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# Modeling cognitive processes of natural reading with transformer-based Language Models

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## Abstract

Recent advances in Natural Language Processing (NLP) have led to the development of highly sophisticated language models for text generation. In parallel, neuroscience has increasingly employed these models to explore cognitive processes involved in language comprehension. Previous research has shown that models such as N-grams and LSTM networks can partially account for predictability effects in explaining eye movement behaviors, specifically Gaze Duration, during reading. In this study, we extend these findings by evaluating transformer-based models (GPT2, LLaMA-7B, and LLaMA2-7B) to further investigate this relationship. Our results indicate that these architectures outperform earlier models in explaining the variance in Gaze Durations recorded from Rioplantense Spanish readers. However, similar to previous studies, these models still fail to account for the entirety of the variance captured by human predictability. These findings suggest that, despite their advancements, state-of-the-art language models continue to predict language in ways that differ from human readers.

## 1 Introduction

Language is one of the defining characteristics of human beings. This unique capability allows us to communicate in complex ways to express thoughts [7]. Throughout history, various scientific fields—such as linguistics, psychology, and neuroscience—have studied language from different perspectives. In recent years, the field of Natural Language Processing (NLP) has gradually advanced toward algorithms and models capable of replicating human language with remarkable fidelity [18, 20, 21, 4]. Although the primary aim of this field is not to understand language itself but rather to simulate it computationally, state-of-the-art models provide us with valuable tools that may contribute to understanding language in the brain. These tools complement ongoing efforts in cognitive neuroscience, which aims to elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying language. Ultimately,

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this creates a virtuous cycle where insights from both language and the brain’s mechanisms drive advancements in algorithm development [26].

In this context, researchers have examined how various algorithms from the field of NLP can estimate the human word-predictability. This variable reflects how likely it is that a human reader can anticipate a specific word before reading it, and it is widely known to have an impact on how words are processed. Predictability is typically measured using a task called the cloze-task, where participants are asked to complete sentences with a single word [25]. Predictability (cloze-Pred henceforth) is then calculated as the frequency with which participants choose the word that originally continues the sentence.

Utilizing this variable to analyze various measurements of human cognition reveals its significant impact. For instance, studies measuring electroencephalography (EEG) signals during reading demonstrate that the brain’s event-related potentials elicited by word processing (whether within sentences or in isolation) exhibit a marked correlation with the cloze-Pred of the presented words around 400 ms after word onset [16]. This effect, known as the N400 (named for its negative polarity and 400 ms latency), has been extensively investigated over the past four decades [15]. Broadly speaking, the N400 reflects the cognitive effort required for processing the word read. Nonetheless, despite substantial efforts dedicated to this research over recent decades, its underlying causes are still widely discussed.

In a related but often independent field of study, eye movements are analyzed to gain deeper insights into cognitive processes during reading. In this domain, eye movements serve as an indirect yet reliable measure of the timing of cognitive processes. It is proposed, for instance, that the duration for which the eyes fixate on a word (which can vary) correlates with the time required by the brain to process that word [11]. Consequently, a substantial body of research in neurolinguistics focuses on reading studies that record fixation durations [22, 13, 14, 5]. These durations are subsequently employed in statistical models to analyze the variables influencing them. Such analyses, conducted in various forms over recent decades, have elucidated that certain properties of words, such as their length or lexical frequency, significantly impact fixation duration. From these correlations, it is hypothesized that length and lexical frequency influence word processing. For example, the observation that more frequent words are fixated for shorter durations suggests they are easier to process, as individuals likely possess a mental lexicon where more frequently encountered words are more readily accessible [14].

Regarding cloze-Pred, it has been widely demonstrated that it negatively correlates with fixation time [14, 12]. In other words, more predictable words are fixated for shorter durations. This, in turn, has led to hypotheses about how predictions are generated in the brain and how these predictions facilitate the anticipation and acceleration of processing future stimuli, a concept that could extend to cognition beyond the realm of reading.

However, due to the costs associated with obtaining reliable measurements of cloze-Pred, studies often analyze the same texts repeatedly (for which measurements have already been made). Consequently, the development of a model capable of generating computational Predictabilities similar to human responses could represent a significant advancement in the study of language processing in the brain. Additionally, studies aimed at developing such a model would provide deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms of predictions generated by these models [3, 28, 26].

