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► **To cite this version:**

Gabriel Weindel, Royce Anders, F.-Xavier Alario, Boris Burle. Fractionning Reaction Time to probe the validity of the Drift Diffusion Model parameters. 20th Conference of the European Society for Cognitive Psychology (ESCoP), Sep 2017, Potsdam, Germany. hal-01579908

**HAL Id: hal-01579908**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01579908v1>**

Submitted on 31 Aug 2017

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# Fractionning Reaction Time to probe the validity of the Drift Diffusion Model parameters

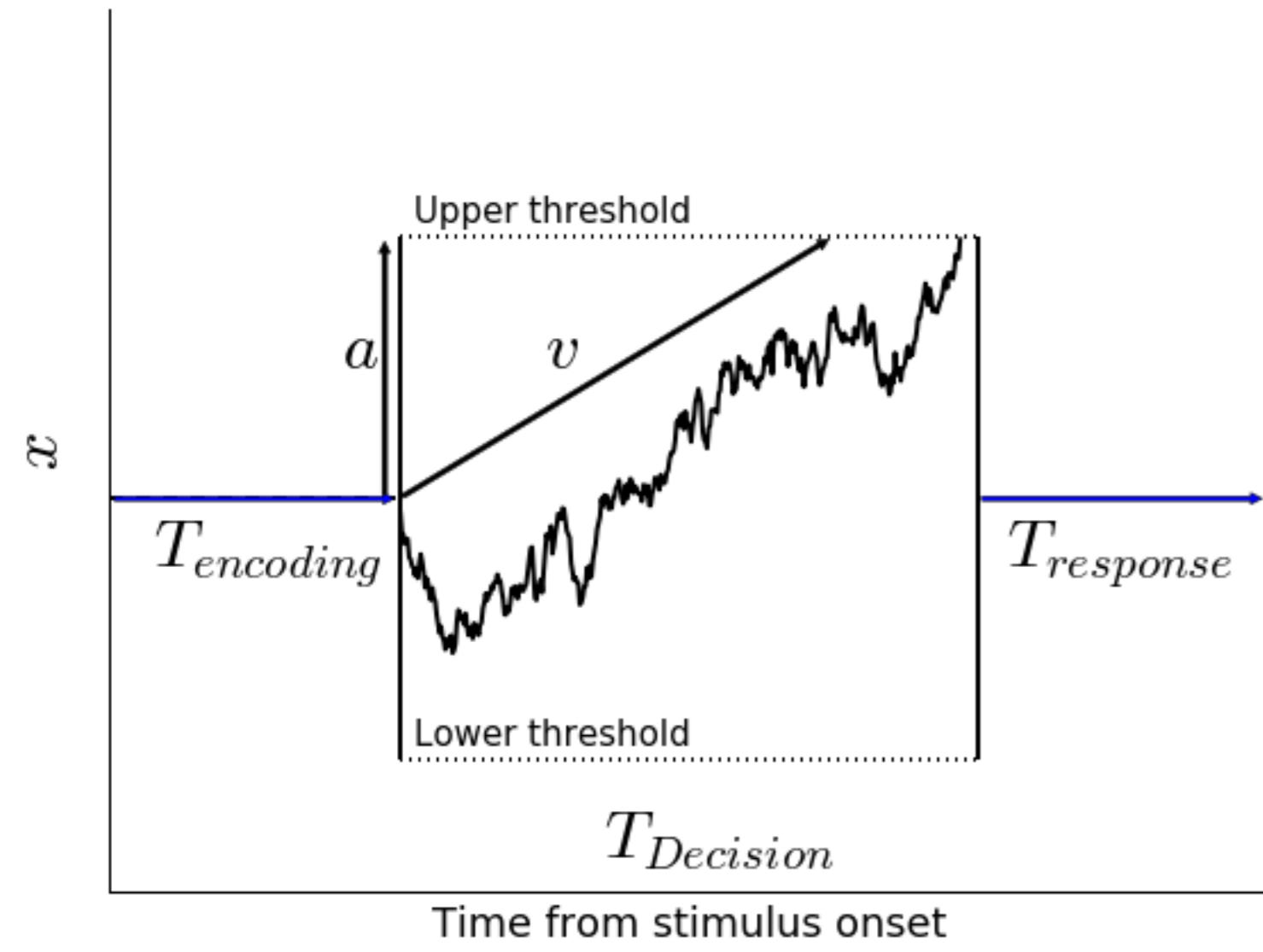
Gabriel Weindel<sup>1,2</sup>, Royce Anders<sup>1</sup>, F.-Xavier Alario<sup>1</sup> & Boris Burle<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laboratoire de Psychologie Cognitive, Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, LPC, Marseille, France  
<sup>2</sup> Laboratoire de Neurosciences Cognitives, Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, LNC, Marseille, France

