

Data simulation for crossed random-effects models

Last modified: 2026-01-09

Crossed random effects

- In many experiments in psychology the reaction of each subject ($j = 1, \dots, N$) to a complete set of stimuli or items ($k = 1, \dots, K$) is measured

$$y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_i x_i + v_{0j} + \eta_{0k} + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

with $\varepsilon_{ijk} \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, \sigma^2)$, $v_{0j} \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, \sigma_v^2)$, and $\eta_{0k} \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, \sigma_\eta^2)$

- Data are completely crossed: all subjects are presented with all items

		Subject				
		1	2	3	...	20
Item	1	1	1	1	...	1
	2	1	1	1	...	1
	3	1	1	1	...	1
	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$
	10	1	1	1	...	1

Lexical decision task (Baayen et al., 2008)

- Assume an example data set with three participants s_1 , s_2 and s_3 who each saw three items w_1 , w_2 , w_3 in a priming lexical decision task under both short and long stimulus onset asynchrony (SOA) conditions
- The data are generated by the following model with random intercepts for subject and item, and random slopes for subject

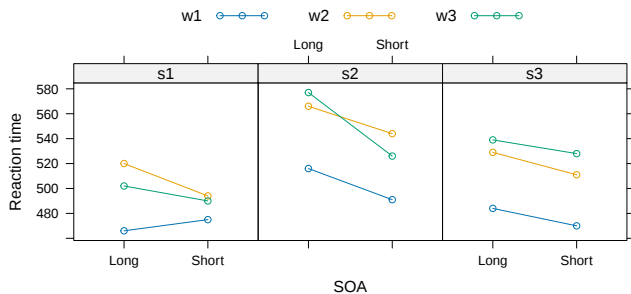
$$y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SOA_k + \eta_{0j} + v_{0i} + v_{1i} SOA_k + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

with $\mathbf{v} \sim N\left(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Sigma}_v = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{v_0}^2 & \sigma_{v_0 v_1} \\ \sigma_{v_0 v_1} & \sigma_{v_1}^2 \end{pmatrix}\right)$, $\eta_{0j} \sim N(0, \sigma_\eta^2)$, $\varepsilon_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma_\varepsilon^2)$, all i.i.d.

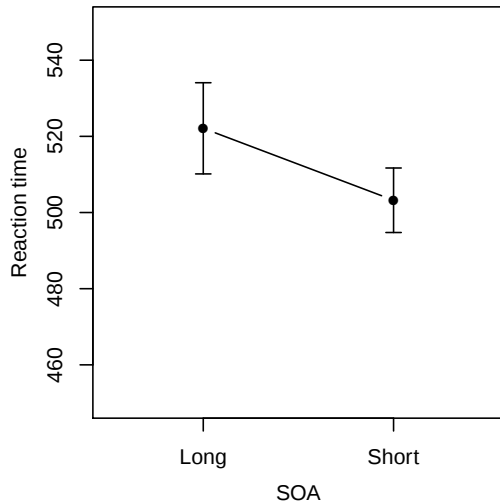
Structure of the data set

Subj	Item	SOA	RT
s1	w1	Long	466
s1	w2	Long	520
s1	w3	Long	502
s1	w1	Short	475
s1	w2	Short	494
s1	w3	Short	490
s2	w1	Long	516
s2	w2	Long	566
s2	w3	Long	577
s2	w1	Short	491
s2	w2	Short	544
s2	w3	Short	526
s3	w1	Long	484
s3	w2	Long	529
s3	w3	Long	539
s3	w1	Short	470
s3	w2	Short	511
s3	w3	Short	528

- When we collect data, we might get a data set like this
- We fit a model to the data to separate the structural and the stochastic parts



