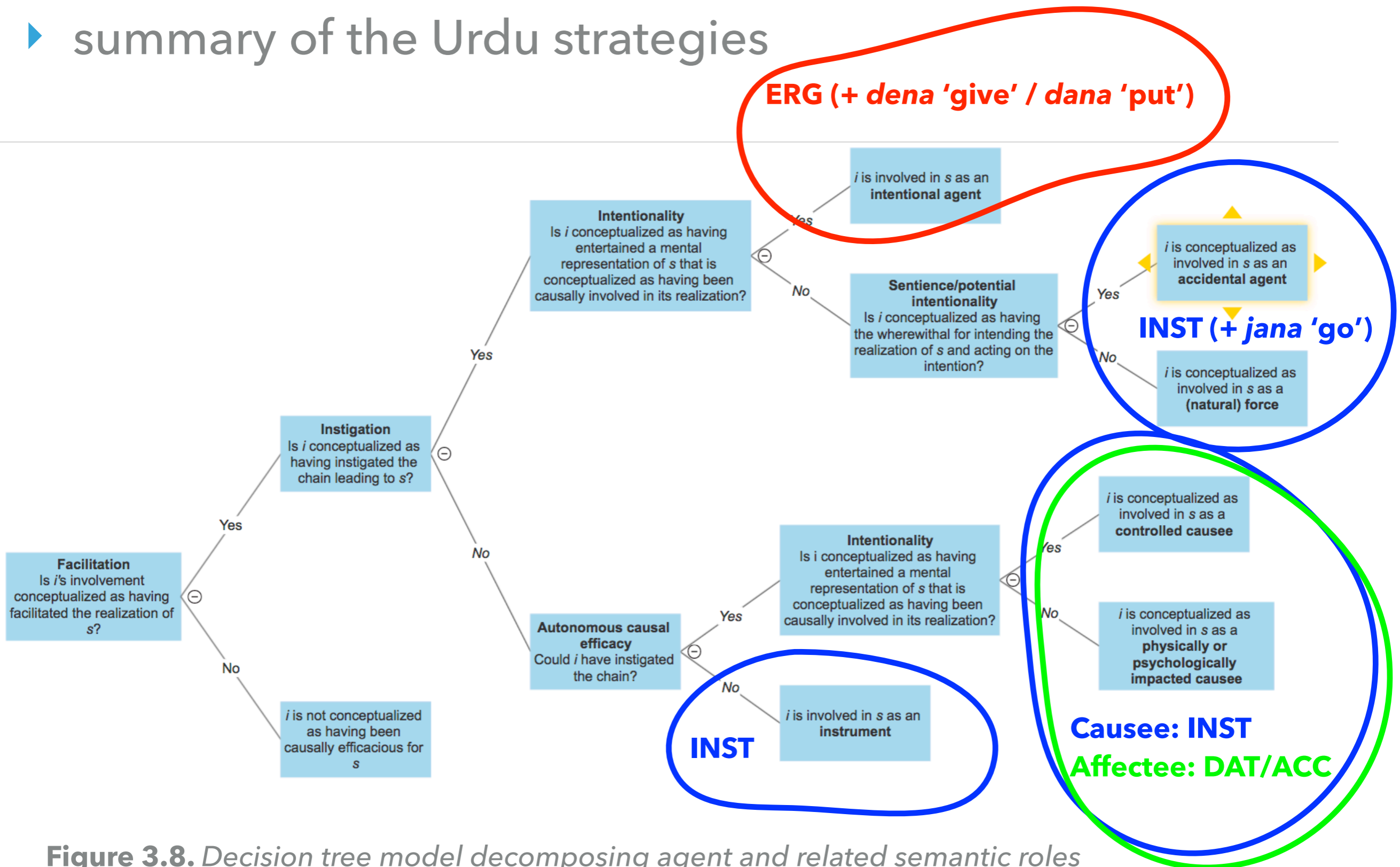


Figure 3.8. Decision tree model decomposing agent and related semantic roles overlaid with the corresponding case marking and light verb selection strategies in Urdu

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STUDY II: SEMANTIC TYPOLOGY

- ▶ the languages from which data has been collected for the Semantic Typology subproject so far

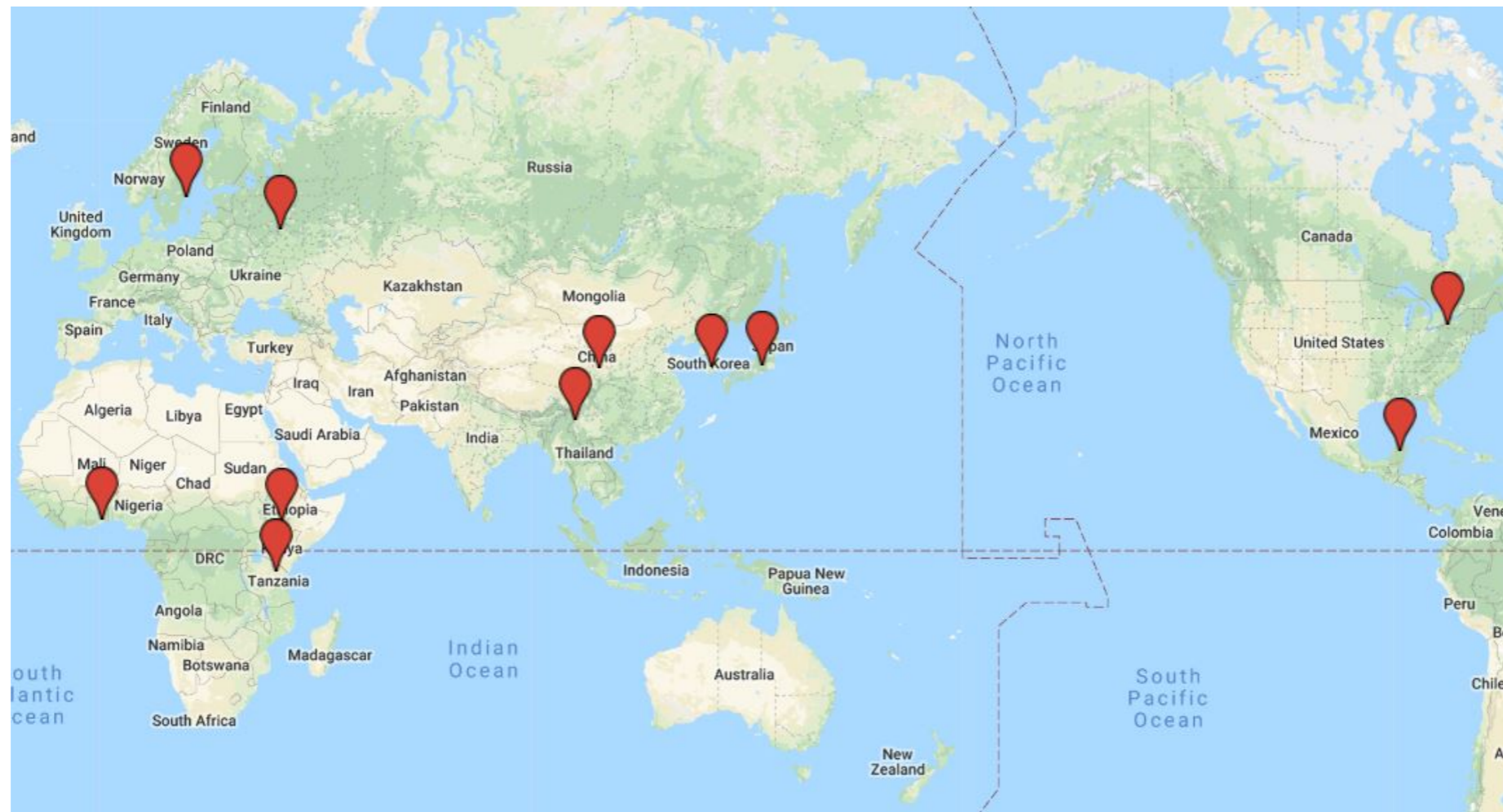
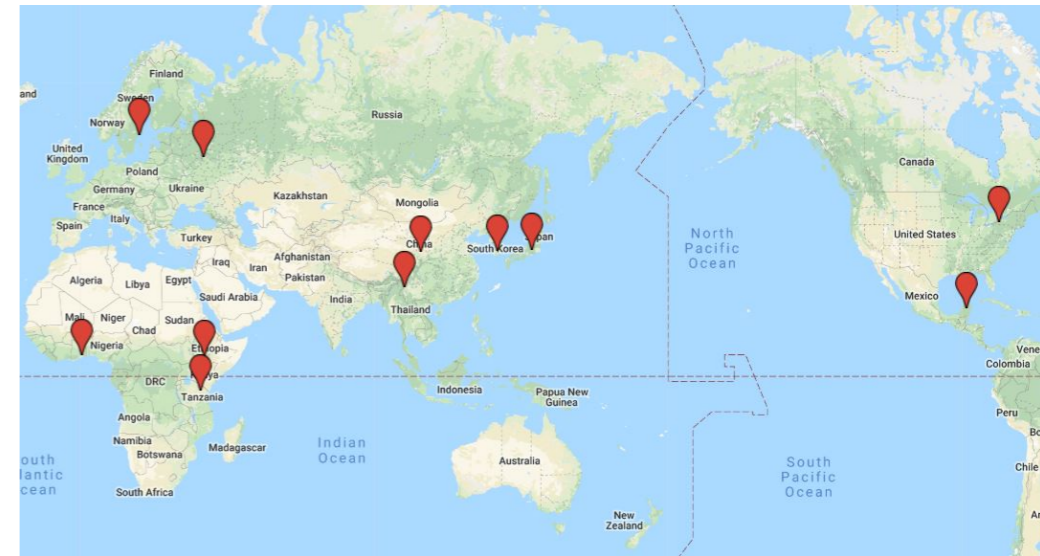


Figure 4.1. *The current sample of the CAL Semantic Typology subproject*

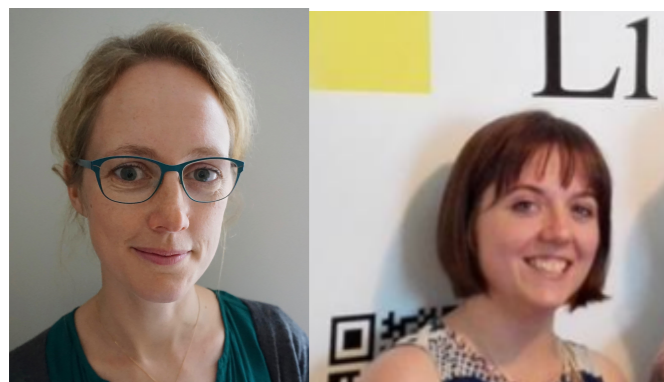
- ▶ wait - what happened to Urdu?
- ▶ the Urdu data was collected
 - ▶ following a slightly different protocol
 - ▶ no ungrammatical or straightforwardly anomalous descriptions were tested
- ▶ accordingly, it is not included in the analyses presented in the following



- populations included in the analysis so far and researchers

Language	Genus	Field site	Participants	Researcher	Affiliation
Datooga	Nilotic	Tanzania	12	A. Mitchell	U of Bristol
English	Germanic	U.S.A.	13	E. Bellingham, S. Evers	UB
Japanese	Japonic	Japan	14	K. Kawachi	National Defense Academy of Japan
Korean	Isolate	R.O.K.	12	S. Park	UB
Russian	Slavic	Russia	12	A. Stepanova	UB
Sidaama	Cushitic	Ethiopia	12	K. Kawachi	National Defense Academy of Japan
Swedish	Germanic	Sweden	12	P. Järnevelt, G. Montero Melis, E. Bylund	Stockholm U
Yucatec	Mayan	Mexico	12	J. Bohnemeyer	UB
Zauzou	Lolo-Burmese	P.R.C.	12	Y. Li	UB

