

When the eyes no longer lead: Familiarity and length effects on Eye-Voice Span

Susana Silva^{1,2*}, Alexandra Reis², Luís Casaca², Karl Magnus Petersson^{3,4,2}, Luís Faísca²

¹Center for Psychology at the University of Porto, University of Porto, Portugal, ²CBMR, University of Algarve, Portugal, ³Neurobiology of Language, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Netherlands, ⁴Language in interaction, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour, Netherlands

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Provisional

When the Eyes No Longer Lead: Familiarity and Length Effects on Eye-Voice Span

Susana Silva^{1,2*}, Alexandra Reis², Luís Casaca², Karl Magnus Petersson^{2,3,4}, Luís Fáisca²

¹ Center for Psychology at the University of Porto (CPUP), University of Porto, Portugal

² Centre for Biomedical Research (CBMR), University of Algarve, Portugal

³ Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Netherlands

⁴ Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour, The Netherlands

* **Correspondence:** Susana Silva, Neurocognition and Language Research Group, Center for Psychology at the University of Porto, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen, 4200-135, Porto, Portugal, zanasilva@gmail.com

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Abstract

During oral reading, the eyes tend to be ahead of the voice (eye-voice span). It has been hypothesized that the extent to which this happens depends on the automaticity of reading processes, namely on the speed of print-to-sound conversion. We tested whether EVS is affected by another automaticity component - immunity from interference. To that end, we manipulated word familiarity (high-frequency, low-frequency and pseudowords) and word length as proxies of immunity from interference, and we used linear mixed effects models to measure the effects of both variables on the time interval at which readers do parallel processing by gazing at word N+1 while not having articulated word N yet (offset eye-voice span). Parallel processing was enhanced by automaticity, as shown by familiarity x length interactions on offset eye-voice span, and it was impeded by lack of automaticity, as shown by the transformation of offset eye-voice span into voice-eye span (voice ahead of the offset of the eyes) in pseudowords. The relation between parallel processing and automaticity was strengthened by the fact that offset eye-voice span predicted reading velocity. Our findings contribute to understand how the offset eye-voice span, an index that is obtained in oral reading, may tap into different components of automaticity that underlie reading ability, oral or silent. In addition, we compared the duration of the offset eye-voice span with the average reference duration of stages in word production, and we saw that the offset eye-voice span may accommodate for more than the articulatory programming stage of word N.

Introduction

When readers name multiple items, the eye is usually ahead of the voice. This is known as eye-voice

35 span (Inhoff et al., 2011; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015; Pan et al., 2013) or eye-voice lead (De Luca et
36 al., 2013). Eye-Voice Span (EVS) can be defined either in terms of space (the distance between the
37 currently articulated item and the currently fixated one, *spatial EVS*), or in terms of time (how long it
38 takes to articulate the item after having fixated it, *temporal EVS*). When EVS is defined in terms of
39 time (Figure 1), a distinction is made between the time from the *onset of word fixation* to the onset of
40 word naming (*onset EVS*), and the time from the *offset of word fixation* to the onset of word naming
41 (*offset EVS*). The temporal onset EVS of word N is equivalent to the naming latency for that word. It
42 encompasses all stages of word processing that take place before articulation, and may thus be
43 referred to as the word's processing time (Figure 1). The temporal offset EVS of word N refers to a
44 shorter period. During this period, the reader gazes at word N+1 while not yet having started to
45 articulate N (Figure 1A). The temporal offset EVS is a particularly interesting period, in that it seems
46 to signal the reader's engagement in the parallel processing of N and N+1, and thus some of her/his
47 reading skills. Offset EVS is the focus of the present study, where we investigate the extent to which
48 it depends on one of the components of automaticity - immunity to interference (Cohen et al., 1992;
49 Moors, 2016; Moors & De Houwer, 2006).

50 Attention to EVS has resurged in the current decade, after a hiatus of nearly a century (see Buswell,
51 1921; Fairbanks, 1937). A major research goal has been to determine whether and how the length of
52 EVS affects eye movements, and there has been agreement on the finding that eye movements on a
53 word may be adjusted (the eyes may "wait for the voice") for the sake of keeping a more or less
54 constant EVS across the text (Inhoff et al., 2011; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015). Since current models of
55 eye movements in reading such as SWIFT (Engbert et al., 2005) and EZ-reader (Reichle et al., 2003)
56 have been designed for silent reading, determining the influence of the eye-voice dynamics on eye
57 movements is a means to expand these models to oral reading. A different and less emphasized
58 research goal has focused on the reverse question, that is, what determines EVS itself. This is what
59 we are concerned with in the present study, where we seek to better understand the meaning of the
60 temporal offset EVS.

61 Why do readers gaze at a new word without having articulated the previous word? An available
62 explanation for EVS is that the eyes tend to be ahead of the articulatory system because visual
63 processing is faster than articulation (Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015). Although plausible, this approach
64 seems insufficient once the influence of EVS on eye movements is considered: if the eyes can wait
65 for the voice (Inhoff et al., 2011; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015), why do the eyes go ahead? Specifically,
66 why does the reader start gazing at word N+1 before articulating N (offset EVS), if s/he seems able
67 to delay the eyes and keep them on word N? The simplest answer seems to be that the lag between
68 eyes and voice is useful. If the reader uses the initial gaze time on N+1 to finish the processing of N
69 (Jones et al., 2008; 2016; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015; Protopapas et al., 2013) and does *parallel*
70 *processing* of the two items, s/he saves time. If the eyes waited for articulation onset in order to move
71 forward to the next word, the process would be less efficient. Of course, one may also admit that the
72 reader already completed the processing of word N by the time he/she starts gazing at N+1, in which
73 case there would be no parallel processing. However, it is hard to explain why the reader would delay
74 the articulation of N in that case. So, there seems to be no better explanation for the offset EVS
75 period than the fact that parallel processing is unfolding, and the most likely scenario is that the
76 reader is decoding item N+1 at the same time that s/he plans the articulation of N (the last processing
77 stage before articulation).

