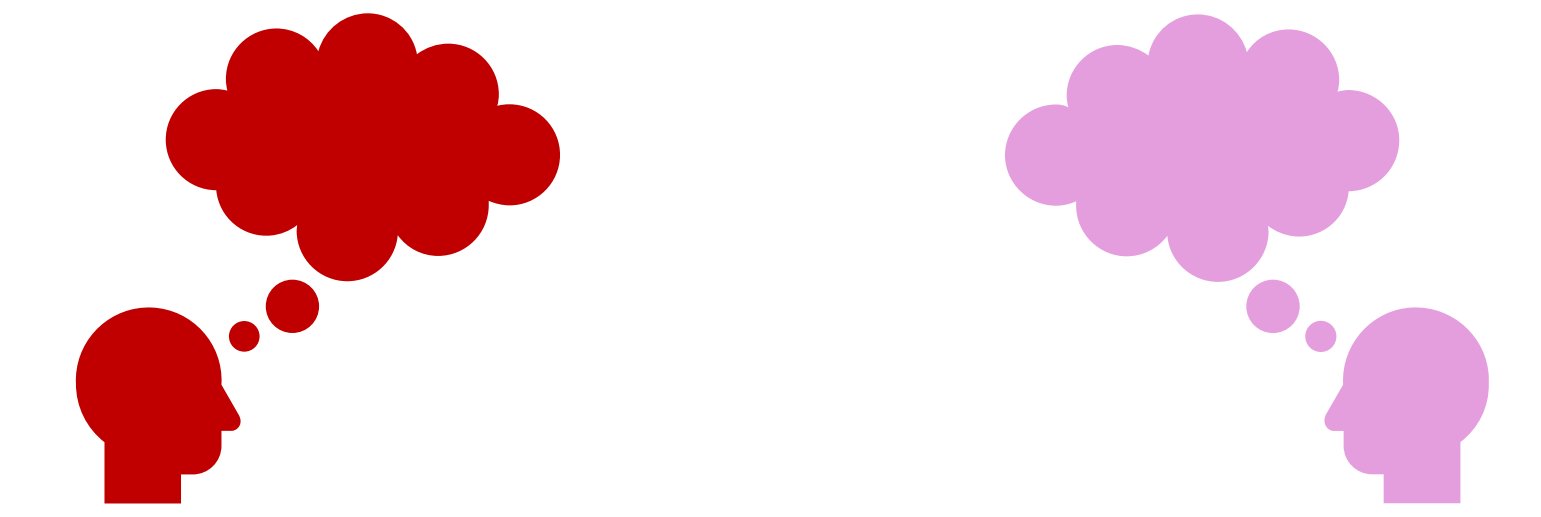


The Silence of the Interim: Planning the Responses to your Questions

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Introduction

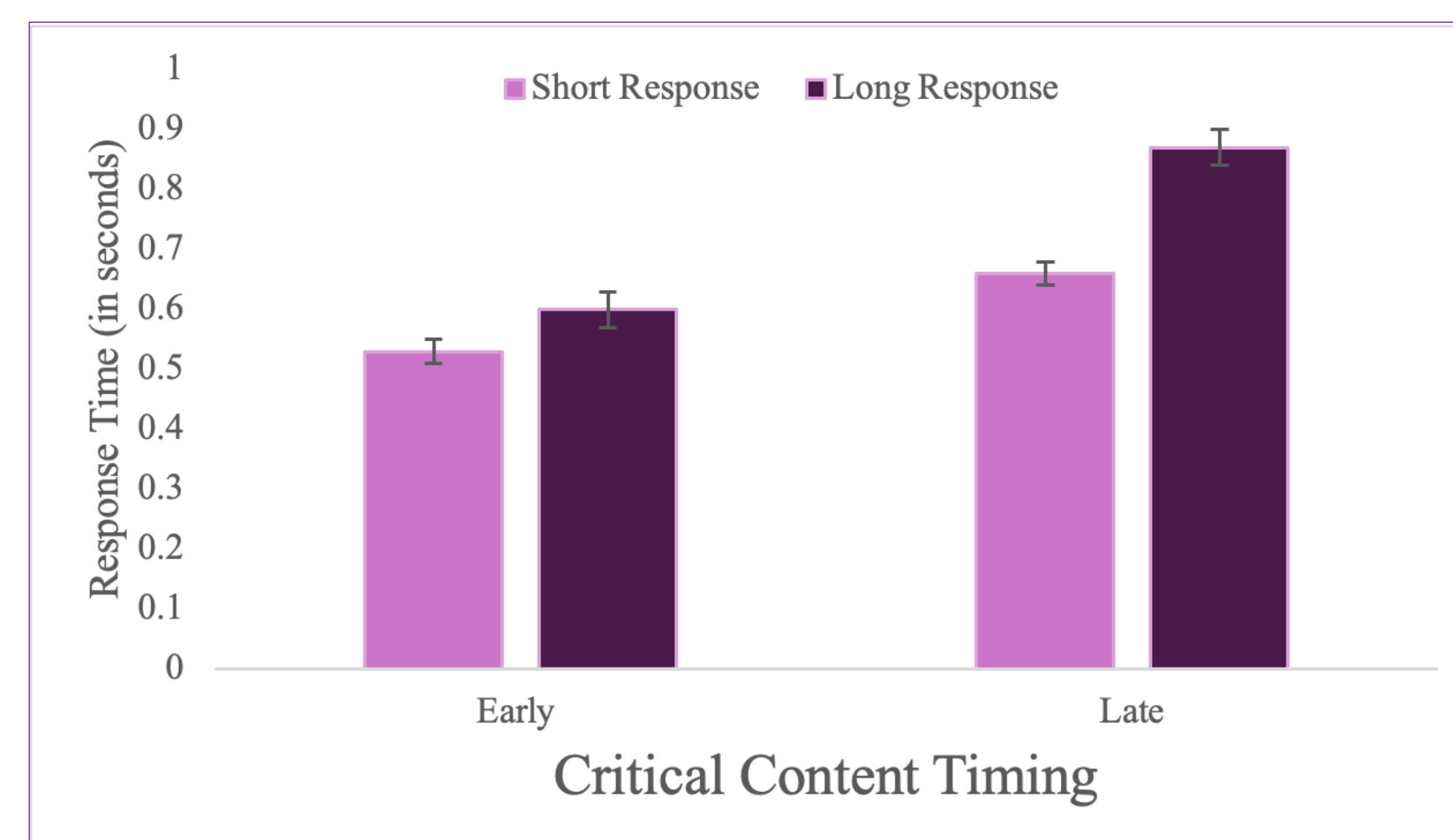
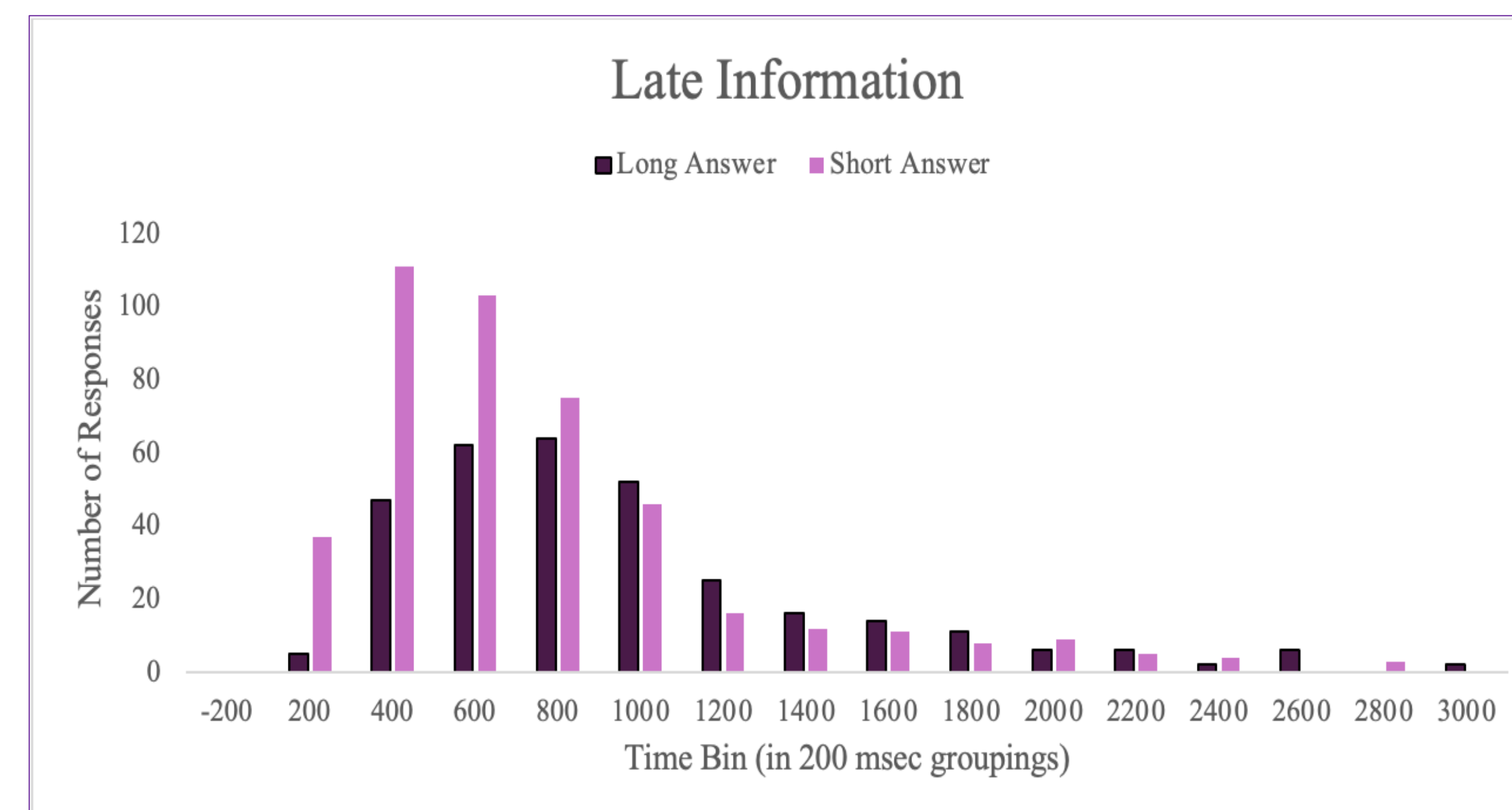
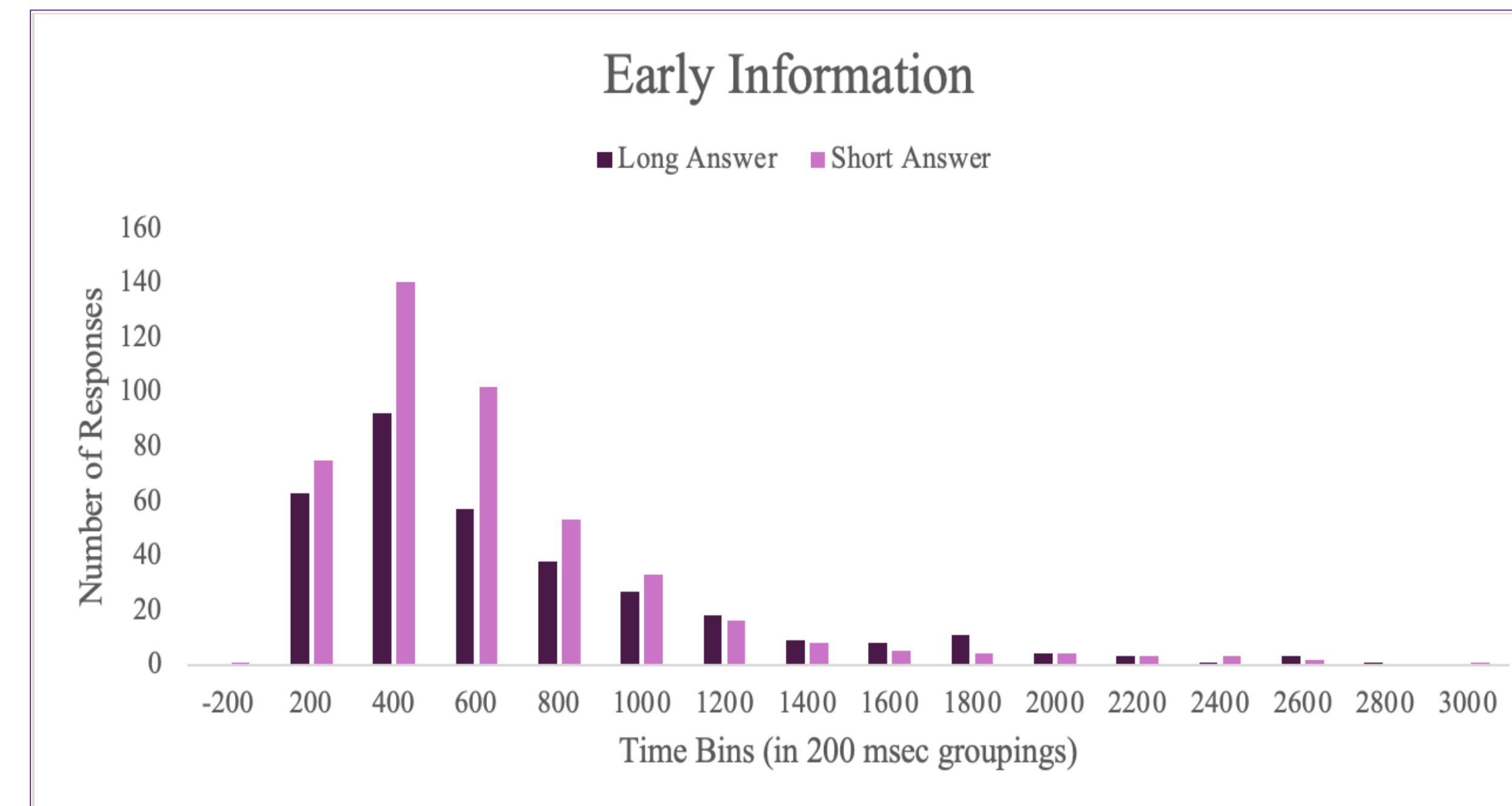
- During a conversation, interlocutors, or someone who participates in a conversation, begin crafting their response to their partner before the partner finishes.
- However, it is unclear about what exactly is being prepared and how it is being prepared.
- There are two prevailing theories. The first is that the form and content is being prepared as soon as possible. The second is that the content is being planned as soon as possible, while the form is prepared closer towards the end of the partner's question.
- But which method is primarily used?