Table 4.1. The current sample of the CAL Semantic Typology subproject



- waiting in the wings:
Ewe (J. Essegbey, UFL); Mandarin (J. Du, F. Li, Beihang U)

► causative coding devices included in the analysis

Table 4.2. *Causative coding devices in the sample languages that were included in the analysis*

Construction	Datooga	English	Swedish	Japanese	Korean	Russian	Sidaama	Yucatec	Zauzou
Transitive causative verbs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	No
Morphological causatives	✓	No	No	✓	✓	No	✓	✓	No
Resultative constructions	No	✓	✓	No	✓	No	No	No	✓
Periphrastic causatives	✓	✓	✓	No	✓	✓	No	✓	✓
Single-core constructions augmented by an oblique causer PP/NP	✓	✓	No	✓	✓	No	✓	No	No
Event nominalizations used as causer arguments	No	No	No	No	✓	✓	✓	No	No
Causal converb constructions	No	No	No	✓	✓	No	✓	No	No
Causal connective constructions	✓	✓	✓	✓	No	✓	✓	✓	✓
'So X that Y'-type constructions	No	✓	✓	No	No	✓	No	No	No

- ▶ compactness of descriptions: wrinkles
 - ▶ compact descriptions encode the cause-effect relation in a single, potentially complex lexical item
 - ▶ incl. simplex transitive causative verbs, resultatives and particle verbs, resultative SVCs, morphological causatives
- ▶ lexicalization here poses limits to generalizability across stimulus scenes
 - ▶ e.g., a compact English description of the scene in Figure 4.2 that entails the resultant motion must involve the caused motion construction



(4.1) *Anastasia kicked the ball into the hall*

Figure 4.2. *UO3_ball*

- ▶ compactness of descriptions: wrinkles (cont.)
 - ▶ as a result, the various compact response types of each language tend to be in complementary distribution
 - ▶ regarding the scenes for which they are available
 - ▶ consequently, the following analysis merges each language's compact constructions
 - ▶ into a single *Compact* response type

- ▶ compactness of descriptions: wrinkles (cont.)
 - ▶ in some languages, compact descriptions were tested for too few scenes for this particular analysis to make sense
 - ▶ this happened in Datooga, Ewe (Gbe, Ghana and Togo), and Gyeli (Narrow Bantu (A80), Cameroon)
 - ▶ the Ewe dataset will be recollected in 2019
 - ▶ this is on us, the Buffalo core team
 - ▶ the first release of the protocol document wasn't sufficiently clear on the need
 - ▶ to test even plainly unacceptable descriptions as long as they could be formed at all 🥲🔥😭🙄

- ▶ compactness of descriptions: wrinkles (cont.)
 - ▶ while compact constructions tend to be applicable only to simple, direct causal chains
 - ▶ non-compact constructions are applicable across the board
 - ▶ limited only by factors of lexicalization and redundancy

(4.2) *Anastasia caused the ball to go into the hall by kicking it*

(4.3) *The ball went into the hall because Anastasia kicked it*



Figure 4.2. UO3_ball

- ▶ compactness of descriptions: wrinkles (cont.)
 - ▶ therefore, we performed two analyses
 - ▶ an analysis of the semantic factors predicting ceiling-rating for compact descriptions only
 - ▶ an analysis of the semantic factors predicting
 - ▶ the most compact response type to receive ceiling rating in each language
 - ▶ only the first analysis is presented here

- ▶ previous multivariate analyses in semantic typology
 - ▶ 'unsupervised' algorithms (no dependent variable): e.g., MDS, Factor Analysis, Correspondence Analysis, Neighbor nets, ...
 - ▶ e.g., Bohnemeyer et al (2012, 2014); Levinson & Meira (2003); Majid et al (2008)
 - ▶ disadvantage: does not directly show the effects of the independent variables (if any)

- ▶ previous multivariate analyses in semantic typology (cont.)
 - ▶ 'supervised' algorithms: predicting dependent variable levels based on independent variable levels
 - ▶ e.g., ANOVA; mixed-effects linear/logistic regression
 - ▶ e.g., Bellingham et al (2017);
Bohnemeyer et al (2014, 2015, in prep a, b)
 - ▶ disadvantages
 - ▶ very large datasets needed
to fit models with multiple fixed and random factors
 - ▶ models may become unreliable due to overfitting,
sparsely populated cells, and multicollinearity

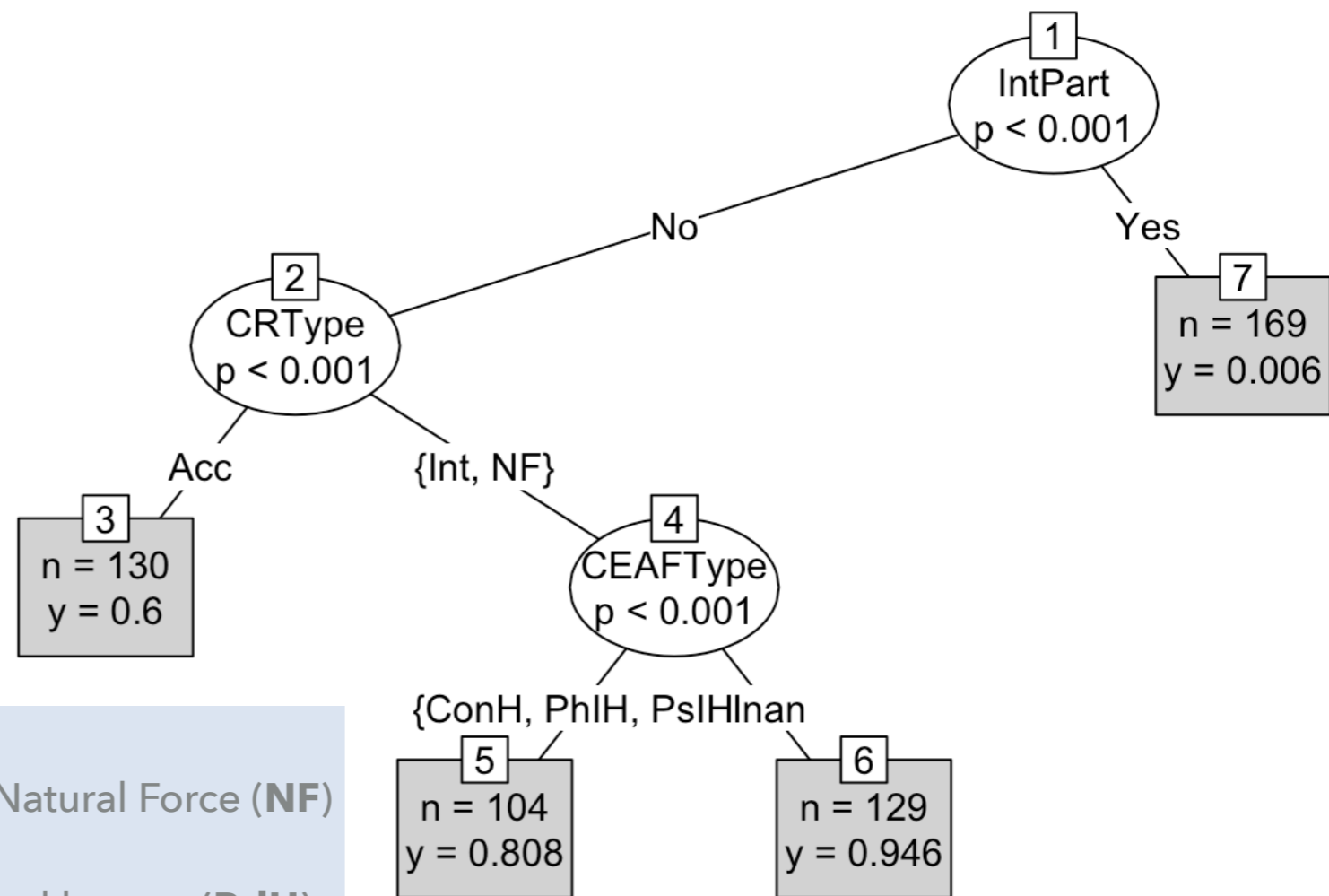
- ▶ **Classification and Regression Trees (CART; Braiman 1984)**
 - ▶ our study is to our knowledge the first study in semantic typology that employs CART
 - ▶ Brunelle (2009) contains an application to phonetics
 - ▶ input: a dataset with a given dependent variable
 - ▶ in our case, a binary variable recording whether or not a compact construction received ceiling rating
 - ▶ in response to a given clip
 - ▶ which instantiates a particular set of independent variable levels
 - ▶ output: decision trees that organize the independent variable level combinations hierarchically
 - ▶ in terms of how well they predict the dependent variable levels

- ▶ we also “grew” **random forest** models
 - ▶ in order to determine the variable ranking in terms of likelihood of showing up as predictive
 - ▶ in a series of 500 conditional inference tree analyses
 - ▶ cf. Tagliamonte & Baayen (2012)

► English - dominant variable: mediation (cf. also Wolff 2003)