In recent decades, numerous studies have attempted to model cloze-Pred using computational models, referred to as computational predictabilities (comp-Pred). However, these efforts have achieved only partial success to date [19, 8, 3, 9, 1, 28, 23, 17]. Recently, there has been a growing interest in employing deep learning models for this purpose. Hofmann and colleagues [8, 9] trained N-grams, Topic Models (LDA), and Recurrent Neural Networks using datasets from Wikipedia texts and movie subtitles. Their analysis of variance in fixation times attributed to these probabilities led to the conclusion that computational models can better account for eye movements than cloze-Pred. Furthermore, Shain et al. [23] explored the relationship between eye movement metrics and predictions from various statistical language models (Ngrams, GPT2, GPT3, among others), revealing a logarithmic connection. Adopting a different methodology, Lopes Rego et al. [17] utilized cloze-Pred and comp-Pred generated by GPT2 and LLaMA to simulate eye movement metrics using the OB1-reader model [24]. They found that the simulated metrics produced with comp-Preds outperformed those generated with cloze-Pred in explaining human eye movements.

Another approach to analyze this was taken by Bianchi et al. [3] and Umfurer et al. [28]. In these studies they did not directly analyze the variance explained by each type of predictability (Cloze or computational), as this approach could overlook the possibility that different variables capture distinct portions of the variability in eye movement data. Notably, Bianchi et al. [3] observed that, unlike cloze-Pred, all the computational predictability measures (models used: N-grams, LSA, word2vec, FastText, AWD-LSTM) captured a portion of the variance originally explained by word lexical frequency. This effect was slightly reduced when using an LSTM-based language model trained on Spanish Wikipedia and fine-tuned on texts from a similar domain to the evaluation materials (narrative texts). Additionally, their findings also show that the residuals of the used statistical models (linear mixed models) contain variance explained by cloze-Pred. That is, the variance accounted for by the analyzed comp-Pred is not the same than the cloze-Pred.

We are currently in an era where transformer-based architectures dominate the field of NLP [29, 20, 6]. The present work aims to extend our previous efforts, first by utilizing transformer-based architectures, and second by refining the training corpus. Specifically, we aim to generate comp-Preds using a GPT2 model trained in Spanish, fine-tuned with two specialized corpora: one from the same literary domain as the evaluation texts, and the other from the same regional variant of Spanish as the participants (Rioplatense Spanish). Additionally, we are also testing predictions from more modern Large Language Models, like Llama and Llama2 in their 7B versions.

## 2 Methods

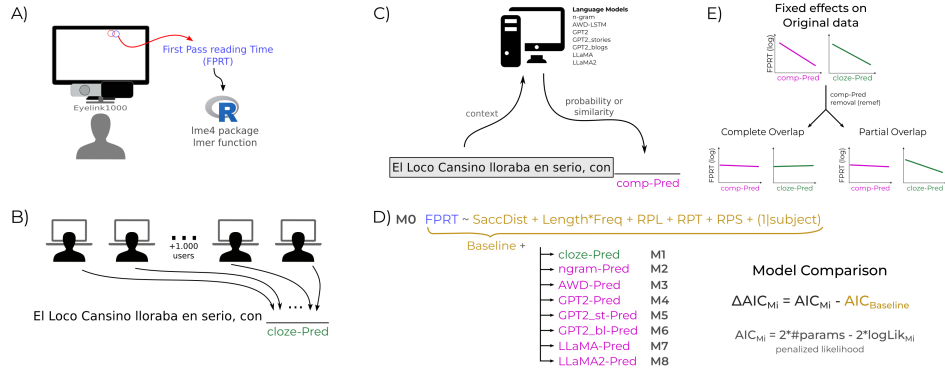


Figure 1: **Experimental designs:** (A) Eye movements were recorded in native Spanish readers reading 8 narrative stories. The eye movement measure (FPRT) was used as dependent variable in statistical models in R. (B) cloze-Pred for texts used in (A) was estimated from online responses by +1,000 participants in a cloze-task experiment. (C) comp-Pred for the same texts was estimated with several Language Models. (D) Statistical models ran in the present study. cloze- and comp-Preds were individually added to a baseline model. Model comparison was performed using AIC difference. (E) Diagram of expected results for cloze and comp-Pred effects after the Remef analysis.

