

At face value, the null relationship between verbal knowledge and linguistic error processing appears to contradict some prior studies examining second-language (L2) learners. In these studies, low-proficiency L2 learners often show absent or reduced P600 effects compared to native speakers (Osterhout, McLaughlin, Pitkänen, Frenck-Mestre & Molinaro, 2006; Zheng & Lemhofer, 2019). Moreover, the magnitude of the P600 in these groups correlates with both error detection rates and measures of L2 proficiency (Tanner, McLaughlin, Herschensohn & Osterhout, 2013; Zheng & Lemhofer, 2019). Critically, however, unlike most native English speakers, lower-proficiency L2 learners are likely to lack some of the core semantic and syntactic knowledge necessary to detect linguistic anomalies.⁴ In light of these results, our current findings suggest that, as readers reach native-like proficiency, subtle differences in verbal knowledge become less important. Instead, in this sample of native speakers, most of the variability in error monitoring performance depended on differences in non-linguistic conflict monitoring, which may regulate the successful *application* of stored linguistic knowledge during real-time comprehension.

Domain-general conflict monitoring predicts measures of reading comprehension

In addition to examining its relationship with linguistic error processing, we were also interested in whether domain-general conflict monitoring predicted individual differences in comprehension ability, as indexed by standardized measures of reading comprehension. From previous studies, it is clear that comprehension abilities in adult readers vary as a function of working memory capacity (Conway & Engle, 1996; Daneman & Carpenter, 1980; Daneman & Merikle, 1996) and verbal knowledge (Cromley, Snyder-Hogan & Luciw-Dubas, 2010; Freed, Hamilton & Long, 2017; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). In the current study, we replicated these findings: working memory capacity and verbal knowledge uniquely accounted for 16% and 20% of the variance in reading comprehension performance.

Importantly, even after controlling for differences in working memory, verbal knowledge, and processing speed, we found that approximately 4% of the additional variance in reading comprehension ability could be explained by individual differences in domain-general conflict monitoring. Additional analyses suggested that this conflict monitoring effect was partially mediated by participants' ability to

⁴ Consistent with this suggestion, in our multiple regression analysis, we observed a marginally significant quadratic effect of verbal knowledge on semantic error detection (Verbal²: $b = -.10$, $t = 1.79$, $p = 0.08$). Specifically, in participants with very low verbal knowledge scores (the bottom tertile), error detection was less accurate ($d' = 2.3$, $SD = 0.5$) than participants with higher verbal knowledge ($d' = 2.7$, $SD = 0.7$).

