

How the mass counts: An

electrophysiological approach to the

processing of lexical features

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classifier morphemes for countable entities (a unit of table (ness)) [3,9]. If English count nouns, and Chinese mass nouns plus classifiers, refer to similar concepts, it is

yielded a (syntactic) P600 rather than a (semantic) N400 [16,17]. Most lexical access studies of normal (non-violation) processing have focused on the comparison of two

syntactic phenomenon.

Proponents of a semantic mass/count distinction emphasize the underlying conceptual basis, observed already in young pre-linguistic infants which seems to play a

of grammatical function words and the open class of meaning-bearing content words [18–20]. They have reported larger N400s for content words and an ensemble of enhanced (left) anterior negativities between 150 and

occurs later during the acquisition of mass/count differ

700ms for grammatical function words. Early anterior

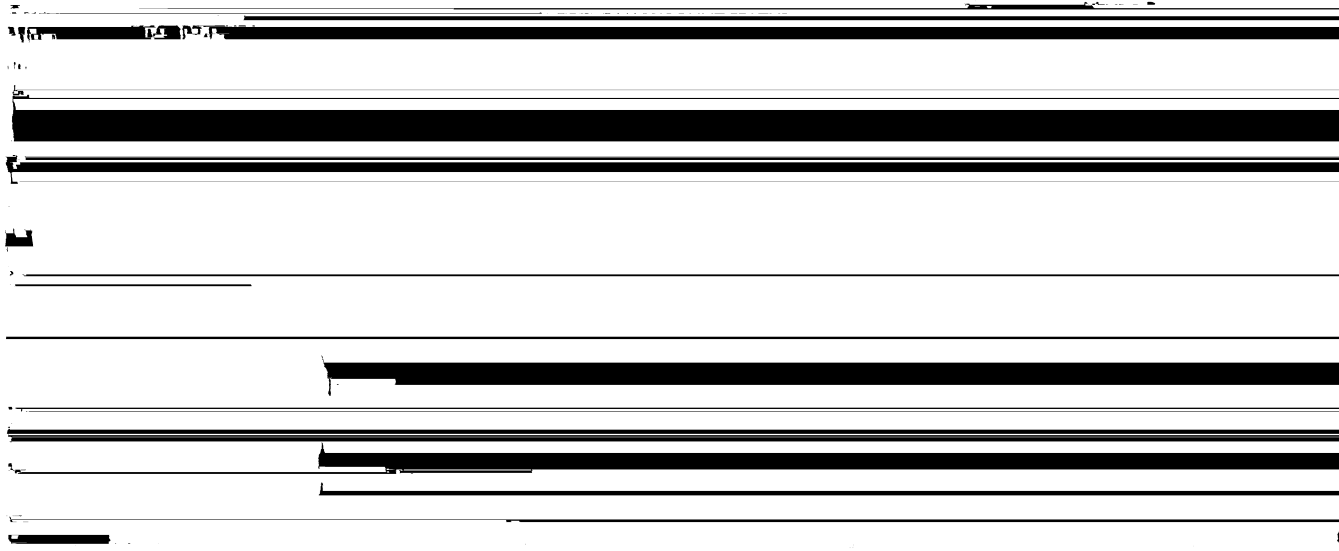
analyses are underlined.

Condition	Example
1a Plausible count	Yesterday, I translated Diane's <u>story</u> for the children

2a Incongruent count The killer put Kyle's chair on the floor

2b Plausible count My friend Edward commented for weeks on the





(a)