Procedures

- We used 49 trivia questions for this study. These questions were chosen out of a pool of 70 from a similar experiment from Corps and Pickering (2024). These questions were selected because they had a higher correct answer rate than the rest.
- These questions had 2 parts to each of them, a part that is critical to the answer and one that is not. (Ex. Which animal barks and is also a common household pet?)
- Out of the 49 questions, 25 had short (one-word) answers, while the other 24 had long (multi-word) answers.
- Then, we created 2 counterbalanced lists of questions so that the short and long answer questions were rearranged to where their critical information was either in the first or second part of the questions in the different lists.
- When participants came to the lab, they were seated across the table from the experimenter. They were instructed that they were about to be asked trivia questions and to answer them as quickly as possible.
- They were also instructed to either be as formal or informal as possible.
- Once ready, the recording would begin. The questions from either list 1 or 2 were asked one at a time and the experimenter allowed the participant to answer or indicate that they didn't know the answer.
- Once finished with all the questions, the experimenter would stop the recording, and the participant would be dismissed.

Data Collection

- The subjects of this study were 44 FSU undergraduate students. They signed up for the study through the SONA program.
- The audio was recorded through Audacity 2.0, an audio recording software.
- The recorded audio of the questions and answers were analyzed through Praat, an audio analyzing software with a spectrogram. Through this software, we looked at response latency, response length, average pitch, average intensity, question length, duration of the second part of the question, whether the participant produced a disfluency, whether the answer was in a complete sentence, and whether the answer was correct.
- We discarded trials where the participant did not know the answer, answered incorrectly, or didn't begin their response with their answer. We also discarded trials where the participant began their response with a disfluency or answers with a response time of more than 3 seconds.
- Whole data analysis and coding was done in RStudio.



Results

- The results supported the hypothesis that interlocutors use early form strategy when producing responses.
- For questions that had the critical content in the beginning, the response latency was much shorter than when the critical content was at the end.
- However, for questions that had multi-word answers, the response time was longer than single-word answers.
- For questions with late critical information, the length of the response saw a bigger effect on response latency than questions with early critical information.
- Overall, the critical information position was more impactful than whether the response was long or short, as the early critical long response questions had less response time than later critical short response questions.
- Pitch, formality instructions, intensity, and second half length generally didn't affect response latency.
- Research is still ongoing, as this was the first wave of research.

Conclusion/Discussion

- Because this study was done in person, there were very little interruptions before the question was finished. This was done in contrast to the similar study done by Corps and Pickering (2024), which was online and had many interruptions. We did this to expand on their research and see if the difference mattered.
- Due to this difference, the results differed greatly. While our data supported the idea of early form production, Corps and Pickering's (2024) data supported late form production.
- This implicates more variables are responsible for response time, like direct human interaction. This is a subject of possible further research.
- Furthermore, this suggests that people use different forms of speech production depending on the situation.
- The instruction of formality didn't have much of an impact on results because there weren't any instructions on what "formal" meant. We also didn't ask the participants what they did to fulfill this instruction. This could be remedied in future research.
- The data collection and coding worked smoothly, however there was some experimenter error, as the questions were uneven in their sorting, although it had very little impact on data.

References

- Brousse, C. M., Chia, K., & Kaschak, M. P. (2024). Non-sentential replies to requests for information. *Memory and Cognition*, 53, 1207-1225.
- Corps, R. E., & Pickering, M. J. (2024). The role of answer content and length when preparing answers to questions. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 17110.