78 The notion that parallel processing takes place during offset EVS is not too controversial, but several
79 questions remain unanswered. The first question concerns the cognitive constraints on parallel
80 processing and, hence, on offset EVS. It has been suggested that the presence of an offset EVS period

81 benefits from *automaticity* in reading (e.g., Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015). Automaticity is commonly
82 approached as a multi-componential construct, in that it is defined by the combination of several
83 features, or components (Cohen et al., 1992; Moors, 2016; Moors & De Houwer, 2006). Two of these
84 components are processing speed (more automatic processes are faster; see Cohen et al., 1992;
85 Moors, 2016; Moors & De Houwer, 2006) and release from attentional control, which in turn affords
86 immunity from competing processes, or *immunity from interference* (Cohen et al., 1992). The
87 relation between automaticity and EVS has been supported by findings that dyslexic subjects, who
88 lack automaticity, show decreased EVS values compared to controls (De Luca et al., 2013), and the
89 same goes for autistic subjects (Hogan-Brown et al., 2014). The idea that EVS reflects automaticity is
90 also supported by findings that EVS predicts naming velocity for automatized processes such as digit
91 naming, but not for less automatized processes such as dice naming (Pan et al., 2013). In these
92 studies, the link between automaticity and EVS has been framed around the processing speed
93 component of automaticity (Hogan-Brown et al., 2014; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015; Pan et al., 2013): it
94 has been argued that the speed (automaticity) of print-to-sound conversion is key to EVS. The
95 potential role of the other automaticity component, immunity from interference, on EVS has
96 remained unexplored. Nevertheless, immunity from interference is expected to facilitate the parallel
97 processing of two adjacent words. If the processing of word N+1, word N, or both, consumes few
98 attentional resources, the processing of one word is immune to the competition of the other word, and
99 the processing of several words may overlap in time (Protopapas et al., 2013), as it seems to occur
100 during the offset EVS period. In order to examine how immunity from interference affects offset
101 EVS, we used word familiarity as a proxy of this automaticity component.

102 The familiarity of a word is known to determine the relative activation of two different processes or
103 routes, lexical and sublexical (Coltheart, 2006; Coltheart et al., 2001; Perry et al., 2007; Perry et al.,
104 2010; Perry et al., 2013, Zorzi, 2010). High-frequency words (highly familiar) are expected to
105 activate the lexical route more than low-frequency (less familiar) ones and pseudowords (totally
106 unfamiliar), and pseudowords are expected to activate the sublexical route more than low- and high-
107 frequency words. Critically, the lexical route is known to be more automatic than the sublexical one,
108 in the specific sense that it is immune to increases in memory load, while the sublexical route is not
109 (Paap & Noel, 1991). Therefore, if immunity from interference determines offset EVS, we expect to
110 see increased offset EVS values for high-frequency words compared to the other classes. As a high-
111 frequency N+1 word would require less attentional control and would be more immune to
112 interference than an N+1 pseudoword, simultaneous (parallel) processing of N and N+1 would be
113 facilitated in the first case. Since lexical route processes are less dependent from word length than the
114 grapheme-to-phoneme conversion processes of the sublexical route (Barton et al., 2014; Juphard et
115 al., 2004; Rastle & Coltheart, 1998; Rastle & Coltheart, 1999; Weekes, 1997; Ziegler et al., 2001;
116 Zoccolotti et al., 2005), we also test for frequency x length interactions on offset EVS and we expect
117 that the offset EVS of low familiarity words show increased length effects than the offset EVS of
118 low-familiarity ones. To our knowledge, word familiarity effects on EVS have only been investigated
119 by Halm and colleagues (2011), who found frequency effects on spatial EVS but not on temporal
120 EVS. Since this paper is a very brief one, and the authors do not specify whether they measured the
121 onset EVS or the offset EVS, uncertainty remains.

122 A second question pertains the type of relation between automaticity (in the sense of release from
123 attentional control, leading to immunity from interference) and offset EVS. Possible evidence that
124 automaticity *favours* the parallel processing taking place during offset EVS, i.e., that familiarity
125 *modulates* offset EVS, does not lead to the obligatory conclusion that automaticity *is necessary* to
126 parallel processing. In theory, parallel processing does not necessarily imply automaticity, and two
127 scenarios may illustrate this possibility. One, the processes unfolding in parallel may depend on

128 different cognitive subsystems which do not require the same attentional resources (Cohen et al.,
 129 1992). Two, the processes could require the same attentional resources, but the amount required by
 130 both may not exceed the available capacity. In these two scenarios, quantitative modulations of offset
 131 EVS by familiarity (shorter or longer EVSs) may still occur for several reasons. However, if
 132 automaticity is necessary, and the parallel processing of words is based on processes outside
 133 attentional control, lack of automaticity should *eliminate the possibility* of parallel processing, hence
 134 of offset EVS itself. Therefore, we posed the following question: under extreme decreases of
 135 automaticity, does a strict offset *eye-voice* span disappear, such that the eye “no longer leads” and the
 136 articulation of N begins while the reader is still gazing at N? Do low-automaticity settings, such as
 137 pseudowords, cause the eyes to remain on the word after naming onset? This scenario is portrayed in
 138 Figure 1B. For convenience, we named it simply *voice-eye span*, even though the voice onset is not
 139 ahead of the eyes in a straightforward manner, that is, the voice onset is not ahead of fixation onset,
 140 but ahead of fixation offset. In order to know the extent to which voice-eye span emerges (and
 141 parallel processing vanishes), we analysed the distribution of offset EVS values for each familiarity x
 142 length condition, and we located the point at which offset EVS values become negative.

143 Whether automaticity is beneficial or necessary to offset EVS (and the possibility of parallel
 144 processing), offset EVS should predict reading velocity, since reading velocity itself depends on
 145 automaticity. A critical way of testing this would be examining whether the offset EVS of the
 146 experimental task predicts reading velocity in a concurrent task, since this would tap into readers’
 147 automaticity skills in different contexts. Thus, in order to strengthen our analysis, we tested if offset
 148 EVS predicted reading velocity in the 3DM reading test (see methods).

149 Finally, the notion that parallel processing takes place during offset EVS raises a third question - the
 150 question of *which processing stages of N* take place while readers gaze at N+1. Two different
 151 perspectives are found in the literature. While Laubrock and Kliegl (2015) argued that word N enters
 152 the memory buffer (the offset EVS period) as a phonological form and parallel processing is
 153 restricted to motor (articulatory) planning, others (Jones et al., 2008, 2016) have claimed that
 154 previous processing stages of N, such as phonological processing, may develop during the offset
 155 EVS period. In order to shed some light on this, we explored the compatibility of the offset EVS in
 156 highly familiar words (highest EVS expected) with the estimated duration of the articulatory
 157 programming stage, which is around 150 ms (Indefrey, 2011). If we find offset EVS values
 158 considerably longer than 150 ms, this will suggest that processes other than motor planning (the last
 159 in the processing chain) may be part of the processing of N in parallel with N+1.