## Summary

We designed a two-alternative forced choice experiment in which the by-trial reaction times could be fractionated into pre-motor (PMT) and motor times (MT), based on the onset of muscular activity from the electromyographic (EMG) recordings (Figure 2c). We then compared this empirical decomposition to the decomposition performed by the Drift Diffusion Model (DDM, Ratcliff, 1978). Using these two decompositions, we show that the non-decision time parameter of the DDM is highly correlated with the Motor Time that was recorded

## The Drift Diffusion Model



**Figure 1:** The standard Drift Diffusion Model (Ratcliff, 1978). Parameter  $a$  represents the boundary separation parameter,  $v$  the Drift Rate,  $T_{er}$  the non-decision time thought to contain encoding and response execution processes.

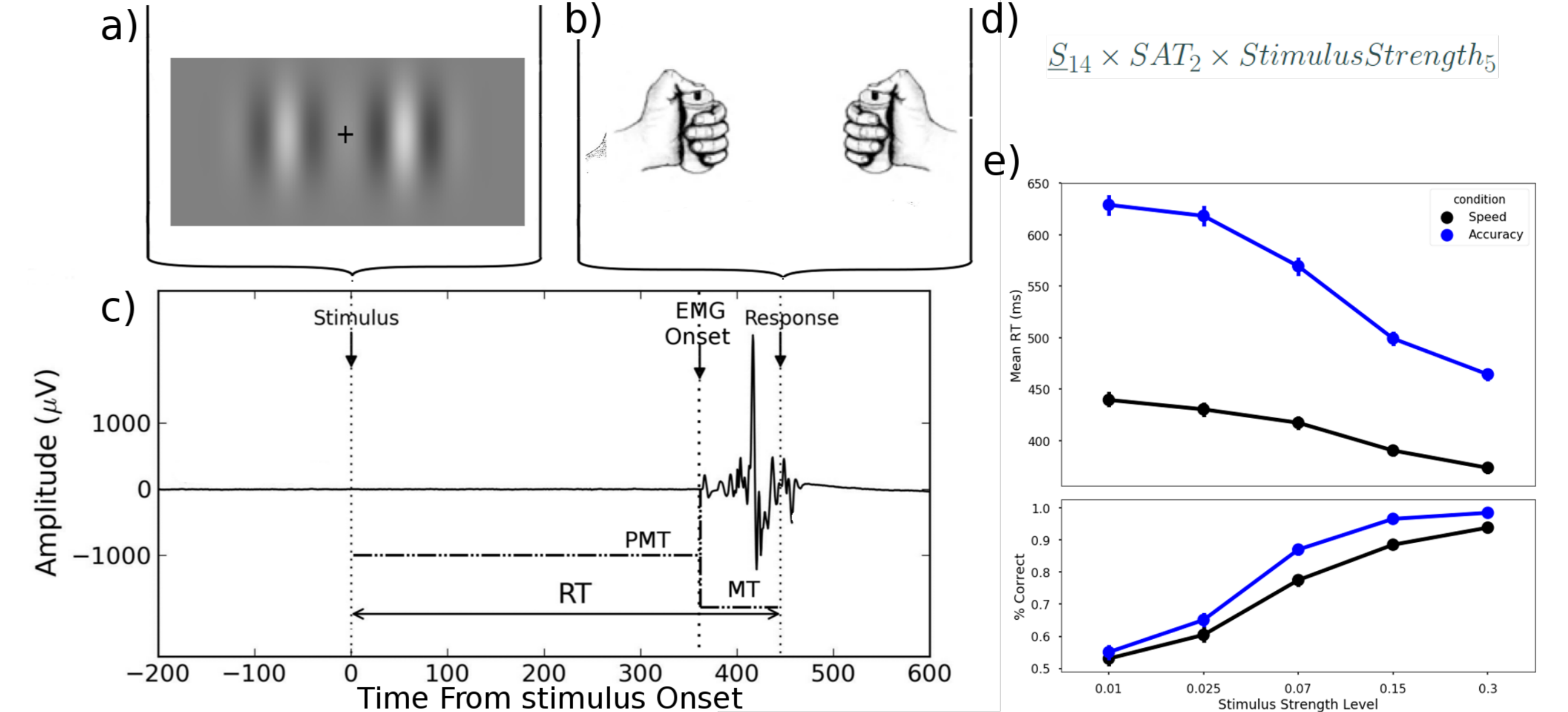
$$RT = T_D + T_{er} \quad (1)$$

$$T_{er} = T_{encoding} + T_{response} \quad (2)$$

$$T_D = \left(\frac{a}{2v}\right) \frac{1 - \exp(-va/s^2)}{1 + \exp(-va/s^2)} \quad (3)$$