Aggregated data



Structure of the data set

Subj	Item	SOA	RT	Fixed		Random			Res
				Int	SOA	ItemInt	SubInt	SubSOA	
s1	w1	Long	466	522.2	0	-28.3	-26.2	0	-2.0
s1	w2	Long	520	522.2	0	14.2	-26.2	0	9.8
s1	w3	Long	502	522.2	0	14.1	-26.2	0	-8.2
s1	w1	Short	475	522.2	-19	-28.3	-26.2	11	15.4
s1	w2	Short	494	522.2	-19	14.2	-26.2	11	-8.4
s1	w3	Short	490	522.2	-19	14.1	-26.2	11	-11.9
s2	w1	Long	516	522.2	0	-28.3	29.7	0	-7.4
s2	w2	Long	566	522.2	0	14.2	29.7	0	0.1
s2	w3	Long	577	522.2	0	14.1	29.7	0	11.5
s2	w1	Short	491	522.2	-19	-28.3	29.7	-12.5	-1.5
s2	w2	Short	544	522.2	-19	14.2	29.7	-12.5	8.9
s2	w3	Short	526	522.2	-19	14.1	29.7	-12.5	-8.2
s3	w1	Long	484	522.2	0	-28.3	-3.5	0	-6.3
s3	w2	Long	529	522.2	0	14.2	-3.5	0	-3.5
s3	w3	Long	539	522.2	0	14.1	-3.5	0	6.0
s3	w1	Short	470	522.2	-19	-28.3	-3.5	1.5	-2.9
s3	w2	Short	511	522.2	-19	14.2	-3.5	1.5	-4.6
s3	w3	Short	528	522.2	-19	14.1	-3.5	1.5	13.2
						$\sigma_{\eta_0}^2$	$\sigma_{v_0}^2$	$\sigma_{v_1}^2$	σ_{ε}^2
						$\sigma_{v_0 v_1}$			

True values

- We assume the following true parameters for a data simulation

Parameter	Model
β_0	522.22
β_1	-19.00
σ_η	21.00
σ_{v_0}	24.00
σ_{v_1}	7.00
$\rho_{v_0v_1}$	-0.70
σ_ε	9.00

$$y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SOA_k + \eta_{0j} + v_{0i} + v_{1i} SOA + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

$$\text{with } \mathbf{v} \sim N\left(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Sigma}_v = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{v_0}^2 & \sigma_{v_0v_1} \\ \sigma_{v_0v_1} & \sigma_{v_1}^2 \end{pmatrix}\right), \eta_{0j} \sim N(0, \sigma_\eta^2), \varepsilon_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma_\varepsilon^2)$$

Matrix notation

For this simple example the model looks like this in matrix notation

$$\begin{pmatrix} y_{111} \\ y_{121} \\ y_{131} \\ y_{112} \\ y_{122} \\ y_{132} \\ y_{211} \\ y_{221} \\ y_{231} \\ y_{212} \\ y_{222} \\ y_{232} \\ y_{311} \\ y_{321} \\ y_{331} \\ y_{312} \\ y_{322} \\ y_{332} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} \beta_0 \\ \beta_1 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} \eta_{01} \\ \eta_{02} \\ \eta_{03} \\ v_{01} \\ v_{02} \\ v_{03} \\ v_{11} \\ v_{12} \\ v_{13} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon_{111} \\ \varepsilon_{121} \\ \varepsilon_{131} \\ \varepsilon_{112} \\ \varepsilon_{122} \\ \varepsilon_{132} \\ \varepsilon_{211} \\ \varepsilon_{221} \\ \varepsilon_{231} \\ \varepsilon_{212} \\ \varepsilon_{222} \\ \varepsilon_{232} \\ \varepsilon_{311} \\ \varepsilon_{321} \\ \varepsilon_{331} \\ \varepsilon_{312} \\ \varepsilon_{322} \\ \varepsilon_{332} \end{pmatrix}$$

References

Baayen, R. H., Davidson, D. J., & Bates, D. M. (2008). Mixed-effects modeling with crossed random effects for subjects and items. *Journal of memory and language*, 59(4), 390–412. doi: 10.1016/j.jml.2007.12.005