160 Our approach is novel in two ways. First, unlike recent studies on EVS for text (De Luca et al., 2013;
 161 Inhoff et al., 2011; Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015), we present single words in blocked lists (high-
 162 frequency, low-frequency and pseudowords in separate lists), rather than connected, sentence-like
 163 text. It is known that the combination of familiar and unfamiliar words (mixed lists) favors
 164 grapheme-to-phoneme conversion processes in familiar words (Lima & Castro, 2010) and thus
 165 decreases the familiarity-related contrast between lexical and sublexical processing. Since the effect
 166 of mixed lists is also expected in connected text, we used blocked lists to maximize such contrast and
 167 thus allow the emergence of extreme levels of automaticity (blocked high-frequency words) and lack
 168 of automaticity (blocked pseudowords).

169 Additionally, we explore a novel approach to offset EVS, involving an EVS-related measure that we
 170 named *Gaze Time to Processing Time ratio* (GT/PT, Figure 1). GT/PT is obtained by dividing the
 171 gaze time on a word by the onset EVS (the processing time) of the same word. One advantage of
 172 GT/PT is that it is suitable for describing eye-voice span (gaze time shorter than processing time,
 173 Figure 1A) as well as voice-eye span (gaze time longer than processing time, Figure 1B). A second

174 advantage of GT/PT is that it is a relative measure, describing the weight of different processing
 175 stages (gaze-dependent vs. gaze-independent) within the onset EVS (naming latency) period. A
 176 relative measure such as this is crucial to validate offset EVS results, since it describes *the*
 177 *contribution* of parallel processing to the complete processing (naming latency) of a given word,
 178 rather than just the duration of the parallel processing stage (offset EVS). Offset EVS (absolute)
 179 values may be misleading in the sense that differences in offset EVS between words do not
 180 necessarily mean different contributions of parallel processing. For instance, offset EVS values of
 181 300 ms and 600 ms indicate equivalent contributions of parallel processing if naming latencies (onset
 182 EVS, or processing time) are 600 ms and 1200 ms, respectively (contribution of 50% in both).
 183 Conversely, it is possible that the offset EVS values of two words differ little (e.g., 300 ms vs. 350
 184 ms), but such differences reflect important contrasts in the contribution of buffer-based processing
 185 (e.g., for processing times of 600 ms vs. 400 ms, respectively). In order to control for possible
 186 misleading effects of offset EVS (absolute) values, we performed the analysis of familiarity x length
 187 effects on both measures, and we compared the effects of both measures on scores of reading
 188 velocity.

189

 Insert Figure 1 about here, please

190

192 **Material and methods**

193 *Participants*

194 Forty subjects volunteered to take part in the experiment, but four were excluded due to excessive
 195 eye artefacts. Thus, thirty-six Portuguese native-speakers (21 female; Mean age \pm *SD* = 26 \pm 5; Mean
 196 years of schooling \pm *SD* = 15 \pm 2) were included in the analysis. All had normal or corrected-to-
 197 normal vision. None had neurological problems or was taking drugs. Screening tests (QHL, Castro &
 198 Alves, 2005; 3DM, Reis et al., 2014) showed no indications of reading disability. Participants signed
 199 informed consent, according to the declaration of Helsinki.

200 *Stimuli*

201 We selected 80 high-frequency (HF) and 80 low-frequency (LF) words from CLUL database
 202 (Bacelar do Nascimento et al., 2000), which provides absolute frequency values found in a corpus of
 203 16 210 438 words (see Figure 2 to visualize log-transformed frequency values per class). We
 204 generated a set of 80 pseudowords (PW, see appendix). In each familiarity level, there were 40 short
 205 (4-5 letters; 30 regular and 10 irregular) and 40 long items (8-9 letters; 30 regular and 10 irregular).
 206 Short and long HF words did not differ in frequency (Means: short - 1339.90, long -1334.00), neither
 207 did LF words (short -12.30, long - 12.98). The six familiarity x length levels were balanced for
 208 bigram frequency (Means: HF- short 60549, HF - long 64635, LF - short 64777, LF - long 63291,
 209 PW - short 62290, PW - long 61416) and neighborhood density (Mean 0.6 in all). In total, there were
 210 240 (80 x 3) experimental stimuli organized into 30 lists for multiple-item presentation (see Figure 2
 211 for an example). The items in each list had the same level of familiarity, length and regularity status.
 212 Lists of long words or pseudowords comprised 12 items (3 rows x 4 columns), and lists of short
 213 words comprised 15 (3 rows x 5 columns). Filler items were included (filler words in word lists and
 214 filler pseudowords in pseudoword lists), so as to avoid artefacts at critical positions (first column and
 215 last word slot of each list), and also to keep the number of items constant across lists. There were 156
 216 filler items, summing up to 396 (240+196) stimuli.

217 The 3DM test, which we used for screening reading disability (see Participants section), had a second
 218 purpose in our study: we also used it as a measure of individual reading velocity. We wanted to know
 219 whether offset EVS values for our experimental stimulus set could predict reading velocity in a
 220 concurrent test (see Statistical analysis section), so as to strengthen possible evidence that EVS taps
 221 into reading velocity (see Introduction). In the 3DM test, participants were presented with 75 low-
 222 frequency words, 75 high-frequency words and 75 pseudowords (none of these included in the eye-
 223 tracking experiment) for a fixed time interval. Their task was to name as many words or
 224 pseudowords as possible.

225 *Procedure*

226 Participants were instructed to name the items, in rows, as accurately and fast as possible, while
 227 remaining still and avoiding blinking. They were asked to press the space bar of the computer
 228 keyboard at the end of each list. The 30 lists were randomly presented across subjects.

229 Eye movements were monocularly recorded at 1250 Hz with a tower-mounted SMI hi-speed eye
 230 tracking system (www.smivision.com). Subjects placed their head on a chin rest and sat 80 cm away
 231 from the monitor. At this distance, the minimal inter-word spacing subtended 6.8° of the visual angle
 232 and was, thus, larger than parafoveal vision. Vocal responses were recorded with a Logitech webcam,
 233 synchronized with the eye-tracker as provided by SMI “Observation package” software. Subjects
 234 were first given practice trials. The recording session started with a thirteen-point calibration
 235 procedure, and tracking errors larger than 0.5° led to a new calibration.