### 2.1 Data: Texts, Cloze-Pred Estimation, and Eye Movements

In this study, we use the cloze-Pred and eye movement data previously published by Bianchi and colleagues [3]. Eye movements (specifically, fixation durations) were recorded from 36 participants while reading 8 narrative texts. From these recordings, First-Pass Reading Time (FPRT: the sum of all fixations on a word during its first encounter) was calculated for each word read by each participant (Figure 1A). This resulted in a total of 54,121 data points, with an average of  $1503 \pm 618$  per participant,  $6765 \pm 3226$  per text, and  $20 \pm 35$  fixations per word, covering 2,588 unique words. FPRT will be used as the dependent variable in our statistical models. The corpus includes each of the 8 texts fully annotated with the following variables of interest: *Saccadic Distance*: the number of characters traversed by the eye before the current fixation; *Word Length*: the number of characters in the fixated word; *Frequency*: lexical frequency of the word based on LexEsp; *Rel pos*: relative positions in the line, text, or sentence; *Length\*Freq*: interaction between Word Length and Frequency; *Pred*: Cloze and computational predictabilities (see below). For more details, see [3].

## 2.2 Human Predictability (cloze-Pred)

Data previously published by Bianchi and colleagues Bianchi et al. [3] includes cloze predictability (cloze-Pred) values for all words in the dataset. Predictions for each word were gathered through an online cloze experiment involving approximately 1,000 participants (Figure 1B). Each participant read at least one of the eight texts from the corpus, sequentially completing approximately one out of every thirty words. The cloze-Pred values were calculated based on an average of 13 responses per word, with a range of 8 to 37 responses.

## 2.3 Computational Predictability (comp-Pred)

To model cloze-Pred, we generated computational predictabilities (comp-Pred) using a Spanish version of GPT2 and two versions of LLaMA. These models were provided with the test texts to extract next-word probabilities corresponding to the completion of the original text (Figure 1C).

In this study, we introduced the GPT2 language model architecture and compared it to previous models used by Bianchi et al. [3] and Umfurer et al. [28]. The model used was trained by the *DeepEsp* consortium and is available through the *HuggingFace* repository.<sup>2</sup> This model was trained on 11.5GB of Spanish text, comprising Wikipedia (3.5GB) and books (8GB) from various domains (narrative, short stories, theater, poetry, essays, and popular science). This pre-trained model will be used for two independent fine-tunings:

1. For the first fine-tuning of this model, we used the corpus of narrative texts employed in previous studies [3]. Due to licensing restrictions, this corpus is not publicly accessible. The corpus contains 2,082 stories (600MB), with a wide range of literary genres and authors from different nationalities.
2. For the second fine-tuning texts sourced from Argentinian blogs were used (28MB). This corpus is being prepared for public release.

Both fine-tunings were performed on all parameters of the original model, using the code provided by HuggingFace for causal language model training.<sup>3</sup> Fine-tunings were performed using a Nvidia Titan RTX (VRAM 24Gb). The first fine-tuning took around 5 hours. The second one, less than an hour.

Finally, two models from the LLaMA [27] family were used. Specifically, we employed the LLaMA and LLaMA2 models, both in their 7-billion-parameter versions. The pretrained versions from the HuggingFace repository were used.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to GPT2, their pretraining corpus was multilingual.

## 2.4 Linear Mixed Models

We employed Linear Mixed Models (LMMs, *lme4* v.3.1-144, R v.3.6.3 [2]) to analyze the log-transformed First Pass Reading Time (FPRT) variable. This variable is proposed to capture effects related to the early processing of words [10]. Each of the fitted LMM returns a t-value for each co-variable, calculated by normalizing the estimated effect (slope) by its standard deviation (SD). Given the high number of data points at our disposal, we can consider infinite degrees of freedom. Thus, co-variables with  $|t - value| > 2$  are considered to have a significant effect on the dependent variable. That is, under an assumed normal distribution, those estimated slopes that are more than 2 SD away from 0 have less than a 5% probability of being 0 (see [3] for more details). All the code necessary to run these statistical tests is openly available<sup>5</sup>.