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in ENG"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 532
##
## CRType CEAFType IntPart
## 0.03365553 0.02996856 0.24673984
```

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in ENG



Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PslH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.3. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for English compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

▶ English - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in ENG

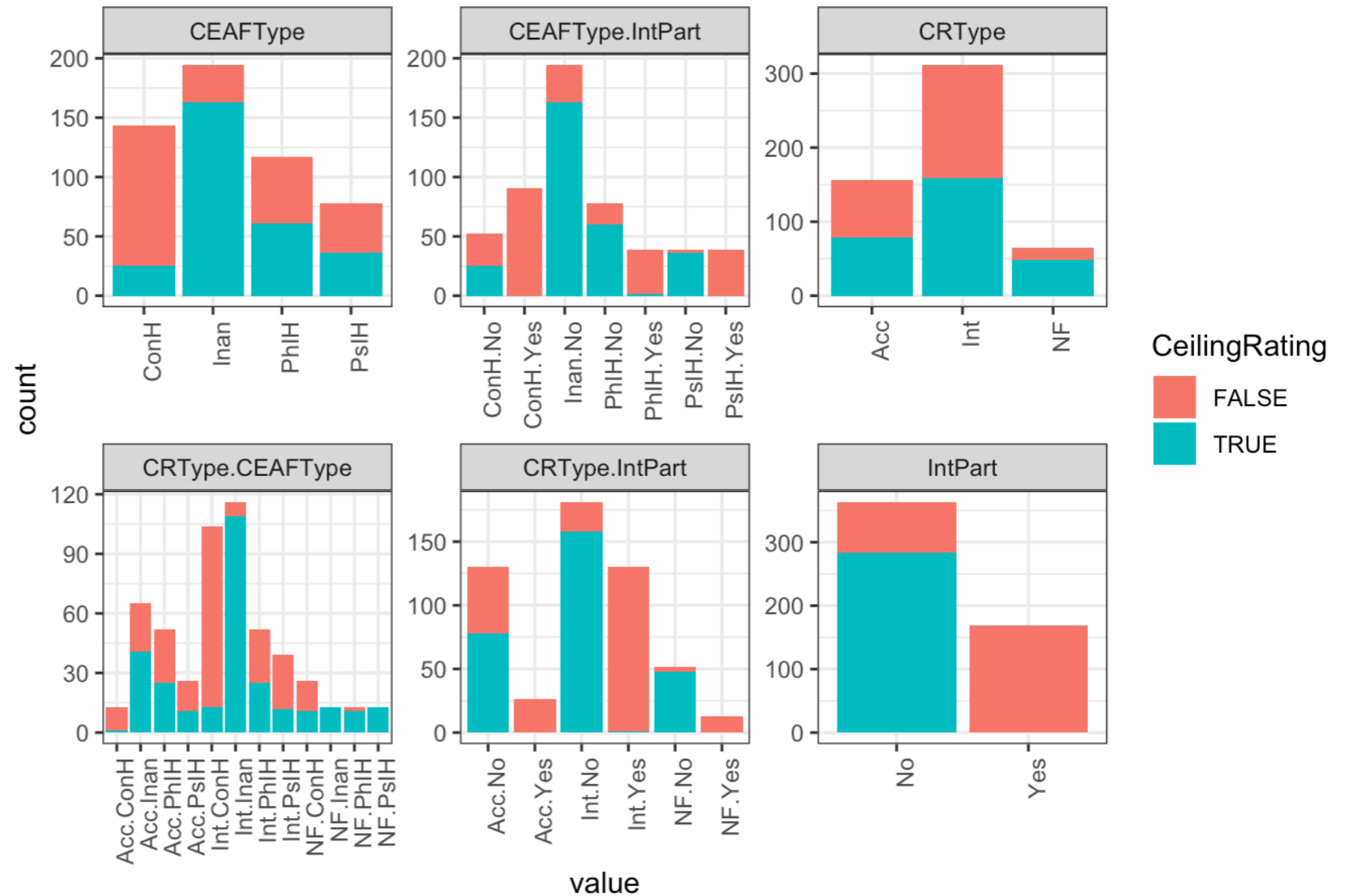


Figure 4.4. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for English compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

Key:

CRTType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):

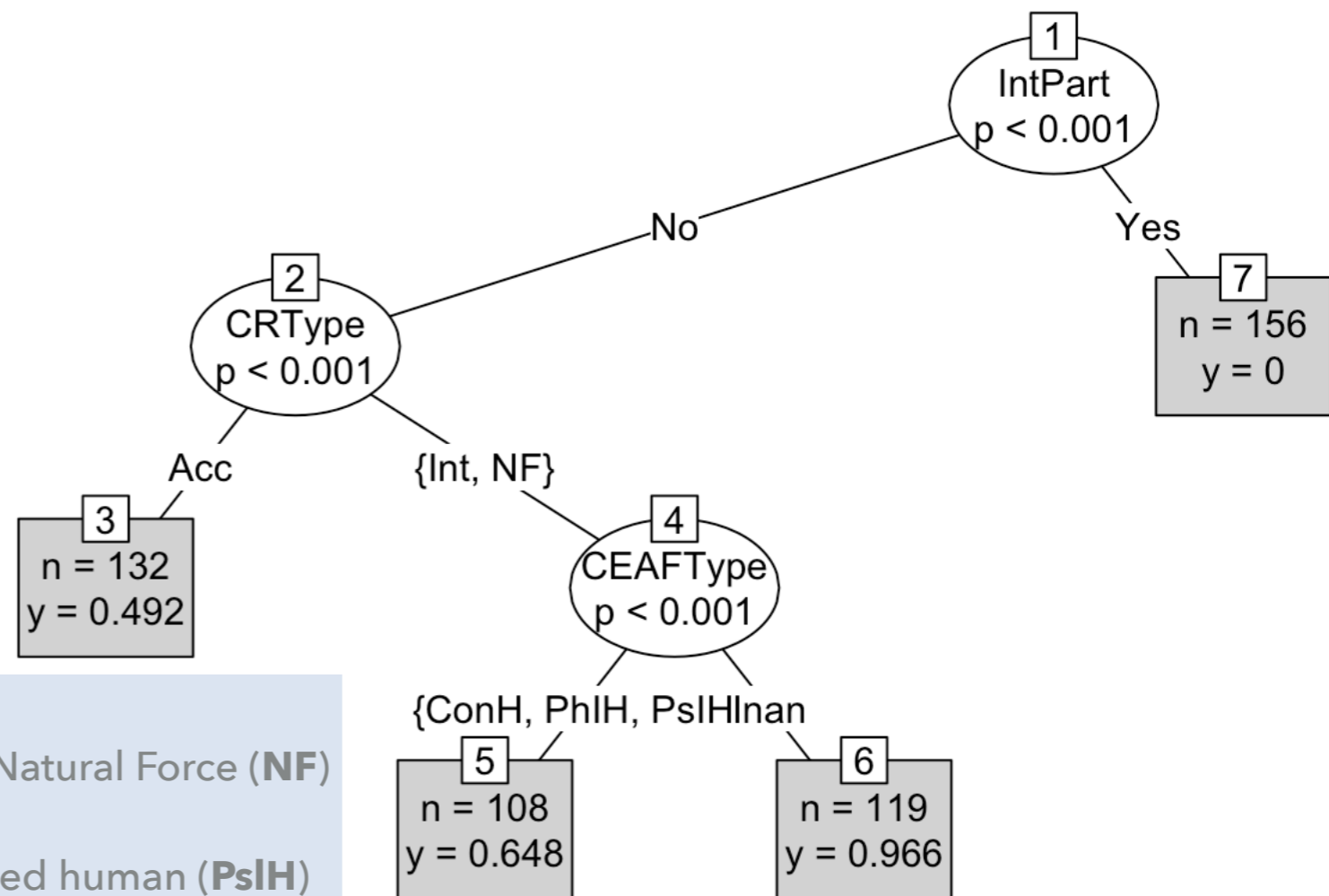
Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**) vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

▶ Russian - dominant variable: mediation

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in RUS"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 515
##
## CRType CEAFType IntPart
## 0.03659423 0.03055178 0.17697122
```

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in RUS



Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PslH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.5. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Russian compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

► Russian - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in RUS

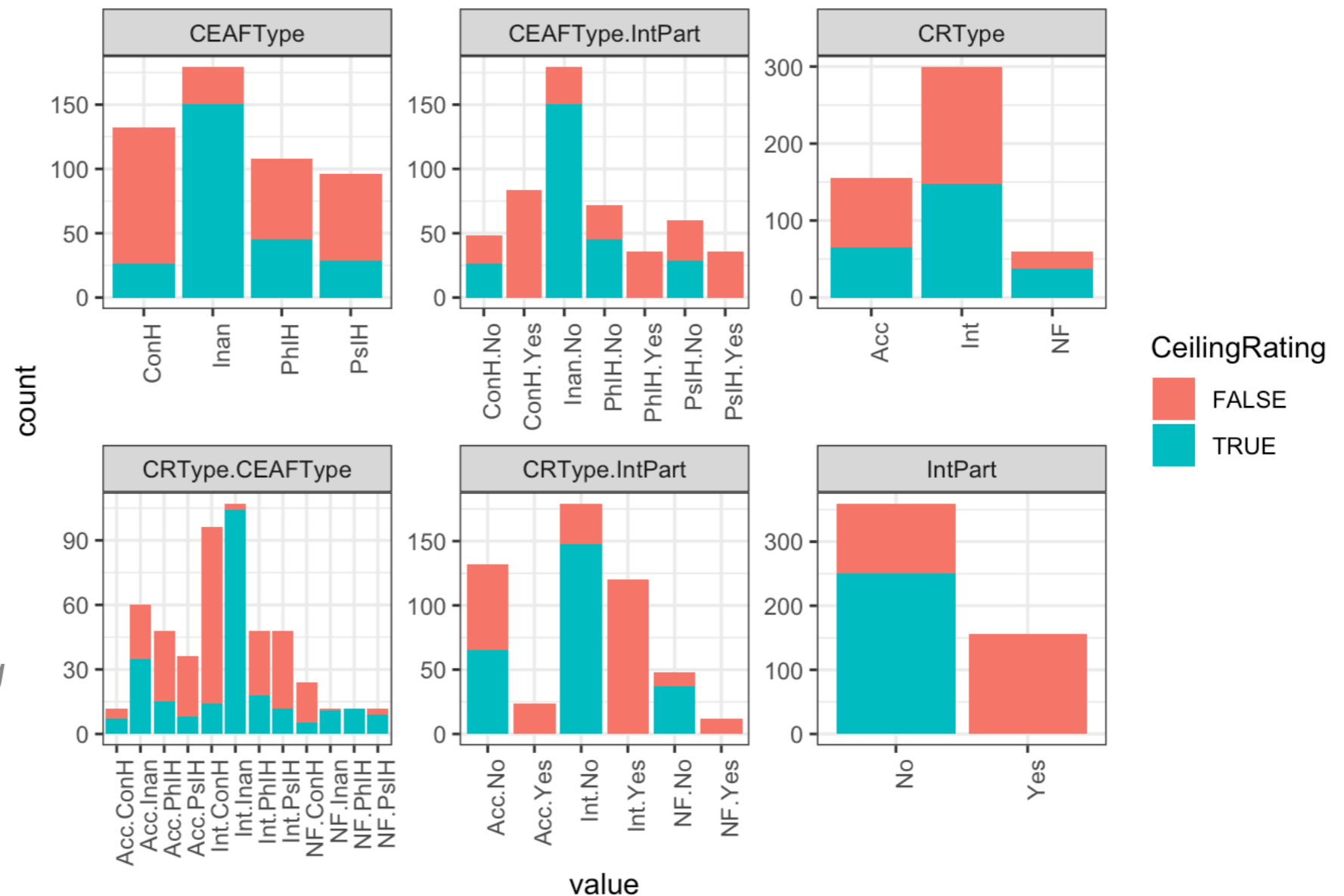


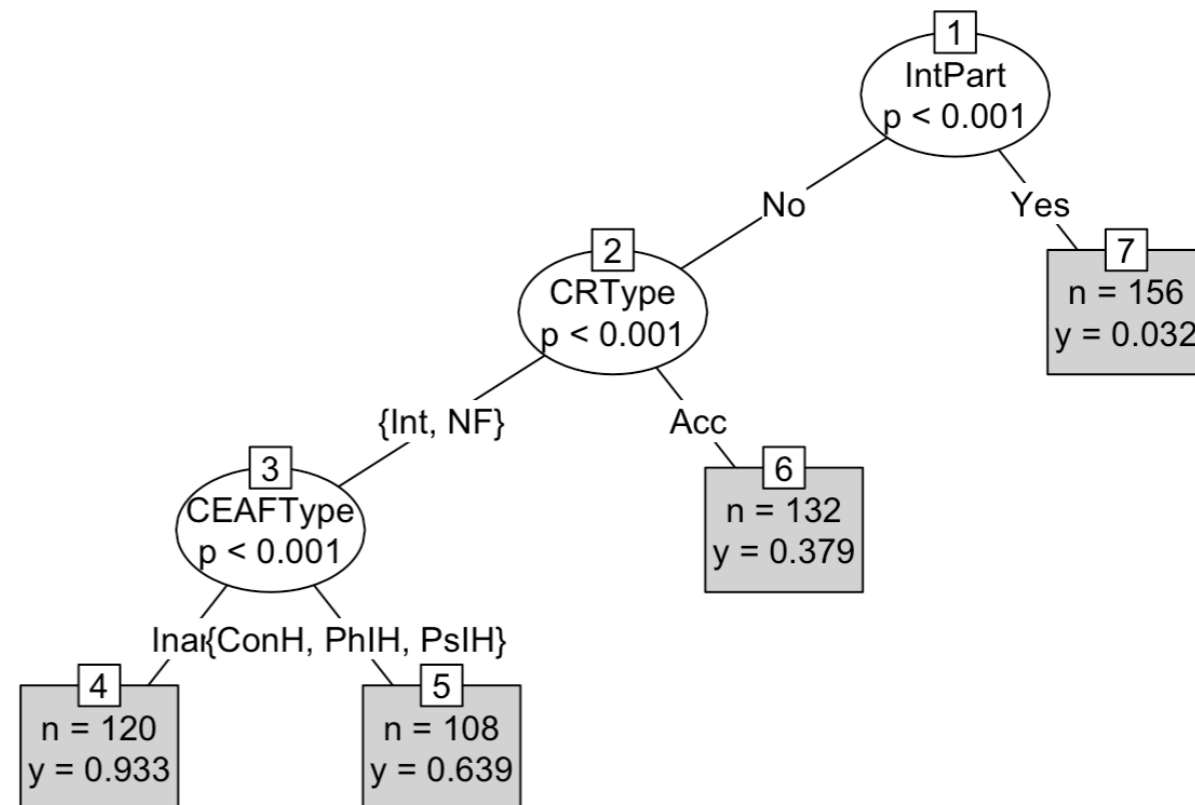
Figure 4.6. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Russian compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