236 *Data pre-processing*

237 Events were extracted with a high-speed algorithm, using a peak velocity threshold of 30° to identify
 238 saccades. Fixations shorter than 50 ms were rejected. Trials (lists) were visually inspected for
 239 artefacts, and those with more than 25% of signal loss were marked as contaminated trials. Subjects
 240 with more than 25% contaminated lists were excluded from the analysis (see participants section).
 241 Audio data were analyzed offline with Praat software (<http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>). Naming
 242 responses were classified for articulation accuracy (correct vs. misarticulated). Eye data per item x
 243 subject was scanned for blinks, lack of eye entry in the AOI (skipped item), and accidental eye
 244 entries at the onset of the list. Misarticulated items, as well as those containing any type of eye
 245 artefact (blink, skip or accidental entry) were removed from the analysis. Since the EVS is often
 246 readjusted by means of regressions (Inhoff et al., 2011), we excluded the items with second-pass
 247 reading from the analysis in order to keep the EVS uncontaminated from influences other than
 248 familiarity and length. After excluding misarticulations, eye artefacts, second-pass viewed items and
 249 outliers, we were left with 6734 data points for analyzing offset EVS, and 6504 data points (out of
 250 8880) for Gaze Time to Processing Time ratio (GT/PT). Differences in the number of data points
 251 between the two variables were due to the exclusion of a different number of outliers in each.

252 Rectangular Areas Of Interest (AOIs) were placed around each word/pseudoword (Figure 2) to
 253 compute first-pass gaze times and onset EVS per item x subject. *Onset EVS* was calculated as the
 254 interval between the first valid eye-entry on the item’s AOI and the naming (articulatory) onset.
 255 *Offset EVS* per item x subject was obtained by subtracting first-pass gaze time to onset EVS of item
 256 N. Positive offset EVS values indicate that the eyes are ahead of the voice (Figure 1A), and negative
 257 ones indicate the opposite (starting to name an item before the eyes move forward, see Figure 1B).
 258 Finally, *Gaze Time to Processing Time ratio* (GT/PT) values (first-pass gaze time / onset EVS) were
 259 obtained. Values larger than 1 follow positive offset EVSs (Figure 1A) and values smaller than 1
 260 follow negative offset EVS values (Voice-Eye Span, Figure 1B). The distributions of offset EVS or

261 GT/PT showed no marked deviations from normality.

262

 Insert Figure 2 about here, please

264

265 *Statistical analysis*

266 We looked into descriptive statistics of offset EVS and GT/PT to determine if and when negative
 267 offset EVS and GT/PT values smaller than 1 (voice-eye span) would emerge. The mean and standard
 268 deviation of offset EVS and GT/PT for each stimulus class allowed us to estimate whether one
 269 standard deviation away from a positive offset-EVS mean (eye-voice span) would show negative
 270 values. This was complemented with percentile analyses, which specified, for each stimulus class,
 271 the percentile at which eye-voice span turned into voice-eye span. Mean offset EVS and GT/PT
 272 values were also used to investigate whether offset EVS periods might accommodate for processing
 273 stages other than motor programming (150 ms).

274 We used R (R core team, 2013) and *lme4* (Bates et al., 2015) to perform linear mixed effects analyses
 275 of the effects of frequency and length (fixed effects, with an interaction term) on offset EVS and
 276 GT/PT. As random effects, we had intercepts for subjects and items, but no by-subject or by-item
 277 random slopes. This was due to lack of convergence in random-slope models for our data, which
 278 seems to be in line with the attention that has been paid to the risk of overparametrization (Bates et
 279 al., 2015). P-values were obtained by likelihood ratio tests of the full model with the
 280 effect/interaction in question against the model without that effect/interaction. Simple familiarity and
 281 length effects were tested against the intercept-only model, and familiarity x length interactions were
 282 tested against the model with both familiarity and length as fixed factors. To allow for these
 283 comparisons, models were fitted using the ordinary Maximum Likelihood (ML) criterion. We also
 284 followed the principle that, with a large sample size, absolute *t* values larger than 2 indicate
 285 significant results at the 5% level (Baayen et al., 2008), and this principle was used to analyse
 286 frequency x length interactions (Tables 2-3).

287 We used similar procedures to test for offset EVS and GT/PT as predictors of reading velocity in the
 288 concurrent 3DM test. We modelled reading velocity with offset EVS or GT/PT as predictors, and
 289 compared the two models with the intercept-only model.

290 **Results**

291 *Eye-Voice Span vs. Voice-Eye span*

292 The mean values of offset EVS (Figure 3) for all items ($M \pm SD$: 148 ± 187 ms) indicated that the
 293 readers' eyes were, on average, fixating N+1 (mean first-pass gaze time was 494 ms) when starting to
 294 name N. However, descriptive statistics for the six familiarity x length levels (Table 1) indicated a
 295 negative mean value for long pseudowords. Also, for low-frequency long words and all
 296 pseudowords, negative offset EVSs started as soon as one standard deviation below the mean (e.g.,
 297 for LF long, 81 – 174 is negative). GT/PT values (Figure 3) showed a similar picture, with a mean
 298 GT/PT > 1 for long pseudowords and GT/PTs > 1 starting one standard deviation above the mean in
 299 low-frequency words and all pseudowords.

300 Percentile-based analyses indicated that GT/PTs > 1, or voice-eye spans, corresponded to percentiles
 301 87, 74, 77 in HF short, HF long, LF short, and to percentiles 51, 59, 15 in LF long, PW short and PW

302 long, respectively.

303 -----
304 Insert Table 1 about here, please
305 -----

306 *Length of offset EVS vs. length of motor programming stage*

307 The average values of offset EVS for long and short high-frequency words (191 and 259 ms), as well
308 as for short low-frequency words (210 ms, see Table 1), were large enough to accommodate for more
309 than the average time of motor programming (150 ms).

310
311 *Familiarity and length effects on offset EVS and VDPT*

312 For both offset EVS and GT/PT the analysis of fixed factors (Tables 2-3) showed significant effects
313 of familiarity, length, and a significant familiarity x length interaction, indicating that the effects of
314 length increased as familiarity decreased. Concerning random factors, the variance arising from
315 subjects was larger than from items in both cases.

316 -----
317 Insert Table 2 about here, please
318 -----
319 -----

320 Insert Table 3 about here, please
321 -----
322 -----

323 Insert Figure 3 about here, please
324 -----

325 *Offset EVS and GT/PT as predictors of reading velocity in 3DM*

326 Both offset EVS and GT/PT predicted reading velocity scores. Reading velocity in 3DM increased as
327 offset EVS in the experimental task increased ($\chi^2(1) = 8.11, p = .004$, see Figure 4), and it increased as
328 GT/PT increased ($\chi^2(1) = 7.38, p = .006$).