Our starting point is a baseline model (M0, Figure 1D) that includes variables typically used in the study of eye movements (saccadic distance; word length; frequency; rel pos; length:freq) [3, 13]. This model serves as a foundation for understanding the effects of both cloze and computational predictability (see [3, 28] for a discussion on these effects).

For comparing each resulting Linear Mixed Model (LMM) to the baseline model (M0), we use the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). AIC evaluates the relative information loss of a model compared

<sup>2</sup><https://huggingface.co/DeepESP/gpt2-spanish>

<sup>3</sup><https://github.com/huggingface/transformers/tree/main/examples/pytorch/language-modeling>

<sup>4</sup><https://huggingface.co/meta-llama>

<sup>5</sup><https://github.com/brunobian/Modeling-cognitive-processes-LMs-Neurips2024>

to other models, with a penalty for adding co-variables; a model that loses less information (i.e., has a lower AIC) is considered to be of higher quality. It is important to note that AIC is a relative metric, not an absolute one, meaning it can only be used to compare nested models fitted to the exact same dataset. Therefore, we report the difference in AIC between each model and the baseline model ( $\Delta\text{AIC}$ ): the smaller this value, the better the model’s performance.

Lastly, we reanalyzed all the models by adding cloze-Pred to its residuals. To achieve this, we extracted the residuals of each model by removing the estimated fixed effects. These residuals were then used in a new linear mixed model, with Cloze-Pred as the only fixed effect, keeping the same random effect structure. The aim of this analysis is to analyze the overlap between the variance explained by cloze-Pred and each comp-Pred. If a given comp-Pred can explain all of the variance of cloze-Pred (i.e. the computational model predicts like human readers), the effect of cloze-Pred on the residuals must be close to zero, (Figure 1E).

### 3 Results

Tables 1 and 2 presents the results (t-values) of the Linear Mixed Models (LMMs) conducted using the (log) First Pass Reading Time as the dependent variable against various combinations of co-variables. Models M0 through M3 (Table 1) correspond to models analyzed in previous work by Bianchi et al. [3] and Umfurer et al. [28]. M0 is considered the Baseline Model, which includes all co-variables unrelated to Predictability. All of them have been proved to have a significant effect on the FPRT, as shown by the t-values presented in the corresponding column.

Table 1: **Previous Linear Mixed Model Results:** Each column represents a different linear model. All models were applied to the same dataset. The results indicate the t-value obtained for each co-variable across the models. The row labeled “Cloze-Remef” refers to the t-value of the Cloze-Pred co-variable when used as the sole predictor in an LMM fitted on the residuals of the original model. All these models were previously presented by Bianchi et al. [3] and Umfurer et al. [28]. The row labeled “ $\Delta\text{AIC}$ ” refers to the difference between the AIC of each model and the AIC of M0.

Co-variable	M0 Base	M1 Cloze	M2 Ngram	M3 AWD epubs
Saccadic Dist.	44.44	44.63	43.92	44.31
Length (inv)	-18.15	-18.56	-19.10	-18.59
Frequency (log)	-10.83	-10.60	-1.93	-5.77
Rel pos line	4.14	3.96	4.33	4.12
Rel pos text	-3.93	-3.28	-3.87	-4.68
Rel pos sntc	-5.36	-4.85	-5.76	-4.97
Len:Freq	16.98	17.17	15.68	16.91
Pred (logit)	–	-16.23	-21.02	-18.23
$\Delta\text{AIC}$	0	-254	-425	-274
Cloze-Remef	-16.14	0.00	-9.47	-7.37

M1 incorporates cloze-Pred, representing the variable we aim to approximate with comp-Pred. As expected, this co-variable shows a significant negative effect, indicating that more predictable words are fixated for shorter durations. Notably, the inclusion of cloze-Pred has minimal to no impact on the effects of the other variables, suggesting that it explains a portion of the FPRT variance that was not captured by any other co-variable in M0. Additionally, this model has a better fit to the data than M0, according to the difference of their AICs ( $\Delta\text{AIC} = -254$ ).