when the participants stressed Accuracy over Speed. Furthermore, we show that fitting the by-trial Pre-Motor Time with the DDM mainly modulated the non-decision time parameters. The relative contribution of decision time and motor time components in the overall Reaction Time (based on speed versus accuracy instructions) was observed. Correlation analyses between speed instructions on empirical data suggest that their could be a change in the architecture of cognitive processes rather than a quantitative change between Speed-Accuracy tradeoff (SAT) levels.

## Methods



**Figure 2:** a) Illustration of the stimuli used with the instruction to respond to the most contrasted gabor patch; b) response execution setup; c) Example of the by-trial EMG decomposition, the Pre-Motor Time (PMT) is the time between stimulus and EMG Onset, the Motor Time (MT) the time between the EMG Onset and the mechanical response; d) Experimental design: 14 participants in two Speed/Accuracy conditions (Speed or Accuracy is emphasized), across 5 levels of difficulty; e) Behavioral results of the experiment that show a lower Reaction Time and a lower accuracy when speed is stressed.

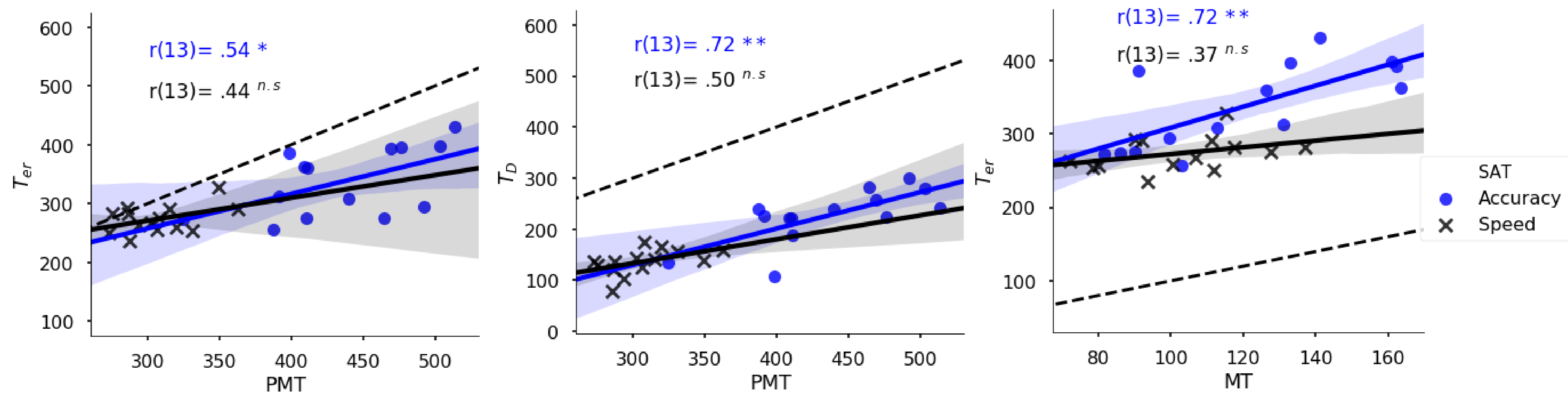
## Correlation between the DDM parameters and the EMG latencies

Expected relations :

