



**When Legal Tradition Opposes Syntactic  
Facts: Ambiguous Language in the Law**

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**Category:** Interdisciplinary Topics, Centers, & Institutes  
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**In parking area A, people may park cars, mopeds, and trucks on weekends.**

Which of the following vehicles may people park only on weekends?

- A. Cars
- B. Mopeds
- C. Trucks
- D. Cars, mopeds, and trucks



- **This sentence is ambiguous**
  - C and D are both correct
- Tobia et al. (2022) found that subjects preferred D

## OUR GOALS

- Replicate and expand on Tobia et al. (2022)
- Use our results to develop guidelines for the legal profession

### 3 Experiments:

1

In parking area A, people may park **cars, mopeds, and trucks on weekends.**

2

A. **Athletes and photographers with their [gear]** waited by the van.

B. **Athletes and photographers with their [cameras]** waited by the van.

3

A. **Photographers and athletes with their [gear]** waited by the van.

B. **Photographers and athletes with their [cameras]** waited by the van.

For each experiment: 12 test questions, 12 distractors, ~500 participants

## Expected Findings:

1

In parking area A, people may park **cars, mopeds, and trucks** on weekends.

2

A. **Athletes and photographers** with their **[gear]** waited by the van.

B. **Athletes and photographers** with their **[cameras]** waited by the van.

3

A. **Photographers and athletes** with their **[gear]** waited by the van.

B. **Photographers and athletes** with their **[cameras]** waited by the van.

**Overall:** People select all nouns unless meaning favors the last noun

Recruit subjects  
& run experiments  
with LUCID



Analyze our results



Publish our findings  
in:  
*The Cambridge  
Handbook of  
Experimental  
Jurisprudence (2023)*