M2 represents the linear mixed model in which predictions from the best Ngram language model trained by Bianchi et al. [3] are added to the M0. As discussed by Umfurer et al. [28], this simple model, based solely on counting the frequency of word chains of length N, generates one of the most human-like predictabilities to date. In the corresponding column of the table, it can be observed that the effect of this comp-Pred is greater than that of cloze-Pred, and is also negative. However, the addition of this co-variable caused significant changes in other effects, primarily in the Frequency effect. This suggests that the Ngram predictions account for variance that was previously attributed to Lexical Frequency. This is likely because the Ngram model, which counts word occurrences, is

highly correlated with word frequency. Regarding the overall M2 performance, the AIC difference with M0 shows that M2 outperforms M1. That is, the co-variables combinations of M2 better explain the variance of the dependent variable.

Finally, M3 represents the best result obtained in Umfurer et al. [28], where an AWD-LSTM network [18] was trained on Wikipedia and fine-tuned with a large corpus of narrative texts. Similar to the effect of Ngram comp-Pred, the AWD-LSTM comp-Pred effect is negative and larger than that of cloze-Pred. Additionally, it introduces significant, though smaller, changes to the other effects in the baseline model. In this case, the AIC analysis shows a slightly better fit to the data than M1, but worse than M2.

The ‘‘Cloze-Remef’’ row shows the t-value for cloze-Pred, obtained after fitting a new LMM on the residuals from each model, using only this co-variable. This approach allows us to analyze how much variance remaining in the residuals can be explained by the cloze-Pred. Trivially, in M0, the effect of cloze-Pred on the residuals is almost identical to its effect in M1. In contrast, in M1, there is no remaining variance in the residuals that can be explained by cloze-Pred. However, residuals of M2 and M3 contains some unexplained variance that can be accounted for by cloze-Pred, with the LSTM network’s comp-Pred leaving the least unexplained variance. It is noteworthy how the overall performance of each LMM on the data, measured with AIC, does not reflect the similarity of the corresponding comp-Pred with cloze-Pred.

Models M4 through M8 (Table 2) correspond to novel models, where several versions of GPT2 and LLaMA Language Models are tested. M4 through M6 represent the statistical models corresponding to the predictabilities from the GPT2 variations. In M4, we introduced comp-Pred as computed with the pre-trained GPT2 model with no fine-tuning, downloaded directly from the HuggingFace repository. M5 and M6 introduce comp-Pred computed through the GPT2 model fine-tuned on short stories and Argentine blogs, respectively. Models M7 and M8 represent the statistical models corresponding to the predictabilities from LLaMA-7B and LLaMA2-7B models.

Table 2: **Novel Linear Mixed Model Results:** Each column represents a different linear model. All models were applied to the same dataset. The results indicate the t-value obtained for each co-variable across the models. The row labeled ‘‘Cloze-Remef’’ refers to the t-value of the Cloze-Pred co-variable when used as the sole predictor in an LMM fitted on the residuals of the original model. The row labeled ‘‘ $\Delta$ AIC’’ refers to the difference between the AIC of each model and the AIC of the M0.

Co-variable	M0 Base	M4 GPT2	M5 GPT2 stories	M6 GPT2 blogs	M7 Llama-7B	M8 Llama2-7B
Saccadic Dist.	44.44	44.03	44.01	44.00	44.42	44.31
Length (inv)	-18.15	-20.04	-19.90	-19.90	-18.25	-19.93
Frequency (log)	-10.83	-4.98	-5.12	-5.01	-9.71	-6.42
Rel pos line	4.14	4.45	4.56	4.61	4.22	4.25
Rel pos text	-3.93	-4.56	-4.15	-4.25	-4.47	-4.76
Rel pos sntc	-5.36	-3.83	-3.81	-3.92	-4.47	-4.76
Len:Freq	16.98	15.59	15.58	15.61	17.20	16.43
Pred (logit)	–	-22.51	-22.52	-22.54	-9.17	-20.73
$\Delta$ AIC	0	-482	-482	-482	-81	-407
Cloze-Remef	-16.14	-6.18	-6.39	-6.58	-13.19	-6.12

All three models based on GPT2 (M4, M5, and M6) show similar t-values for comp-Pred ( $t\text{-val}_{Pred, M4-M6} \sim -22$ ) when compared to the Ngram-based model (M2) ( $t\text{-val}_{Pred, M2} = -21.02$ ). However, when analyzing the impact of these comp-Preds on the other co-variables (compared to M0), we observe smaller variations than in M2. This is particularly evident in the effect of lexical Frequency ( $t\text{-val}_{Freq, M0} = -10.83$ ). While in M2 lexical frequency loses significance ( $t\text{-val}_{Freq, M2} = -1.93$ ), in models M4 to M6 the t-values remain above the significance threshold ( $t\text{-val}_{Freq, M4-M6} \sim -5.00$ ). In this regard, the fine-tuned models seem to perform slightly better than the original model.