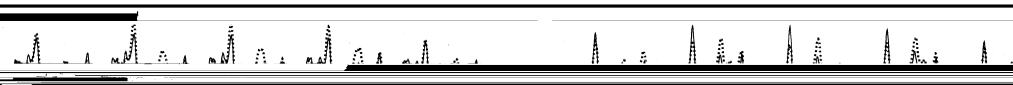
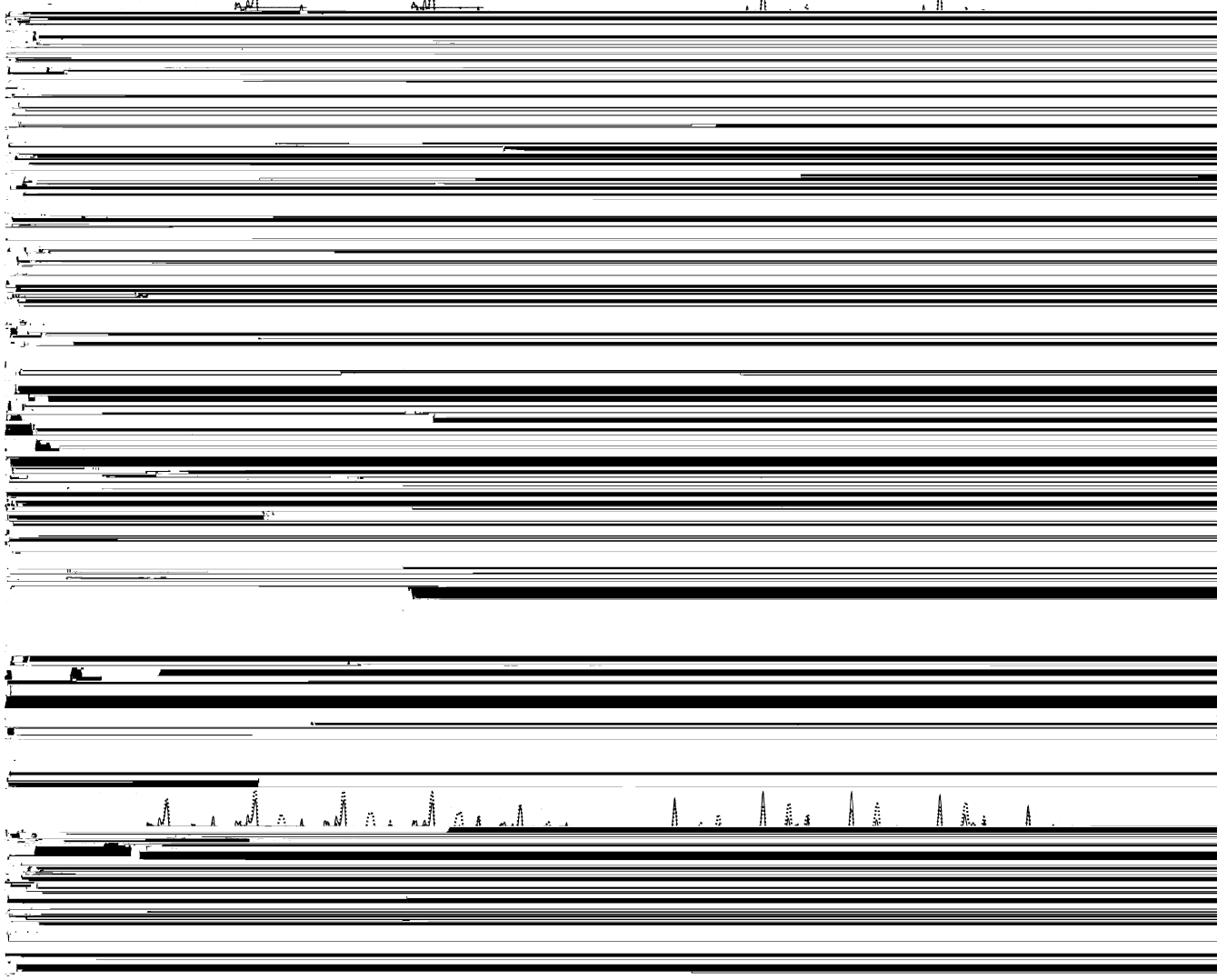
FP1

FP2

(b)