Key:
CRTType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

► Swedish - dominant variable: mediation

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in SWE"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 516
##
##      CRType   CEAFType   IntPart
## 0.07782431 0.11030571 0.11340929
```

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in SWE



Key:

CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.7. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Swedish compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

► Swedish - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in SWE

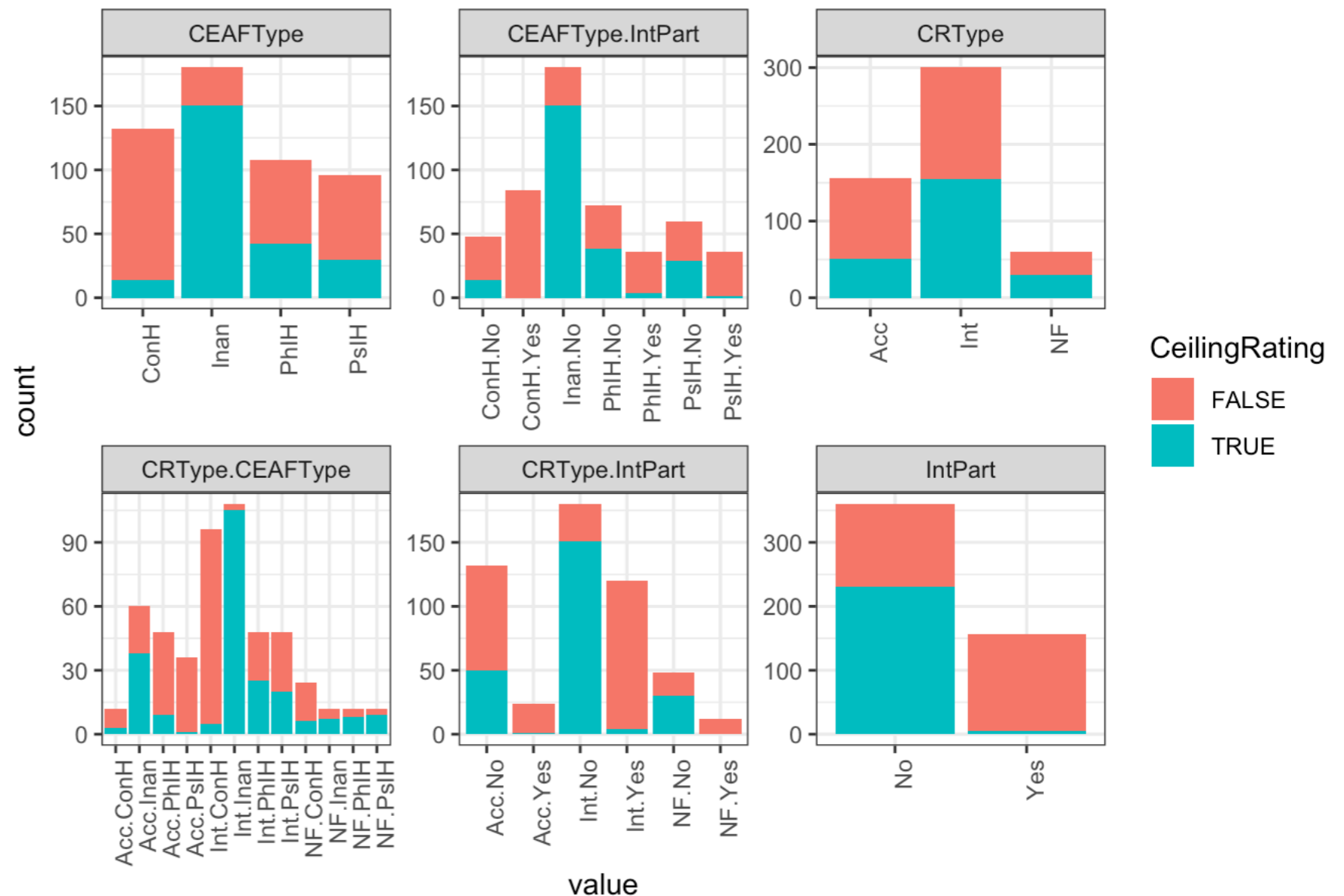
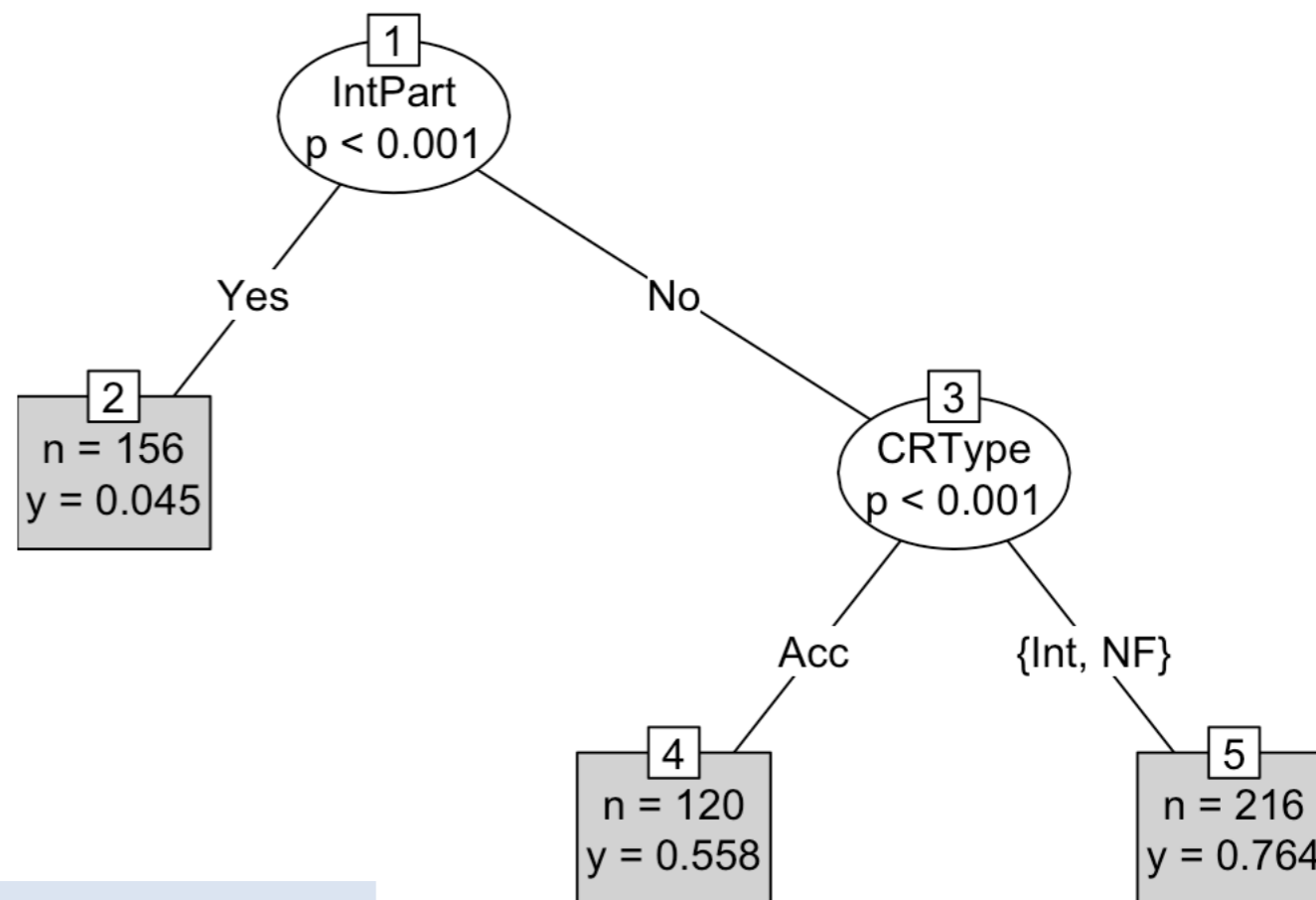


Figure 4.8. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Swedish compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

▶ Yucatec - dominant variable: mediation

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in YUC"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 492
##
##          CRType  CEAFType  IntPart
## 0.03242584 0.01094577 0.14872202
```



Key:

CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
Controlled human (ConH) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.9. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Yucatec compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