329 -----
330 Insert Figure 4 about here, please
331 -----

332 **Discussion**

333 Current approaches to the dynamics of eye and voice during oral reading suggest that the extent to
334 which the eyes go ahead of the voice depends on the automaticity of the processes involved,

335 automaticity referring to the speed of those processes. We have expanded the work on this hypothesis
336 by focusing on a different component of automaticity – release from attentional control, leading to
337 immunity from interference. This automaticity component is conceptually close to the parallel
338 processing taking place during the offset eye-voice span period, and thus we investigated its role
339 empirically, using word familiarity and its interactions with word length as proxies of immunity from
340 interference. Our goal was threefold. First, we wanted to gather further evidence that automaticity
341 leads to increased offset EVS values. Second, we wanted to determine if extreme decreases in
342 automaticity eliminate parallel processing and transform eye-voice span into voice-eye span, so as to
343 clarify if automaticity is necessary to offset EVS, rather than just beneficial. Third, we wanted to get
344 preliminary information on whether the processing of word N in parallel with word N+1 is limited to
345 motor programming or, on the contrary, if it encompasses previous stages in the processing chain.
346 We addressed these goals by investigating the effects of word familiarity and length on offset EVS as
347 well as on an EVS-related measure that we named gaze time to processing time ratio. (GT/PT).

348 Supporting our predictions, automaticity (immunity from interference) lengthened the parallel
349 processing period corresponding to offset EVS. Less familiar words elicited shorter offset eye-voice
350 span values (absolute measure) as well as stronger investment on gaze during word processing
351 (longer GT/PT values – relative measure), compared to more familiar words. Due to the categorical
352 approach we made, our analyses highlighted the effects of different *levels* of automaticity. From this
353 viewpoint, we concluded that a pseudoword (less familiar) requires, on average, longer offset EVSs
354 than a high-frequency word (more familiar). Nevertheless, gradient effects were also apparent:
355 among high-frequency words, words with the highest frequency values seemed to elicit the longest
356 offset EVSs (see Figure 3), so it is highly likely that a continuous approach would also show
357 significant effects. The effects of word length on offset EVS and GT/PT increased as familiarity
358 decreased, signaling the interaction we predicted.

359 More than just beneficial, automaticity seems to be necessary to the parallel processing occurring
360 during the offset EVS period. As familiarity decreased and length increased, a true eye-voice span
361 vanished, and the reader started to name word N while still viewing it. Our data included many
362 instances of voice-eye span, most of these found in low-frequency words and pseudowords. In low-
363 frequency long words, data points that were one standard deviation above the mean represented
364 voice-eye spans instead of eye-voice spans, and, in long pseudowords, even mean values did the
365 same.

366 Finally, what is going on with word N while the eyes are ahead? Our findings are consistent with the
367 possibility that the processing of N in parallel with N+1 is not restricted to motor programming, the
368 last stage before articulation. For high-frequency (short and long) words and short low-frequency
369 words, we saw mean offset EVS values that accommodate for more than the average duration of
370 articulatory programming, which is about 150 ms (Indefrey, 2011). For instance, according to our
371 results, short high-frequency words seem to allow both the syllabification (*idem*) and the articulatory
372 programming of N in parallel with visual decoding of N+1, that is, during the offset EVS period.
373 From this viewpoint, the idea that a word must be phonologically coded by the time it ceases to be
374 fixated in order to resist memory decay (Laubrock & Kliegl, 2015) does not seem to be supported,
375 but we should be extremely cautious about this at least for two reasons. First, we are dealing with
376 mere referential values; second, the fact that offset EVS exceeds the reference duration of motor
377 programming does not necessarily mean that other processes are taking place, and the processing of
378 N may be simply suspended for a fraction of the offset EVS period.

379 In the comparative analysis of offset EVS with GT/PT, both measures exhibited the expected
380 familiarity x length interactive effects, and both predicted reading velocity in the expected direction

381 (velocity increased with longer offset EVS and decreased with larger GT/PT). Therefore, our results
382 for offset EVS seem valid enough. Although, in our case, offset EVS measures were not misleading
383 since GT/PT indices did not change the picture, the concept of GT/PT expressed the observed
384 negative offset EVS values (voice-eye span) in a simpler, less biased way. GT/PT values larger than
385 1 indicate that readers spend more time gazing at the word than the time needed to process it (begin
386 its articulation). In contrast, the idea of a negative offset EVS is less transparent. Therefore, GT/PT
387 seems to hold, at least, a conceptual advantage over offset EVS.

388 Our findings contributed to strengthen the link between offset EVS and the automaticity of reading,
389 but the fact that we manipulated automaticity in an indirect manner, that is, using proxies (word
390 familiarity and length), is one limitation. Direct manifestations of automatic processes may be
391 captured with stroop tasks (see Jones et al., 2016 for an example), which could be used in further
392 studies to verify the relation between these processes and offset EVS.

393 In addition, our paradigm comprised a number of options that may have had a significant impact on
394 our results. First, we chose to use lists of unconnected words because we wanted to potentiate
395 familiarity effects. Finding out whether a different picture emerges (e.g., no voice-eye span) when
396 using sentence-like materials that discard block effects and elicit semantic and syntactic integration,
397 should stand as a next step in research. Second, we tried to eliminate parafoveal processing (Schotter
398 et al., 2011) by controlling the inter-word space. The parafoveal processing that takes place when
399 gazing at N+1 (previewing N+2) stands as an additional processing channel, and thus it is possible
400 that there are less available resources for parallel processing during offset EVS when parafoveal
401 processing is allowed.

402 The main contribution of our study was to strengthen the relation between offset EVS and
403 automaticity in reading. Although we focused on measures that pertain to oral reading (offset EVS,
404 GT/PT), the results of our study ultimately support the understanding of offset EVS (or its relative
405 counterpart, GT/PT) as an index of automaticity, which underlies both oral and silent reading.
406 Establishing offset EVS or GT/PT as indices of automaticity is an important step in clinical and
407 experimental applications of the double-deficit hypothesis on dyslexia (Norton & Wolf, 2012; Wolf
408 & Bowers, 1999), which proposed a distinction between phonological deficits and naming speed
409 deficits in dyslexia cases. Lack of automaticity is a key feature of the naming-speed dyslexia type,
410 which has been tapped with rapid automatized naming (RAN) tasks. Naming times have been used as
411 indices of RAN performance, hence of automaticity. If offset EVS measures reflect automaticity, it
412 may be helpful to add them when classifying dyslexia types.

413 Specifically, our study highlighted the relation between offset EVS and automaticity *viewed as*
414 *immunity to interference*. Our findings are consistent with increasing evidence that dyslexic
415 individuals – who typically show shorter EVSs - have problems in dealing with multiple presented
416 items such as in RAN tasks (Jones et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2008; Zoccolotti et al.,
417 2013), and they are particularly consistent with the interpretation that this is due to difficulties in
418 managing between-item competing processes (e.g., processing one item while naming the previous
419 one, and while previewing the next).