FP1

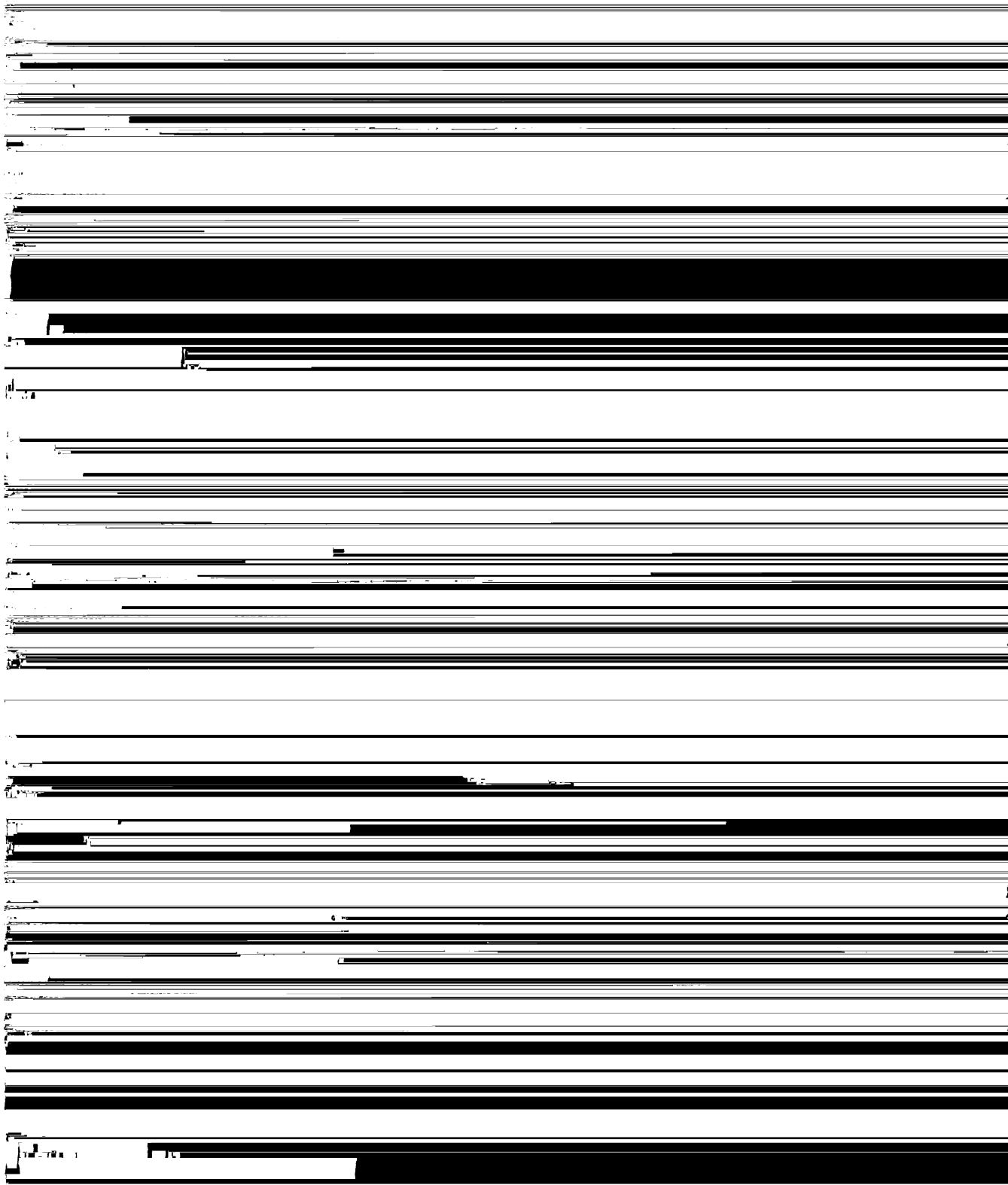
FP2



FPI

FP2

components are usually defined as difference waves between two conditions, not as deflections in one single



22. Osterhout L, Bersick M and McKinnon R. *Biol Psychol* 46, 143-168 (1997).
23. [REDACTED]
- 203-208 (1985).
26. Friederici AD, Steinhauer K and Frisch S. *Mem Cogn* 27, 438-453 (1999).