► Yucatec - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in YUC

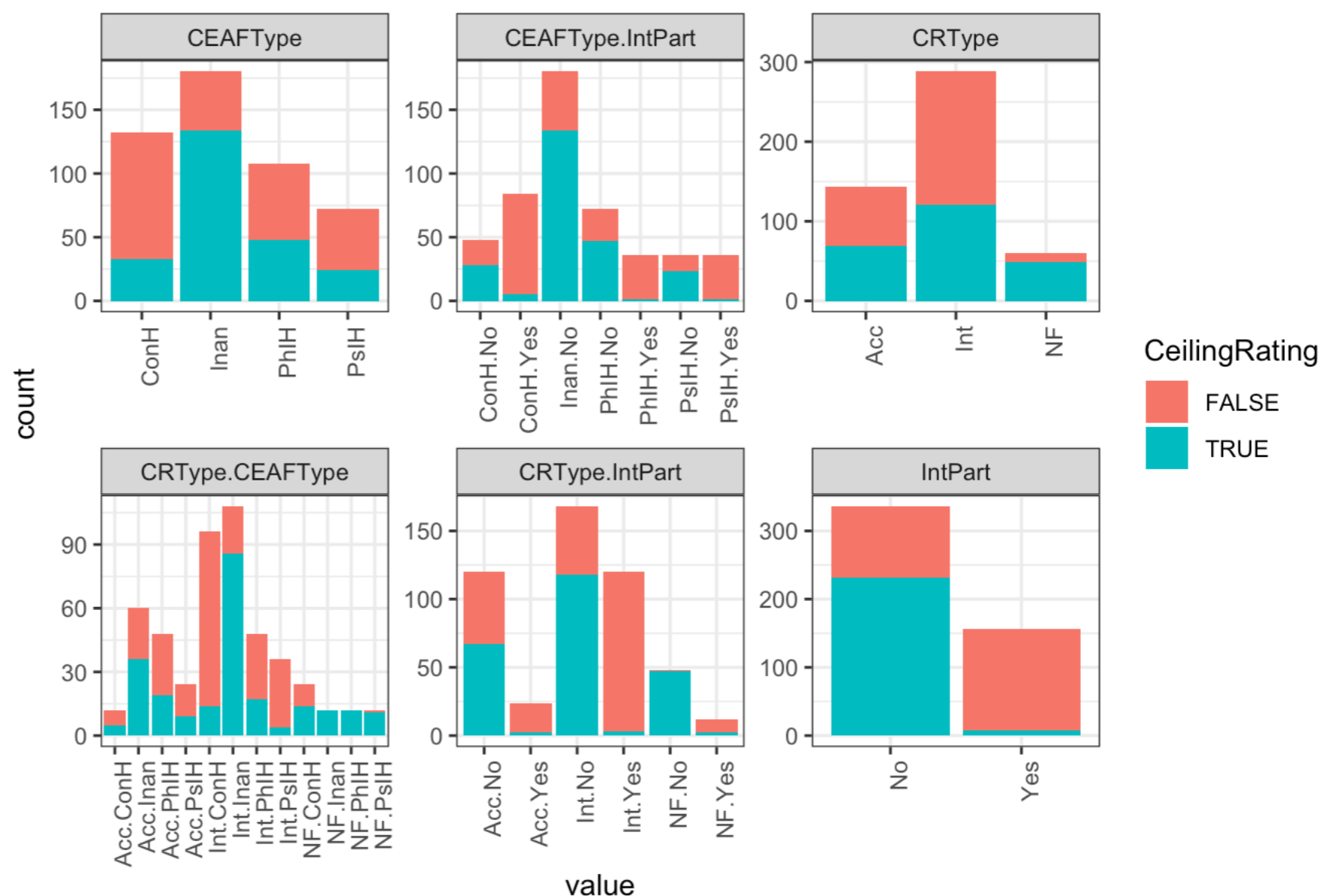
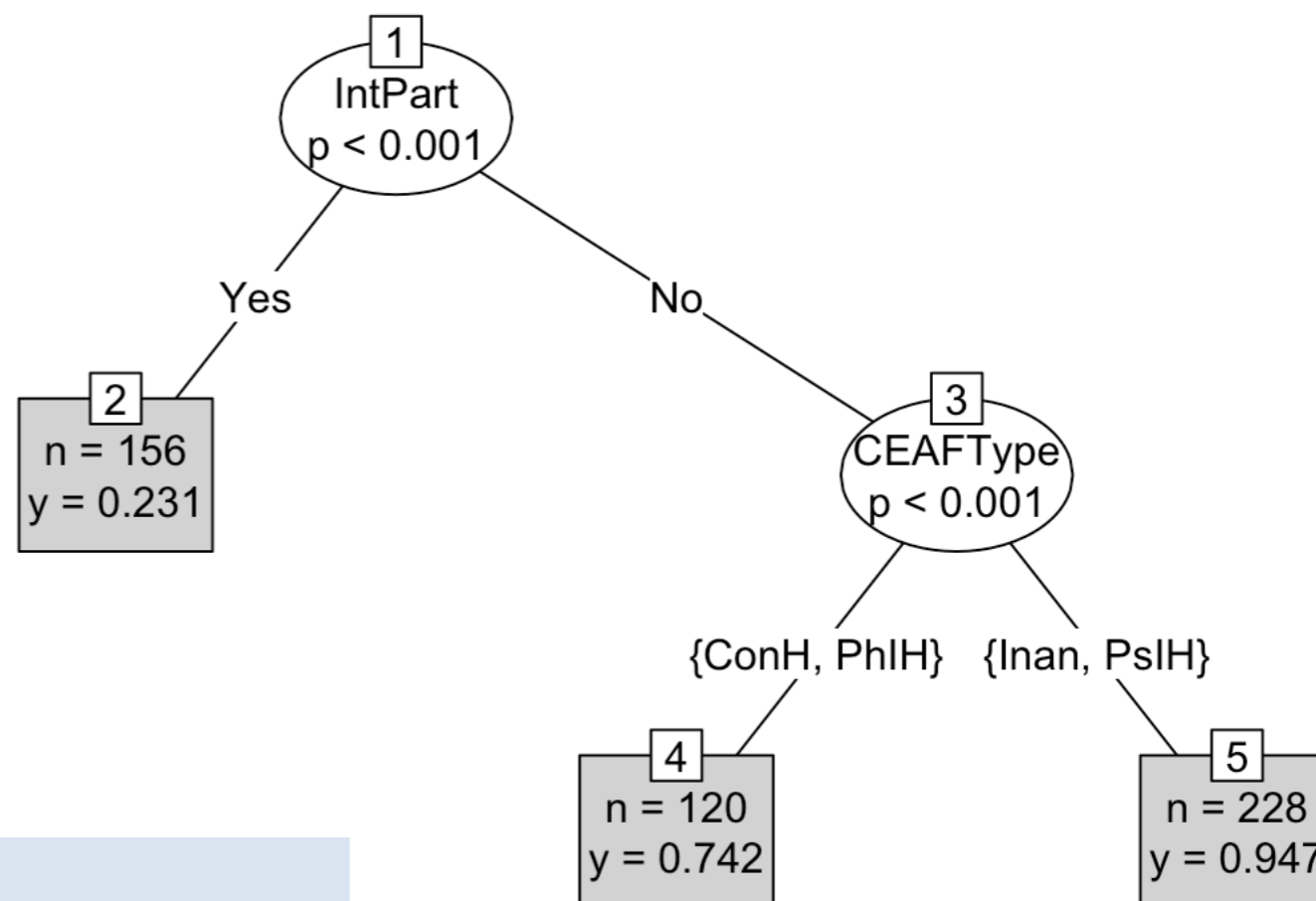


Figure 4.10. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Yucatec compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

▶ Zauzou - dominant variable: mediation

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in ZAL

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in ZAL"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 504
##
##          CRType    CEAFType    IntPart
## 0.004657513 0.025217541 0.140768217
```



Key:

CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PslH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.11. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Zauzou compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

► Zauzou - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in ZAL

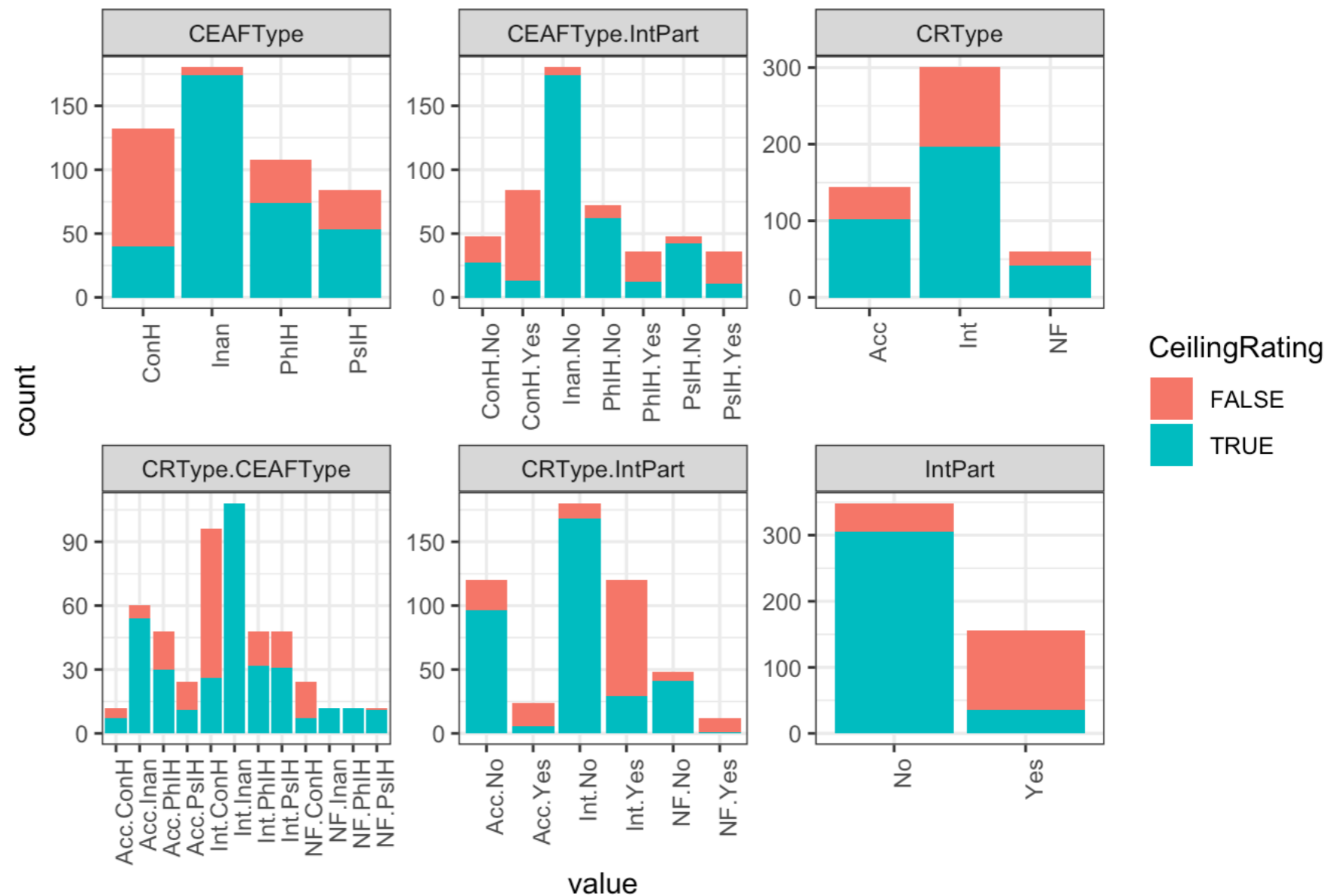


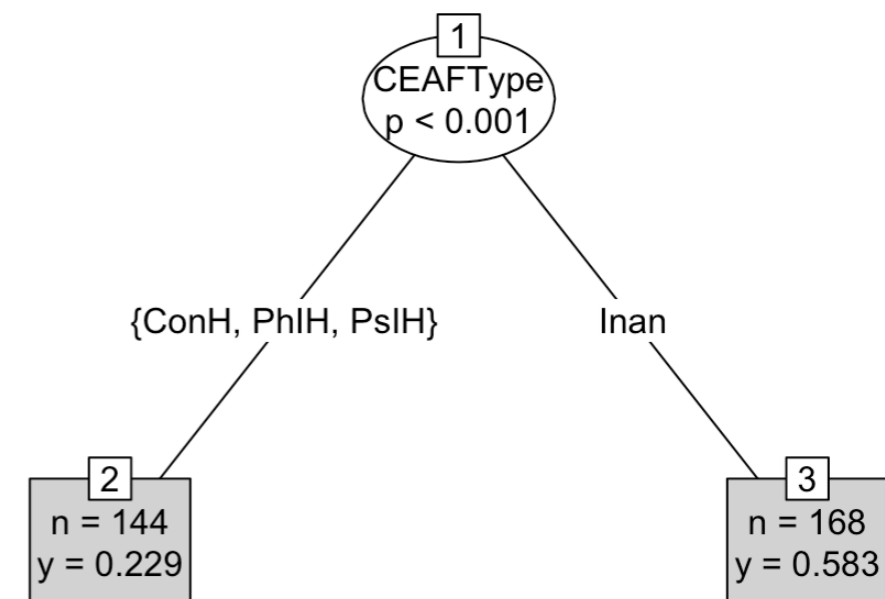
Figure 4.12. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Zauzou compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsiH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhiH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

- ▶ Korean - dominant variable: causee/affectee type
 - ▶ compact descriptions are dispreferred if the second participant in the causal chain is human

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in KOR"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 312
##
##          CRType  CEAFType  IntPart
## 0.06373713 0.10112069 0.01853191
```

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in KOR



Key:

CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.13. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Korean compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