With respect to the residual variance analysis (Cloze-Remef), we observe that cloze-Pred is still able to capture enough variance to have a significant effect. Nevertheless, these remaining ef-

fects ( $t\text{-val}_{Remef,M4-M6} \sim -6.40$ ) are smaller than the effects captured in the residuals of M2 ( $t\text{-val}_{Remef,M2} = -9.47$ ) and M3 ( $t\text{-val}_{Refemef,M3} = -7.37$ ).

When comparing the comp-Pred derived from LLaMA models (M7 and M8), clear differences emerge between the two versions. The first version (LLaMA-7B) exhibits a smaller comp-Pred effect ( $t\text{-val}_{Pred,M7} = -9.17$ ), suggesting that its predictions are less aligned with cloze-Pred. Moreover, its influence on the Frequency effect is more subtle compared to the comp-Pred effects observed in previous models. Additionally, a significant amount of variance in this model’s residuals can still be explained by cloze-Pred ( $t\text{-val}_{remef,M7} = -13.19$ ), indicating incomplete overlap between these predictions.

In contrast, the second version (LLaMA2) shows a marked improvement. The comp-Pred effect is more comparable to previous models ( $t\text{-val}_{Pred,M8} = -20.73$ ). However, this stronger effect comes with a notable reduction in the Frequency effect. Interestingly, LLaMA2, the most advanced model tested so far, leaves the least amount of unexplained variance for cloze-Pred ( $t\text{-val}_{remef,M8} = -6.12$ ), demonstrating its superior ability to account for the variance in predictability.

When it comes to overall model performance, with the exception of M7, where the first version of LLaMA produced suboptimal results, all models exhibited comparable AIC values. Notably, the model incorporating LLaMA2-7B predictabilities, which were the most similar to cloze-Pred, demonstrated slightly lower performance compared to the models using GPT2-based predictabilities.

## 4 Discussion

Recent advances in Natural Language Processing (NLP) models have opened new avenues for their application in Cognitive Neuroscience, helping to shed light on the underlying processes of language comprehension. Previous studies have made significant strides in understanding how these models, particularly causal language models, can estimate the likelihood of a human reader knowing a word before encountering it (i.e., cloze Predictability, or cloze-Pred) as a co-variable in statistical models analyzing eye movements [3, 28, 9, 8, 17]. In this study, we extended this research by evaluating the performance of transformer-based architectures in this context. Importantly, this research examined eye movement data from native Spanish readers analyzing Spanish texts. Despite Spanish being one of the most spoken languages globally, research on reading processes in Spanish remains underrepresented in the psycholinguistic literature.

To this end, we analyzed the probabilities generated by the LLaMA-7B, LLaMA2-7B models, and three versions of the GPT2 model (a pre-trained version and two custom fine-tuned versions) as co-variables in the same linear mixed models used by Bianchi et al. [3]. These models use First Pass Reading Time (FPRT, or Gaze Duration) as the dependent variable, along with a variety of co-variables corresponding to each word. The different computational predictability (comp-Pred) values generated by these models were added one at a time to the statistical models, which were then compared with the baseline model without any predictability (M0). Additionally, we analyzed the residuals of each model to assess the remaining variance that could be explained by cloze-Pred.

Results obtained in the present study shows that the GPT2 performance was independent of whether the model was used as-is from the HuggingFace repository or whether it was fine-tuned with domain-specific texts or the dialect variant of Spanish spoken by the readers. Two points about the fine-tuning are important to highlight. First, the original GPT2 model’s training data included narrative texts, so the fine-tuning may not have added much novel information to the model. Second, both fine-tunings were conducted with very small datasets (Rioplatense Spanish: 28MB, Narrative Stories: 600MB) compared to the original training corpus (11GB). Thus, it is possible that fine-tuning had little to no impact on the learned weights.