$$T_{er} - MT < PMT$$

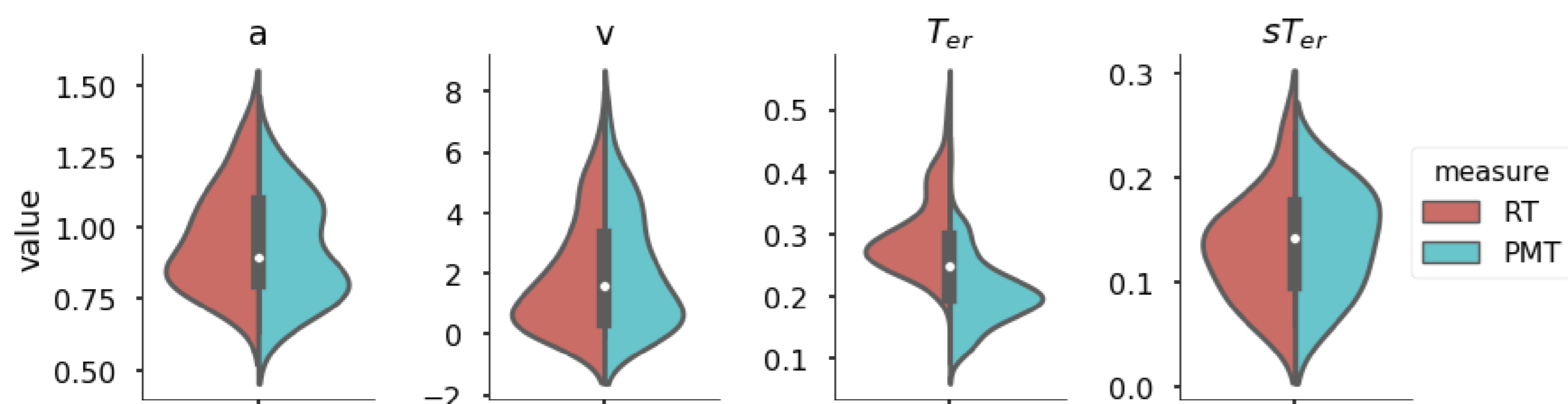
$$PMT > T_D$$

$$MT < T_{er}$$



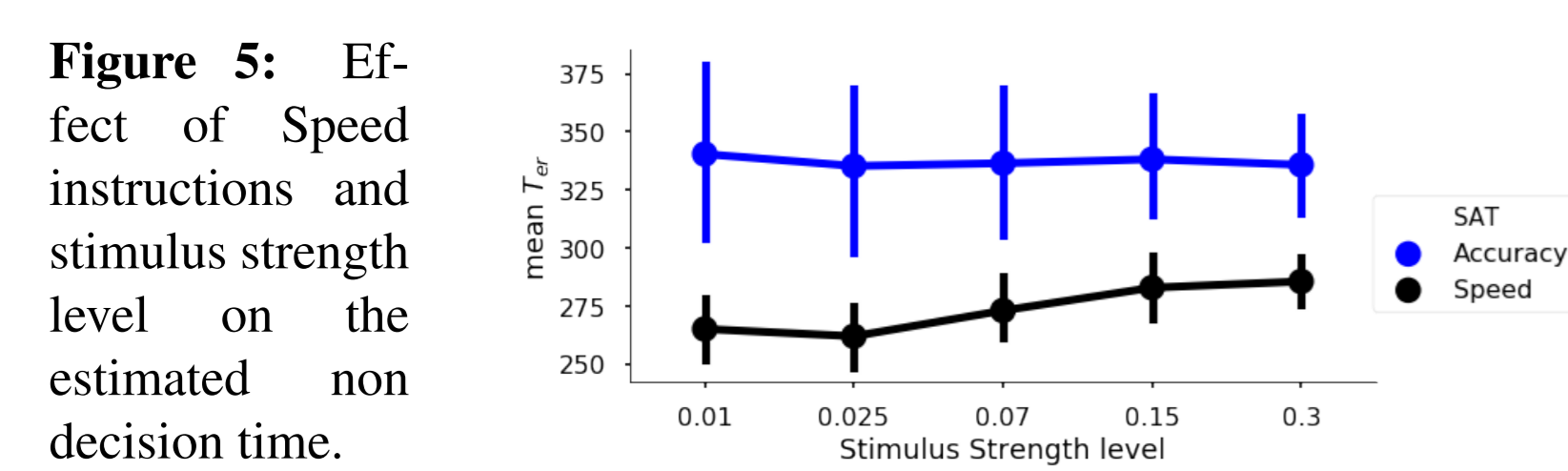
**Figure 3:** Correlations between the latencies of the empirical decompositions (PMT and MT) and the latencies of the model-based decomposition ( $T_D$  and  $T_{er}$ ) in both SAT emphasis conditions. These figures show that when accuracy is stressed, empirical and model-based decompositions are strongly correlated.

## Impact of MT on model fit: comparison of fits on RT and PMT



**Figure 4:** Distribution of parameter values across participants according to Reaction Time fits (red) and Pre-Motor Time fits (blue). This figure shows that removing the MT on a by-trial basis, and fitting the model selectively, impairs selectively the non-decision time.