► Korean - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in KOR

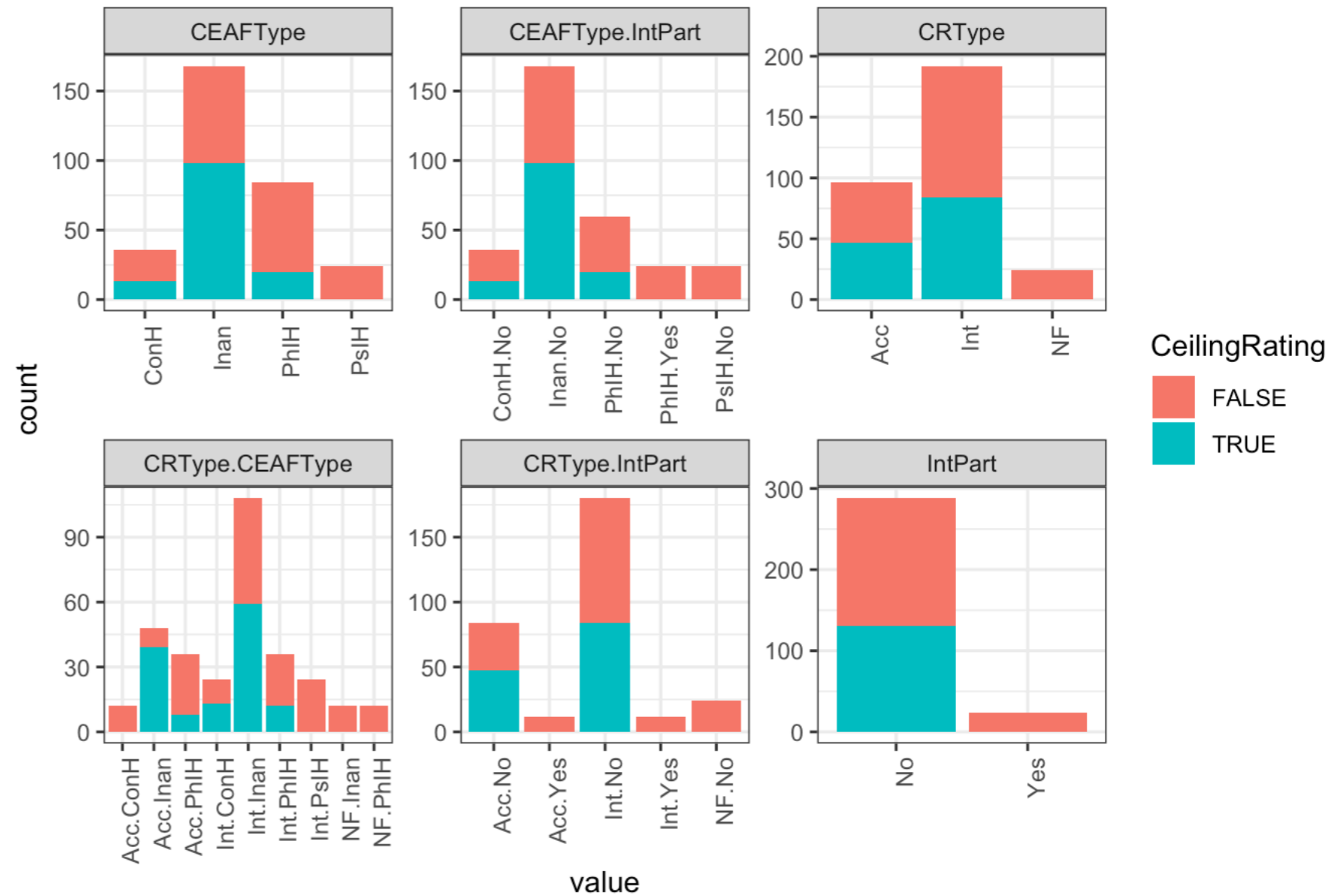


Figure 4.14. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Korean compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

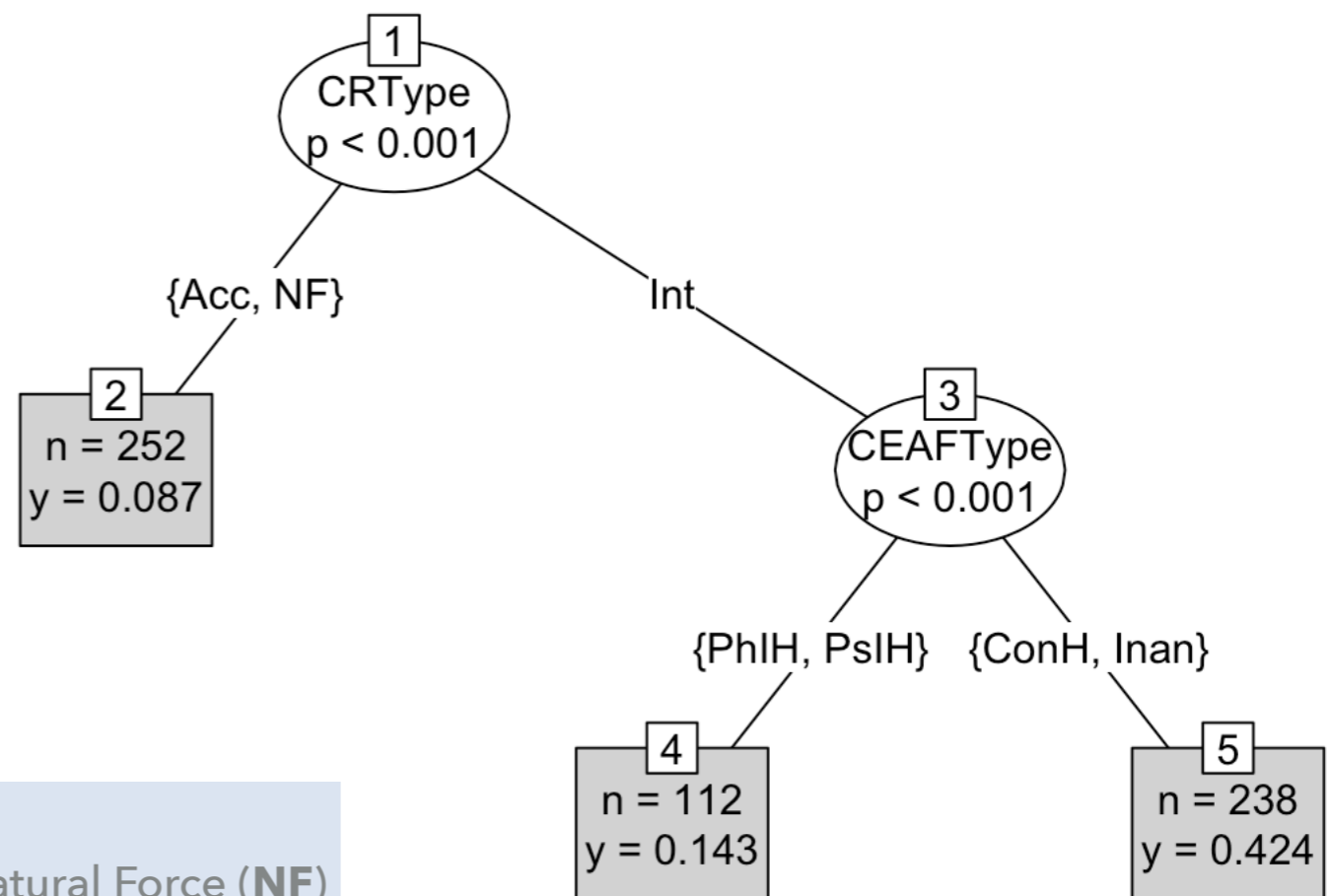
Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

- ▶ Datooga and Sidaama - inter-speaker variation drowning out the semantic variables
 - ▶ in the case of Datooga, compact response types were tested with respect to too few scenes
 - ▶ in the case of Sidaama, three speakers accepted compact response types almost indiscriminately
 - ▶ we're currently auditing this data

▶ Japanese: dominant variable participant, then causer type

Conditional inference tree for COMPACT junctures in JPN

```
## [1] "Random forest for COMPACT junctures in JPN"
##
## Random Forest using Conditional Inference Trees
##
## Number of trees: 500
##
## Response: CeilingRating
## Inputs: CRType, CEAFType, IntPart
## Number of observations: 602
##
## CRType CEAFType IntPart
## 0.042134948 0.029432274 0.007512527
```



Key:

CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)

CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PslH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)

IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

Figure 4.15. Random forest model and conditional inference tree predicting ceiling rating for Japanese compact response types in terms of independent variable level combinations (scene properties)

▶ Japanese - a closer look

Vars + interactions for COMPACT junctures in JPN

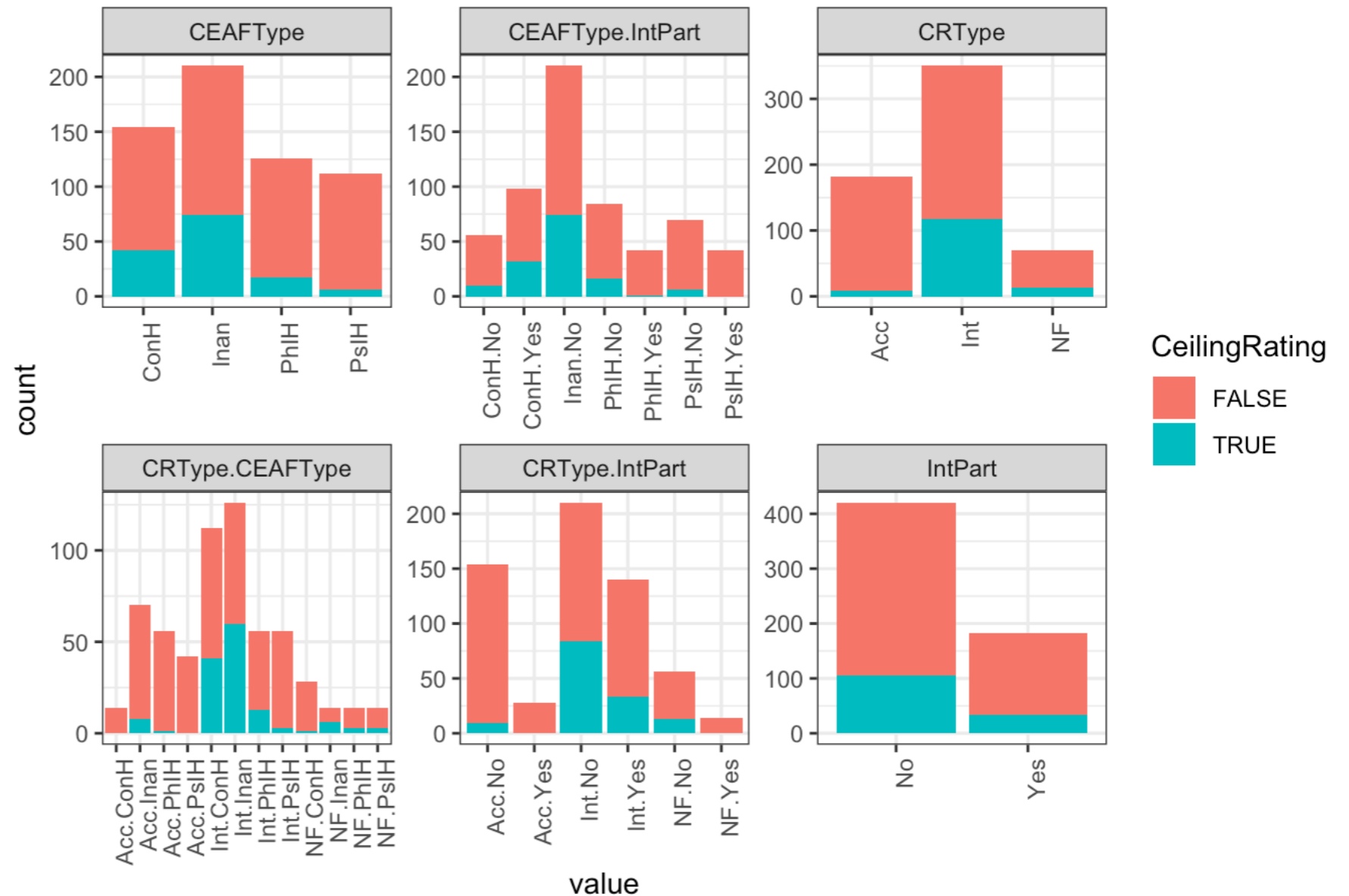


Figure 4.16. Bar plots of ceiling /non-ceiling rating for Japanese compact descriptions by variable level (including interactions)

Key:
CRType (Causer type): **Int**(entional) vs. **Acc**(idental) vs. Natural Force (**NF**)
CEAFType (Causee/affectee type):
 Controlled human (**ConH**) vs. Psychologically impacted human (**PsIH**)
 vs. Physically impacted human (**PhIH**) vs. **Inan**(imate)
IntPart (Mediation): **No** (unmediated) vs. **Yes** (mediated)

- ▶ interim summary
 - ▶ in English, Russian, Swedish, Yucatec, and Zauzou
 - ▶ compact descriptions will receive ceiling ratings only in case the causal chain is unmediated
 - ▶ regardless of agentivity

- ▶ interim summary (cont.)
 - ▶ in Japanese
 - ▶ compact descriptions will receive ceiling ratings only in case the causal chain is agentive
 - ▶ regardless (in first approximation) of mediation

- ▶ interim summary (cont.)
 - ▶ the Korean participants dispreferred compact descriptions when the CE/AF was human
 - ▶ almost all clips in question involve mediation, non-agentive causers, or psychological causation
 - ▶ the one exception did in fact elicit ceiling ratings for a compact construction
 - ▶ so what we have here seems to be an intermediate case between the agentivity-dominant pattern of Japanese
 - ▶ and the mediation-dominant pattern of the other language populations

▶ examples

(4.4) natural force causer, unmediated chain (CR > AF),
compact description, active voice

a. ENG *The wind blew away the reporter*

[Not tested - only the passive version occurred
during the production phase]

b. JPN *Tsuyoi kaze=ga otoko=no hito=o taosi-ta*

strong wind=NOM man=GEN person=ACC knock.down-PAST

'Strong wind knocked the man down'

[Ceiling rating for

NM2_reporter: 2 out of 14
participants]



Figure 4.12. *NM2_reporter*

▶ examples (cont.)