420 We wanted to test the effects of immunity to interference on offset EVS, and we used word
421 familiarity as a proxy of immunity to interference. We did that based on Paap and Noel's (1991)
422 findings, which have not been consistently replicated (Pexma & Lupker, 1995). Therefore, there is
423 the possibility that our assumption is incorrect, and that activating the lexical route by presenting
424 high-frequency words does not necessarily increase immunity from interference. Even if that is the
425 case and we have not manipulated automaticity in our study, we are still left with evidence that the

426 activation of the lexical route increases offset EVS. On the one hand, this may have implications for
 427 dual-route-based reading measures. Namely, it may afford measuring the reader's reliance on the
 428 sublexical route using decreases in eye-voice span as an index. This would add to available
 429 behavioral (Crisp & Lambon Ralph, 2006) and eye-movement indices (e.g., Hawelka et al., 2010;
 430 Rau et al., 2014; Schattka et al., 2010). On the other hand, the fact that parallel processing is
 431 increased in the lexical route (longer EVS) raises new theoretical perspectives on dual-route
 432 approaches. It indicates that the lexical route affords a view-independent stage of word processing,
 433 while the sublexical route does not. If the reasons for this do not relate to different levels of
 434 automaticity in the two routes, they may, for instance, relate to increased levels of visual monitoring
 435 in the sublexical route, which, to our knowledge, is a new finding.

436 In our approach to the offset EVS, we put the emphasis on the extent to which it is a manifestation of
 437 parallel timelines of word processing, and many questions remain unanswered concerning these
 438 timelines. One question that is raised by our findings is why the eyes remain on the word during
 439 articulation in cases of voice-span, instead of moving on to the next word as soon as articulation
 440 begins. May articulation itself be dependent on gaze? For which purpose? Under which
 441 circumstances? We believe that this and other questions may strongly benefit from using methods of
 442 co-registration of eye-tracking and EEG in future research.

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448

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584
585

586 **Tables**

587 Table 1. Means (standard deviation) for offset EVS and GT/PT

	HF		LF		PW	
	Short	Long	Short	Long*	Short*	Long*
Offset EVS (ms)	258.9 (134.8)	191.4 (155.9)	210.2 (151.7)	80.9 (173.8)	122.7 (169.2)	-63.1 (185)
GT/PT (First-pass/onset EVS)	0.59 (0.18)	0.71 (0.23)	0.68 (0.22)	0.89 (0.28)	0.82 (0.27)	1.15 (0.36)

588 (*) Voice-Eye Span starting as soon as one standard deviation away from the mean

589

590 Table 2. Predictors of Offset EVS

Fixed effects	Estimate	SE	T	Significance
Familiarity				$\chi^2(2)=137.6, p <.001$
LF-HF	-80.77	14.91 -	-5.42*	
PW-HF	-202.20	15.00 -	-13.48*	
Length (Short-Long)	134.80	13.76	9.80*	$\chi^2(1)=81.1, p <.001$
Familiarity*Length				$\chi^2(2)=42.2, p <.001$
LF(Short-Long) – HF (Short-Long)	66.00	19.01	3.47*	
PW(Short-Long) – HF (Short-Long)	130.53	19.27	6.77*	
Random effects		Variance	SD	
Item	Intercept	8323.00	91.23	
Subject	Intercept	6093.00	78.05	
Residuals		16684.00	129.17	
Number of observations: 6734; Items: 240; Subjects: 36				

591

592

593 Table 3. Predictors of Gaze Time / Processing Time

Fixed effects	Estimate	SE	T	Significance
Familiarity				$\chi^2(2)=147.2, p <.001$
LF-HF	0.18608	0.02049	9.079*	
PW-HF	0.44857	0.02132	21.038*	
Length (Short-Long)	-0.22579	0.02253	-10.02*	$\chi^2(1)=84.5, p <.001$
Familiarity*Length				$\chi^2(2)=44.3, p <.001$
LF(Short-Long) – HF (Short-Long)	-0.09339	0.02884	-3.24*	
PW(Short-Long) – HF (Short-Long)	-0.20501	0.02948	-6.95*	
Random effects		Variance	SD	
Item	Intercept	0.00679	0.08242	
Subject	Intercept	0.01295	0.11382	
Residuals		0.04395	0.20965	
Number of observations: 6504; Items: 240; Subjects: 36				

595 **Figure legends**

596 **Figure 1:** Eye-Voice measures under two possible circumstances: (A) naming of N occurs while the
 597 reader views N+1 (Eye-Voice Span) and (B) Naming of N occurs while the reader is still viewing N
 598 (Voice-Eye Span). See text for more details (GT/PT = Gaze Time / Processing Time).

599 **Figure 2:** Example list (long pseudowords). Participants read the items in lines, as indicated by the
 600 example scanpath. Items in the first column, as well as the last item (“champalho”) did not enter the
 601 analysis. Rectangles around each item indicate the AOIs, which were not visible during the
 602 experiment.

603 **Figure 3:** Offset EVS (left) and Gaze Time / Processing Time (right) as a function of familiarity (*HF*
 604 High-frequency, *LF* Low frequency, *PW* Pseudowords) and length (long vs. short). Offset EVS
 605 values < 0 indicate Voice-Eye Span instead of Eye-Voice Span, and so do Gaze Time/Processing
 606 Time (GT/PT) >1. Frequency values were log-transformed.

607 **Figure 4:** Reading velocity (measured by 3DM, maximum 75 words) as a function of Offset EVS
 608 (left) and GT/PT (right). Subject means are plotted.