Regarding the use of LLaMA family models, both the first and second versions in their 7-billion-parameter (7B) variants, the results show a significant difference between the two versions. Notably, the first version (analyzed in M7), released in 2023, performs worse than the GPT2 model, which was published four years earlier. This is evident not only in the smaller effect size of the corresponding comp-Pred but also in the residual variance that can be explained by cloze-Pred. However, when analyzing the second version of the LLaMA model (analyzed in M8), slightly better results are observed compared to GPT2, both in terms of residual variance and reduced interference with

the Lexical Frequency effect. This leads to the hypothesis that more modern models are not only generating predictions that are somewhat closer to those of human readers, but they are also achieving this by becoming less dependent on the frequency of word occurrences in the lexicon.

The improvement in comp-Preds from transformer-based models, compared to previously used models (particularly AWD-LSTM), highlights the advantages of this architecture, which appears to capture richer linguistic information. Transformers benefit from processing entire input sequences simultaneously, allowing them to retain information from distant words without loss. Moreover, the increasing complexity of these models in recent years has further enhanced their predictive accuracy. This is largely driven by the significant growth in the number of internal parameters. For instance, while the AWD-LSTM model we used contains approximately  $10^7$  parameters, both GPT2 and LLaMA models have  $10^9$  parameters, representing a two-order-of-magnitude difference. This increase in the number of parameters, combined with recent optimizations to the transformer architecture, allows for enhanced extraction of intrinsic textual information, leading to improved language modeling and prediction capabilities. These improvements are evident both in the models' commercial applications as AI assistants and in our empirical findings. Our results demonstrate that transformer-based models generate predictions that rely less on lexical frequency compared to previous models.

There are two main benefits to our analysis with respect to previous works [8, 9, 23, 17]: (1) the interference generated by comp-Pred in the other co-variables of the models, and (2) the capacity of cloze-Pred to capture a portion of the residual variance. These analyses are essential for gaining a deeper understanding of computational predictions. Examining how these predictions account for variance in Fixation Duration in isolation from other effects could lead to overly optimistic conclusions. For instance, if the focus is solely on the observation that the effects of GPT2 or LLaMA2 are greater than that of cloze-Pred, or even that the AIC of the fitted LMMs are better, it might be concluded that predictions from state-of-the-art language models outperform those from human readers. However, our analysis reveals that this improvement comes at the expense of the Frequency effect (which has been extensively studied in the field of neurolinguistics) and leaving part of the cloze-Pred variance unexplained. In future work, it would be interesting to extend this analysis to other languages and datasets to determine whether the effects found in our Spanish corpus are replicated in the data analyzed in the related literature.

In summary, this work contributes to the existing literature on predictions during reading, enhancing our understanding of both human predictability and computational predictabilities. Over the next few years, these two avenues must proceed hand in hand to foster synergy between the fields of cognitive neuroscience and artificial intelligence. This collaborative approach will enable us to combine resources and efforts to better understand the internal processes of both the human brain and state-of-the-art AI models, particularly in NLP. Furthermore, as advancements in AI continue to unfold, integrating insights from cognitive neuroscience could lead to the development of more sophisticated and human-like models. Ultimately, this intersection of disciplines holds the promise of unlocking new pathways for enhancing our comprehension of language processing, potentially paving the way for applications that not only improve AI performance but also offer deeper insights into human cognition.

## 5 Limitations

As previously mentioned, the corpora used for fine-tuning the GPT2 models are much smaller than the corpus used for pre-training. This may have resulted in the fine-tuning process not producing substantial changes in the pre-trained model's weights. However, it would be interesting to explore in greater depth whether it is possible to enrich these models with more information, both from the specific domain (narrative texts) and from the variant of Spanish spoken by the readers (Rioplatense Spanish). In the near future, we plan to expand the Rioplatense Spanish corpus to conduct a more thorough analysis of this type of fine-tuning. Additionally, we aim to further explore and diversify the analyses related to using these model outputs to improve our understanding of cognitive processes.

It is of great importance, both for the field of cognitive neuroscience and for artificial intelligence, that studies of this nature be conducted in as many languages and dialects as possible. Only in this way can we understand the general characteristics of our brain, while also ensuring equitable access to technological resources, such as today's generative NLP models.



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