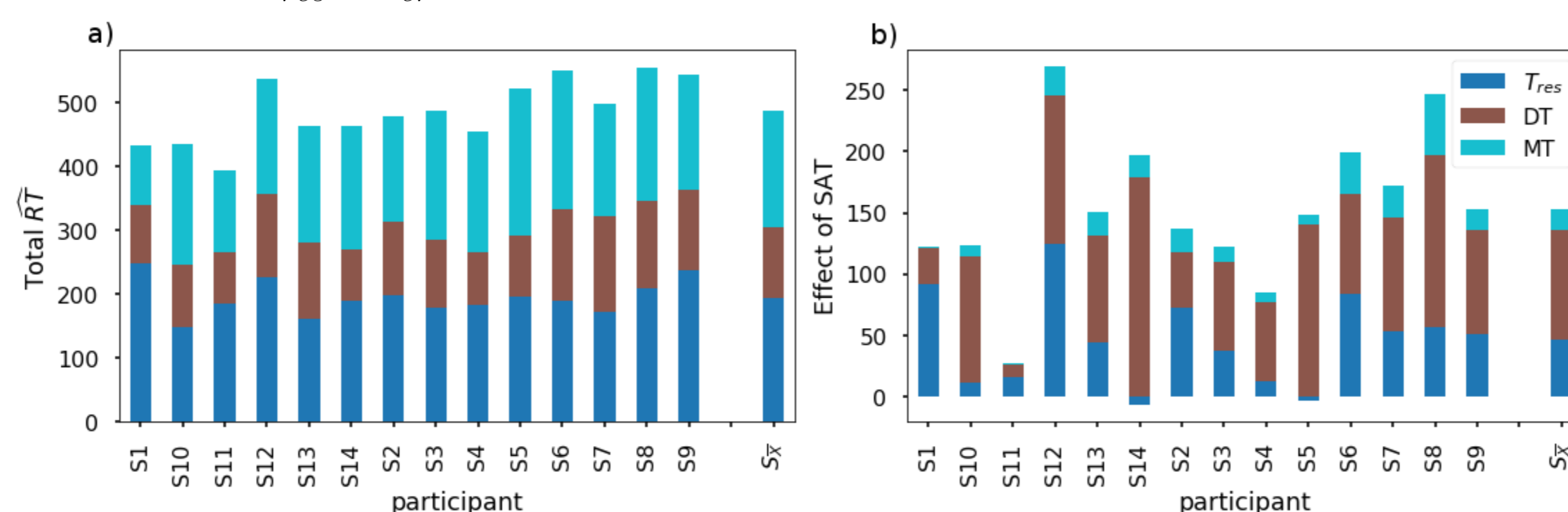
## Mixed regression on the DDM non-decision time parameter



**Ter :**  
 - SAT:  $\beta = -73^{***}$   
 - Stimulus strength:  $\beta = -6^{n.s.}$   
 - SAT\*SS Interaction:  $\beta = 86^{***}$

## Combining Decompositions

Using the empirical and model-based decompositions, we can assess more specific components of the classic total RT: that is the MT, the Decision Time, and finally the residual non-decision time which is obtained by subtracting the measured MT to the theoretical non-decision time:  $T_{res} = T_{er} - MT$



**Figure 8:** a) Representation of the theoretical composition of the RT, consisting of Decision Time ( $T_D$ , 37% of the RT), MT (23%) and residual  $T_{er}$  ( $T_{res} = T_{er} - MT$ , 40%). b) Representation of each component in the overall SAT effect (Accuracy condition - Speed condition) with a high contribution of  $T_D$  (58%), and a weaker contribution of MT (11%) and  $T_{res}$  (31%)

## Conclusions

- Empirical and model-based decompositions are strongly correlated when accuracy is stressed (figure 3)
- Removing MT (i.e. fitting on PMT) selectively affects the non-decision time parameter (figure 4) suggesting that this theoretical parameter accurately captures the Motor Time we are measuring with EMG.
- The change in the correlation between PMT and MT (figure 6b) suggests that SAT not only affects the individual component of RT, but also modifies their interrelationship.

- Both empirical (figure 7) and model-based decompositions (figure 5) are evidence that non-decisional processes are affected by Speed instructions, which confirms previous results by Spieser et al. (2017).
- Finally, these two decompositions have allowed us to infer that the decision time is just a small part of the total RT (37%), but it however explains most of the Speed instructions effect (58%) (figure 8).
- We note that we have also replicated all of these results in a second experiment with a similar design but with different participants.

## References

- Ratcliff, R. (1978). A theory of memory retrieval. *Psychonomic review*, 85(2), 59.  
 Spieser, L., Servant, M., Hasbroucq, T., & Burle, B. (2017). Beyond decision! Motor contribution to speed-accuracy trade-off in decision-making. *Psychonomic bulletin & review*, 24(3), 950-956.

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