609 **Supplementary Material**

610 Appendix - stimuli

High Frequency (HF)		Low Frequency (LF)		Pseudoword (PW)	
SHORT	LONG	SHORT	LONG	SHORT	LONG
café	negativo	acne	taxativo	madé	tamarela
bebé	medicina	bidé	tagarela	umpo	cexarevo
júri	rigoroso	bule	carapuço	jule	jigoroso
táxi	cerâmica	caju	vocativo	esbo	vobativo
base	pesquisa	guru	cernelha	tafe	pesmilha
tabu	permitir	maná	masmorra	jufe	masquisa
maré	resposta	osga	campista	xevo	pesmotir
rede	encontro	orbe	propalar	guse	blascemo
nulo	proposta	tule	madrigal	réxa	profemir

High Frequency (HF)		Low Frequency (LF)		Pseudoword (PW)	
bife	flexível	unto	blasfemo	xuna	maprigal
couve	habitação	pónei	carapinha	reipe	surailode
museu	revolução	naipe	bagaceira	naino	balicanha
peixe	narrativa	bouça	fuzileiro	reixa	reguvação
gesso	vacinação	rojão	serradura	beite	cabeleida
cupão	cabeceira	gibão	barricada	faute	sarrivada
beijo	televisão	quedo	pegureiro	mubão	balaceira
reino	sucessivo	sifão	saraivada	gipão	capoceiro
roupa	terramoto	fauno	cachalote	reife	catapinha
tarde	diferença	dedal	indigesto	vesna	nargativa
papel	dirigente	vesgo	cabotagem	vorfa	reditagem
filme	ginástica	jaspe	cavalgada	moliz	caxaltiça
total	ginástica	lorpa	repetente	begor	pelorente
líder	eleitoral	ginja	campesino	férus	repelanto
dólar	casamento	sapal	dirigismo	tolim	giritento
feliz	municipal	lúpus	petulante	vimol	dipetendo
vírus	resultado	móbil	pilotagem	sárus	renimenca
rival	chanceler	bemol	carrascão	mópis	chuvercar
vital	calcanhar	bilro	bairrista	pamur	sustincar

When the eyes no longer lead

High Frequency (HF)		Low Frequency (LF)		Pseudoword (PW)	
lápiz	suspensão	selim	chamuscar	sezir	caquinhar
luzir	banqueiro	bílis	charneira	xorba	fangarrão
civil	linguagem	fémur	churrasco	ripel	carfascão
arroz	distinção	lince	carrossel	sadal	pegulante
nuvem	mesquinho	furna	fanfarrão	pazol	jesquinho
grupo	finlandês	lugre	casquilho	zegre	mistinção
fluxo	charneira	sabre	metralhar	flubo	proguiste
negro	orquestra	zebra	doutrinal	labro	castrapal
lapso	principal	tripé	chanfrado	rubre	prolhando
rubro	proporção	brejo	castrense	glopo	disgrital
lebre	brilhante	greda	flautista	gnoxo	mepralhar
globo	distrital	gnomo	droguista	brepo	caspreense