(4.5) Natural force causer, unmediated chain (CR > AF),
compact description, passive voice

a. ENG *The reporter was blown away by the wind*

[Ceiling rating for *NM2_reporter*: 11 out of 13 participants]

b. JPN *Otoko=no hito=ga tsuyoi kaze ni taos-are-ta*

man=GEN person=NOM strong wind by knock.down-PASS-PAST

'The man was knocked down by strong wind'

[Ceiling rating for *NM2_reporter*: 7 out of 14 participants]

▶ examples (cont.)

(4.6) Accidental human causer, unmediated chain (CR > AF), compact description, active voice (passive versions not tested)

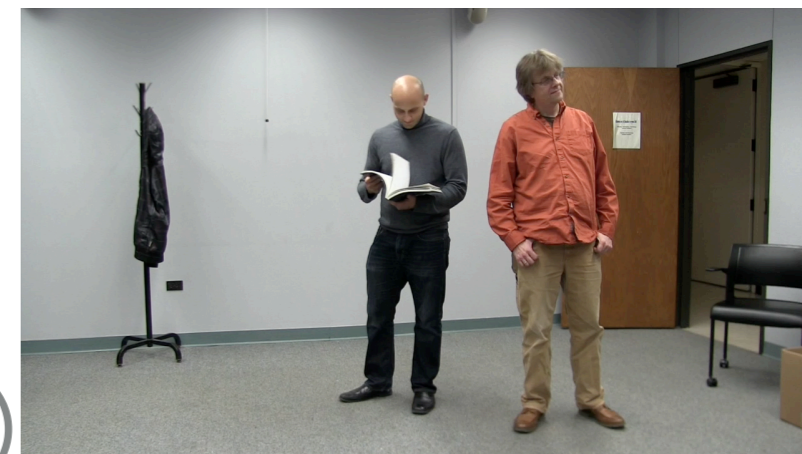


Figure 4.13. *UM3_faint*

a. ENG *The man knocked the other man over*

[Ceiling rating for *UM3_faint*: 7 out of 13 participants]

b. JPN *Migi=no otoko=no hito=ga hidari=no hito=o*

right=GEN man=GEN person=NOM left=GEN person=ACC

taosi-ta

knock.down-PAST

'The man on the right knocked down the man on the left'

[Ceiling rating for *UM3_faint*: 1 out of 14 participants]

▶ examples (cont.)

(4.7) Mediated chain (CR > CE > AF) with agentive causer

a. ENG *The man cracked the egg*

[Ceiling rating for *HCO3_egg_new*: 0 out of 13 participants]

b. JPN *Otoko=no hito=ga onna=no hito=ni tamago=o*

man=GEN person=NOM woman=GEN person=DAT egg=ACC

war-ase-ta

break-CAUS-PAST

'The man caused the
woman to break the egg'

[Ceiling rating for *HCO3_egg_new*:
7 out of 14 participants]



Figure 4.14. *HCO3_egg_new*

- ▶ examples (cont.)

(4.7) Mediated chain with agentive causer (cont.)

a. ENG *The man cracked the egg*

[Ceiling rating for *HCO3_egg_new*: 0 out of 13 participants]

- ▶ English compact descriptions get low-rated for mediated scenes b/c English lacks morphological causatives
- ▶ so what about other languages with morphological causatives?
 - ▶ Yucatec: only unaccusatives produce morphological causatives
 - ▶ Korean: morphological causatives of causative verbs exist
 - ▶ but are restricted to physically impacted CEs (e.g. 'eat' > 'feed')
 - ▶ Japanese: morphological causative are compatible w/ speech act causation scenarios



Figure 4.15. *HCO3_egg_new*

- ▶ so what's going on here?
 - ▶ as it turns out, several things!
- ▶ Japanese speakers have a strong preference for compact causative descriptions to be agentive
 - ▶ even in the passive voice
 - ▶ in contrast, speakers of the other languages accept compact causatives with non-agentive causers
 - ▶ but fairly strongly prefer passive voice for this
- ▶ in addition, the importance of mediation is reduced further in Japanese
 - ▶ due to morphological causatives being applicable to mediated causal chains

- ▶ consonant earlier findings regarding non-agentive compact causatives being dispreferred in Japanese
 - ▶ Ikegami (1991): Japanese is a 'BECOME language', whereas English is a 'DO language'
 - ▶ Japanese prefers intransitive/non-agentive expressions
 - ▶ English prefers transitive/agentive expressions
 - ▶ Fausey et al (2010): non-agentive causal chains are more likely to be represented with omission of causality
 - ▶ by Japanese speakers compared to English speakers
 - ▶ and Japanese speakers are less likely to remember the identity of accidental causers
 - ▶ similarly Fausey & Boroditsky (2011) on Spanish vs. English speakers

SYNOPSIS

- ▶ Introducing CAL
- ▶ Agentivity and the CAL Clips
- ▶ Study I: Urdu
- ▶ Study II: Semantic typology
- ▶ Study III: Responsibility assignment
- ▶ Agentivity and the future of CAL

STUDY III: RESPONSIBILITY ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ languages vary in the role agentivity plays in their grammars
- ▶ so what about non-linguistic cognition?
- ▶ the third study addresses this via responsibility assignment
- ▶ design: E. Bellingham; J. Bohnemeyer; J. A. Jódar Sánchez
- ▶ analysis: E. Bellingham; J. Bohnemeyer; S. Evers



Figure 5.1. *The current sample of Study III*



- ▶ research questions
 - ▶ to what extent is the attribution of causality in the CAL Clips scenarios subject to cross-cultural variation?
 - ▶ if there is variation, does it affect concepts that typologists and theories of the syntax-semantics interface rely on?
 - ▶ in particular, the notion of agentivity?
 - ▶ is there evidence that the cross-cultural variation - if it exists -
 - ▶ aligns with variation in the verbal representation of the scenes?

- ▶ research questions (cont.)
 - ▶ the test case: intentionality
 - ▶ a series of studies in social psychology suggest less attention to dispositional properties in causal attribution
 - ▶ among Chinese participants compared to Americans
 - ▶ e.g., Chiu et al (2000); Choi & Nisbett (1998), Choi et al (1999), Maddux & Yuki (2006); Menon et al (1999), Morris & Peng (1994), Peng & Knowles (2003)

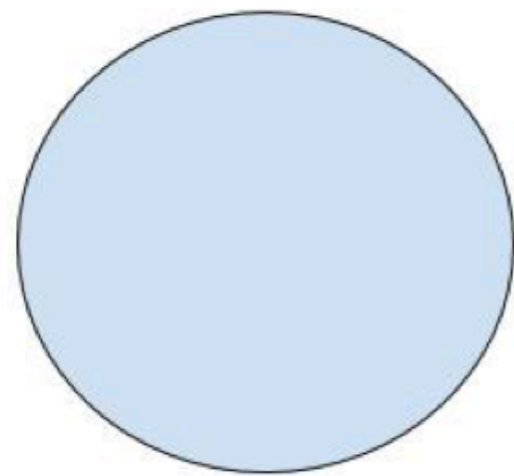
- ▶ research questions (cont.)
 - ▶ the test case: intentionality (cont.)
 - ▶ a different research tradition in cultural anthropology suggests the role of intentionality may covary
 - ▶ with the role of magical reasoning in a given culture
 - ▶ cf. Evans-Pritchard 1937
 - ▶ in this tradition, Le Guen et al (2015) report
 - ▶ that Tzeltal and Yucatec Mayans are more likely than urban Mexicans and German participants to attribute blame
 - ▶ in scenarios in which an actor desired an outcome, but did not contribute to its realization beyond that
- ▶ Danziger (2006), working in the same tradition, argues that Mopan Mayans pay less attention to intentions if a causal link can be established w/o them

- ▶ materials
 - ▶ test items: a subset of 24 of the CAL clips featuring a human causer (CR) and human causee (CE)/affectee (AF)
 - ▶ training items: 10 clips featuring various actions involving two human participants
 - ▶ some of these were joint actions
 - ▶ to motivate the idea of joint responsibility

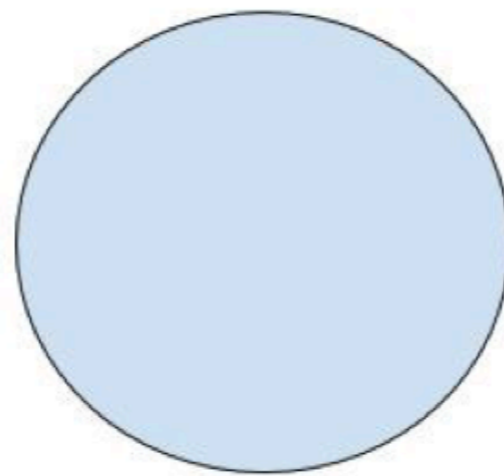


Figure 5.2. 04_glass_training

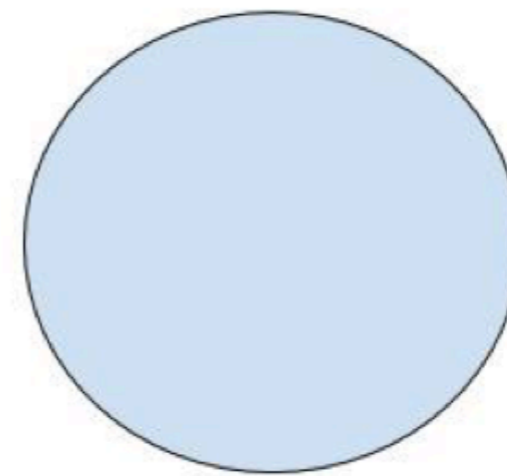
- ▶ procedure
- ▶ participants received 10 tokens and a sheet of paper with three circles