Figure 01.TIF

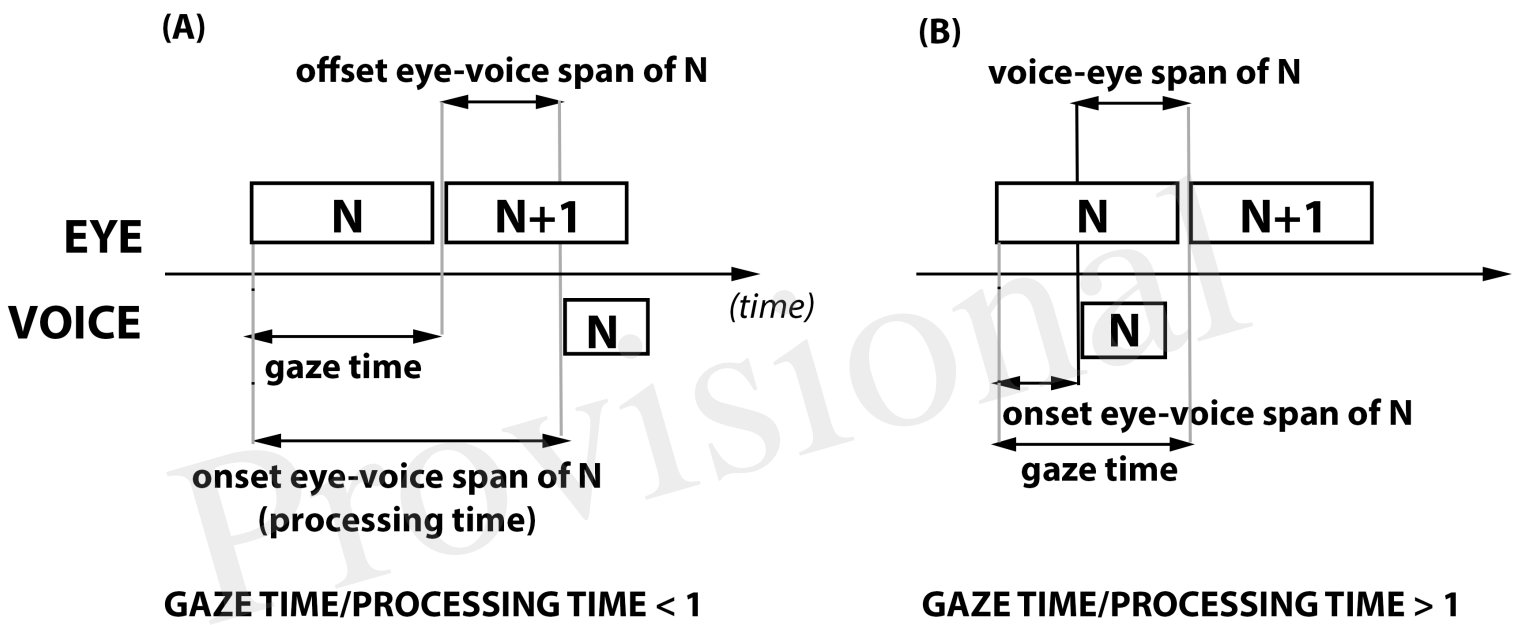


Figure 02.TIF

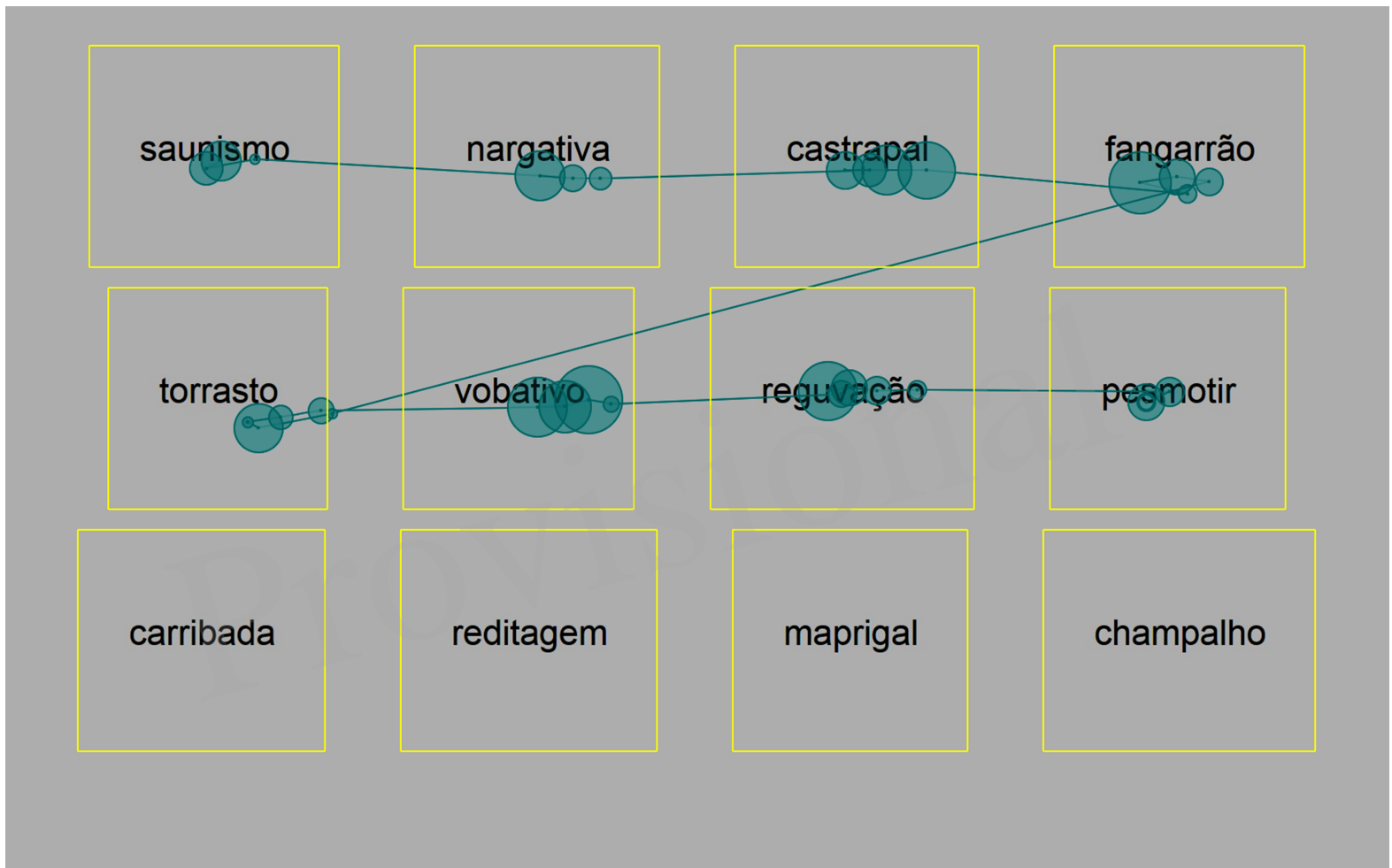


Figure 03.TIF

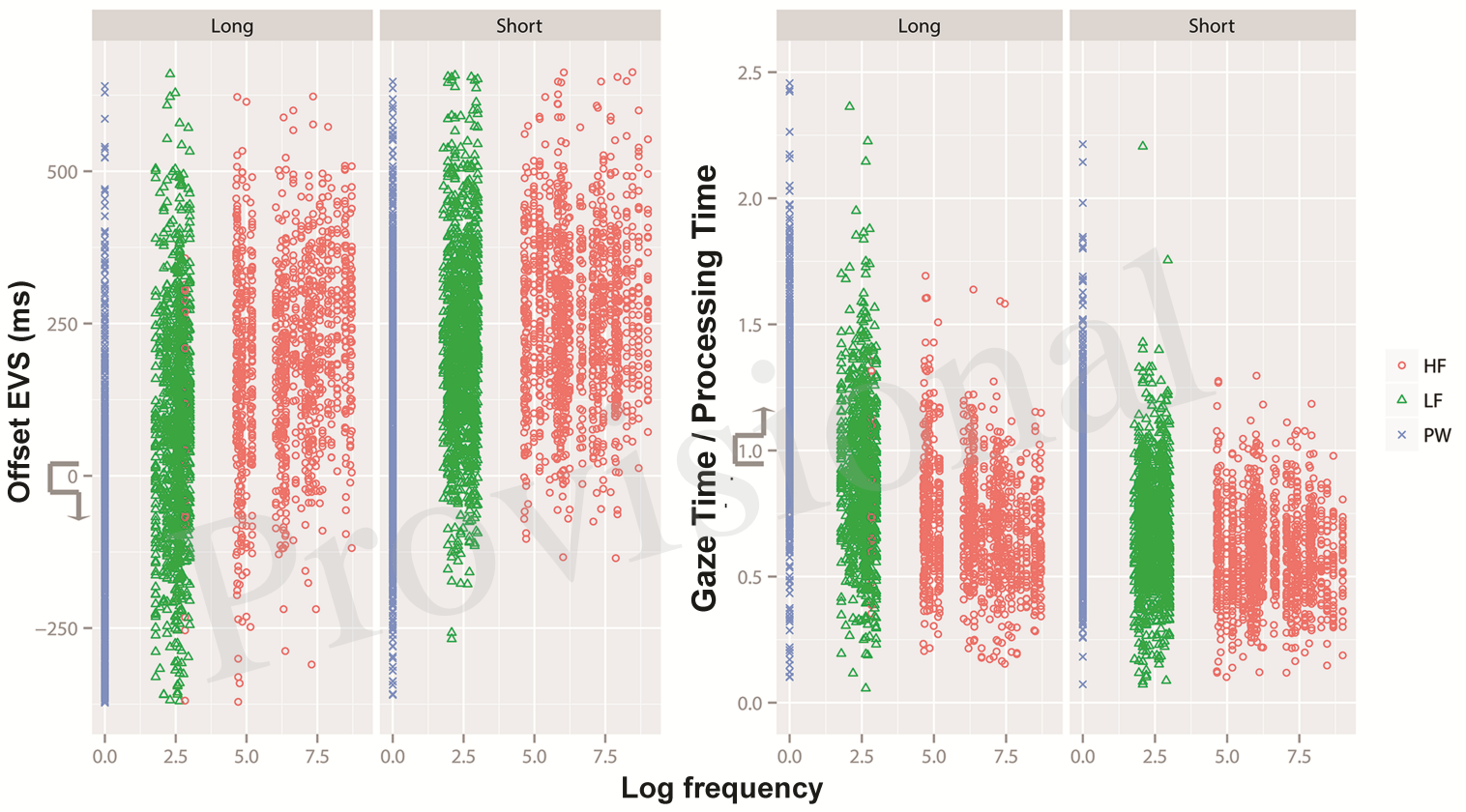


Figure 04.TIF