Leftmost Actor



Other Actor

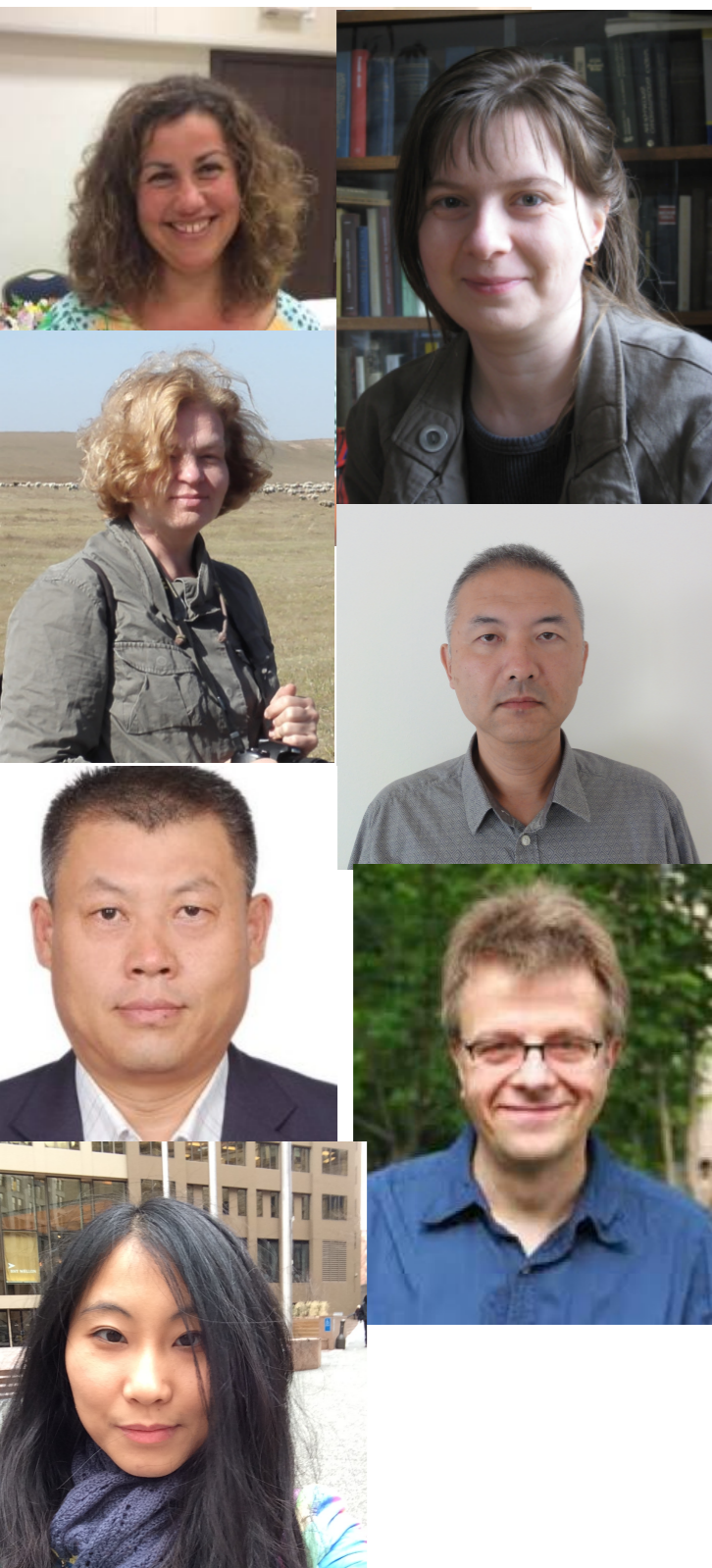


Neither Actor

Figure 5.3. Layout of the sheet on which participants allocate the tokens

- ▶ having watched each clip twice, participants were to allocate the tokens proportionately
- ▶ to represent each character's responsibility

- ▶ populations included in the analysis so far and researchers



Language	Genus	Field Site	Participants	Researcher	Affiliation
Basque	Isolate	Spain	25	I. Ibarretxe-Atuñano, M. Louro Mendiguren	Universidad de Zaragoza
Chuvash	Turkic	Russia	12	T. Nikitina	CNRS
Estonian	Uralic	Estonia	20	I. Tragel, K. Tomson	U of Tartu
Japanese	Japonic	Japan	20	K. Kawachi	National Defense Academy of Japan
Kupsapiny	Nilotic	Uganda	12	K. Kawachi	National Defense Academy of Japan
Mandarin	Sino-Tibetan	China	16	F. Li, J. Du	Beihang University
Sidaama	Cushitic	Ethiopia	22	K. Kawachi	National Defense Academy of Japan
Spanish	Romance	Spain	23	I. Ibarretxe-Atuñano, A. Ariño Bizarro	Universidad de Zaragoza
Yucatec	Maya	Mexico	12	J. Bohnemeyer	UB
Zauzou	Lolo-Burmese	P.R.C	29	L. Yu	UB

Table 5.1. *The current sample of the Responsibility Assignment study*

▶ results

▶ significantly more responsibility was attributed to intentional causers

▶ than to non-intentional ones

▶ by speakers of Japanese, Spanish, and Yucatec

▶ but not by members of the other populations

▶ a mixed effects regression model confirmed this

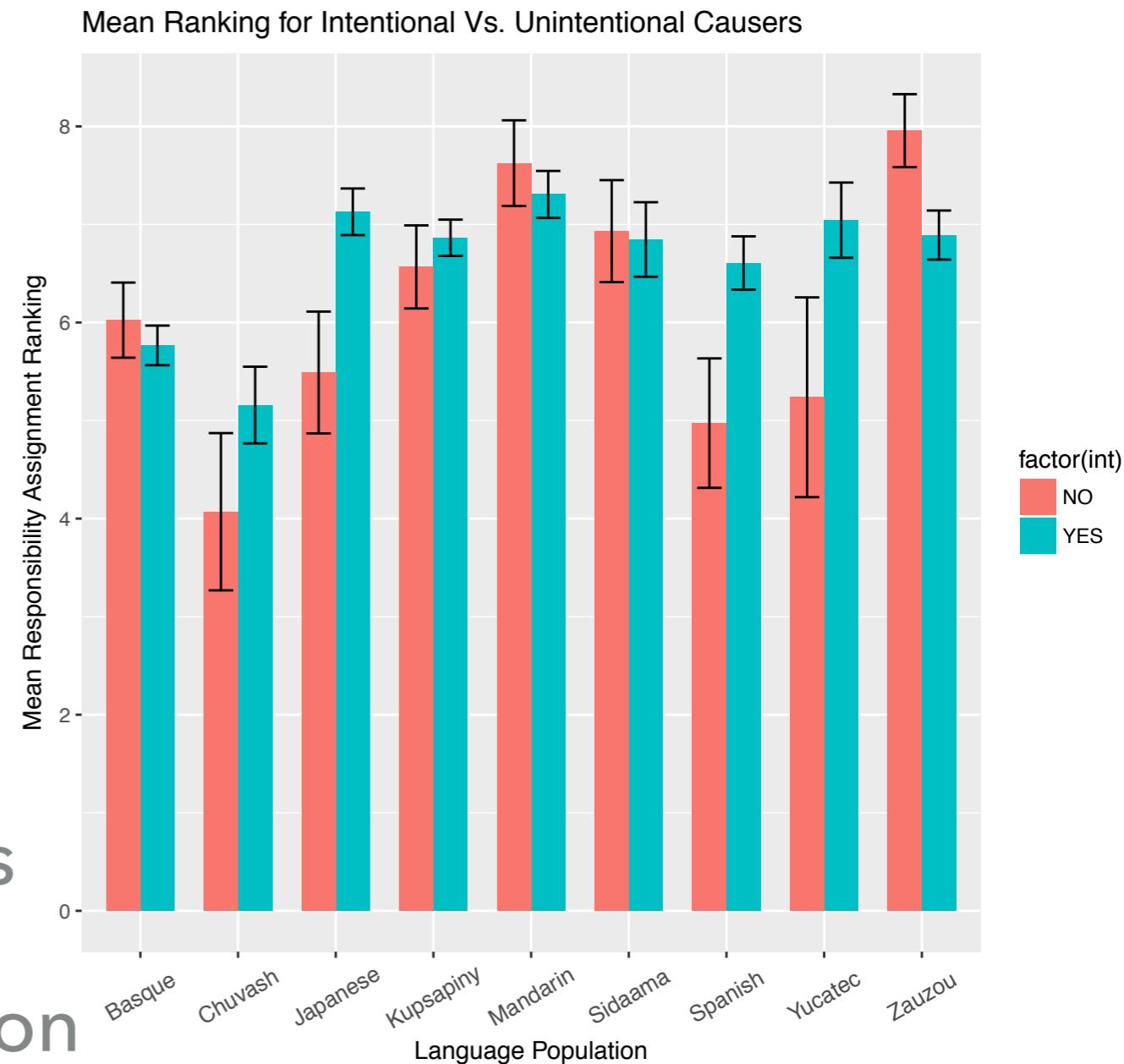


Figure 5.4. Mean Causer responsibility rating by population and Causer intentionality

- ▶ discussion
 - ▶ Chinese participants payed less attention to CR intentionality when attributing responsibility
 - ▶ in line with the predictions arising from the SocPsych literature
 - ▶ not confirmed: Mayan participants did pay more attention to intentionality when attributing responsibility
 - ▶ contra Danziger (2006)
(for Mopan, which is closely related to Yucatec)

- ▶ discussion (cont.)
 - ▶ Japanese speakers displayed a high degree of sensitivity to intentions when attributing responsibility
 - ▶ in line with the findings of Study II
 - ▶ but Study III also found a significant role of intentionality in the Yucatec and Zauzou speakers' responses
 - ▶ although causer intentionality played only a minor role in these population's linguistic responses
 - ▶ so if there is any causal relation involved, it is more likely an effect of cultural reasoning on language
 - ▶ then the other way around

- ▶ what's next
 - ▶ we've begun typing our populations using the *Self Construal Questionnaire* (Singelis 1994)
 - ▶ objective: determine whether something like 'sociocentrism' has systematic explanatory value
 - ▶ for the responsibility assignment data
 - ▶ we plan to relate the responsibility assignments to the CAL Discourse subproject data
 - ▶ to see whether there are inter-predictive patterns
 - ▶ including along the lines of Fausey et al (2011) and Fausey & Boroditsky (2010)

SYNOPSIS

- ▶ Introducing CAL
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- ▶ Agentivity and the future of CAL

AGENTIVITY AND THE FUTURE OF CAL

- ▶ we are currently in the process of designing a follow up project to CAL
- ▶ the new project is planned to focus specifically on agentivity
- ▶ working title:
CAAAL - Causality and Agentivity Across Languages 😎

- ▶ Theme I: crosslinguistic variation in directness
 - ▶ CAL has uncovered evidence that languages differ in which variables most strongly drive causative complexity
 - ▶ English, Russian, Swedish, Yucatec, Zauzou: mediation
 - ▶ Japanese: agentivity
 - ▶ Korean: patientivity (the type of the second participant in the causal chain)?
 - ▶ or really just a combination of the first two patterns?
- ▶ plan: study this complex more thoroughly and develop it into a full-blown typology

- ▶ Theme II: strategies for non-agentive causers
 - ▶ across languages, compact representations of causal chains are subject to some version of the Hopper-Thompson model
 - ▶ however, languages seem to differ in their preferred strategies for accommodating non-agentive causers
 - ▶ and not-fully-agentive (i.e., accidental) causers
 - ▶ English, Yucatec: compact description + passivization
 - ▶ Japanese, (Spanish?): either do not encode causation or use a more complex representation
 - ▶ effectively treating non-agentive causation as 'indirect'
 - ▶ Urdu: use case alternations and light verb selection to flag non-agentive and non-intentional causers
- ▶ plan: study this complex toward a full-blown typology

- ▶ Theme III: cultural models of agentivity
 - ▶ there is evidence that the role of intentions in attributing causality varies across cultures
 - ▶ what does this mean for the conceptualization of agentivity across cultures?
 - ▶ how can it be reconciled with evidence pointing in the direction of an innate basis of the agent concept
 - ▶ cf. Samet & Zaitchik (2017) for a survey
 - ▶ how do folk conceptualizations of agentivity interface with the grammars of natural languages
 - ▶ if at all?

- ▶ planned studies
 - ▶ study the makeup of the causality concept across languages/cultures w/ a questionnaire with story vignettes
 - ▶ study the makeup of the agency concept across languages/cultures w/ a questionnaire with story vignettes
 - ▶ following the model of Le Guen et al (2015)
 - ▶ develop a more elaborate set of CAL Clips that fills some of the currently “sparsely populated cells”
 - ▶ conduct corpus studies in suitable languages to investigate the frequency distribution of variable levels
 - ▶ continue the responsibility assignment study w/ the Self Construal Questionnaire
 - ▶ and by relating it to the Discourse subproject data

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- ▶ epic thanks to the CAL researchers who contributed to the studies presented here



- ▶ massive thanks also to
 - ▶ colleagues who have provided advice:
Dare Baldwin; Dedre Gentner; Beth Levin; Gail Mauner;
Eric Pederson; Robert D. Van Valin, Jr., Phillip Wolff
 - ▶ all of whom shall be held blameless for any foolish
and harebrained claims in this presentation
- ▶ our sponsor:
NSF Award #BCS-1535846; PI J. Bohnemeyer



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