

WWEP: How Experience Affects Adults' Recognition of Words

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Introduction

Methods

Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Participants (%)	Mean	SD
Overall	832		
Age		18.91	1.17
Gender			
Male	343 (41.2)		
Female	489 (58.8)		
Class Year			
Freshman	565 (67.9)		
Sophomore	169 (20.3)		
Junior	61 (7.3)		
Senior	34 (4.1)		
Did not say	3 (.36)		
First Language			
English	692 (83.2)		
Other	140 (16.8)		

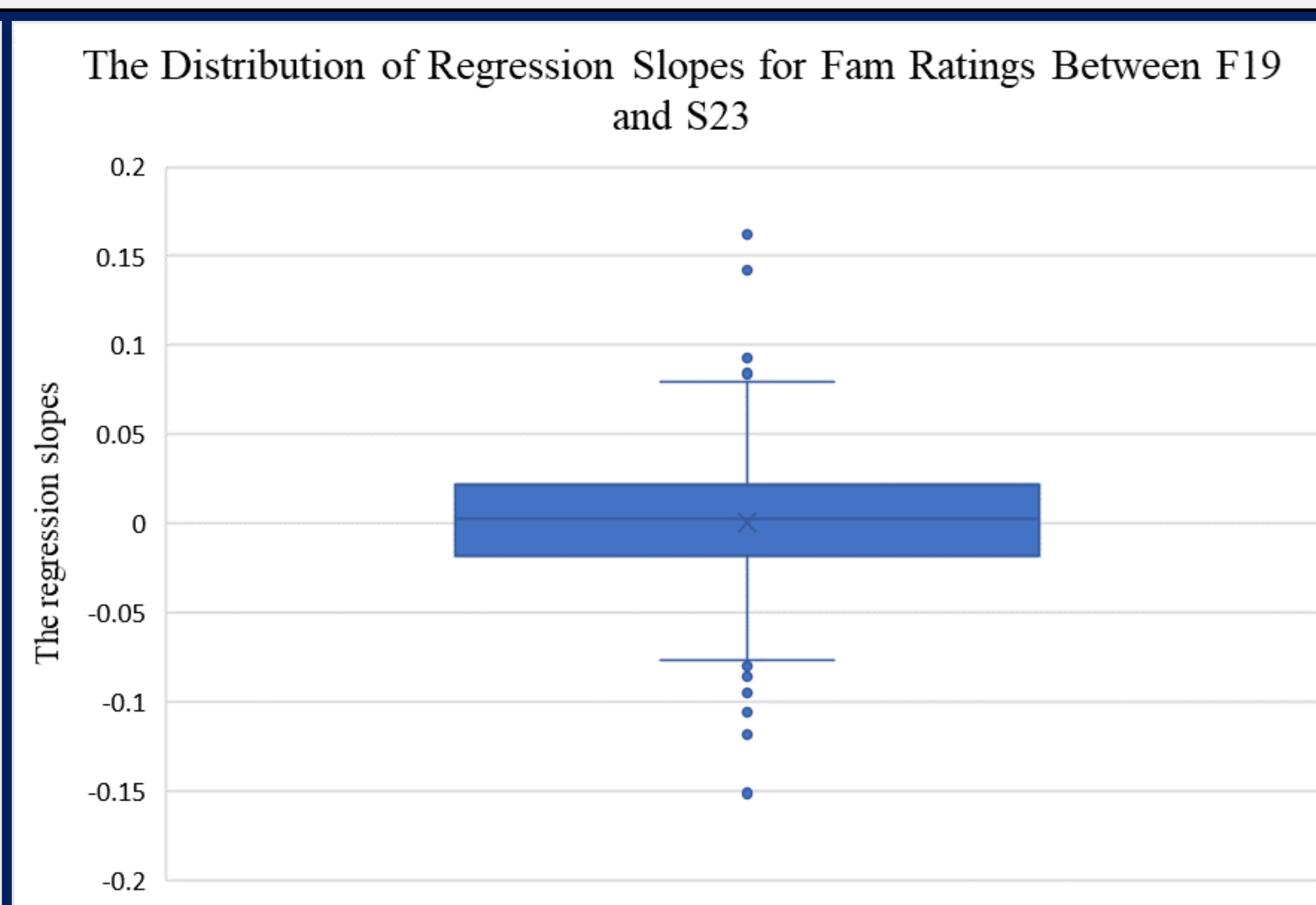
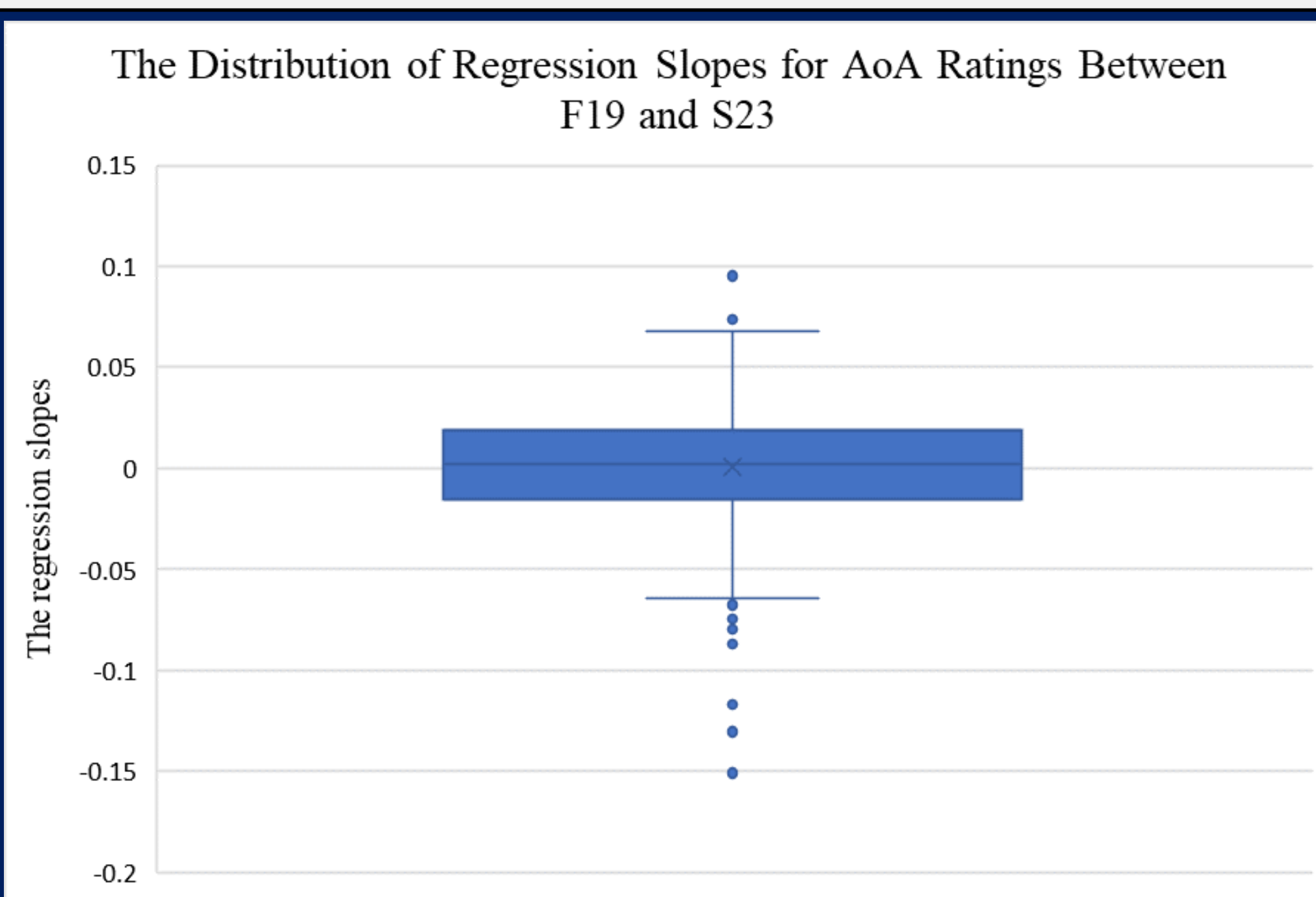
Stimuli

- There were 499 words on the questionnaire in total.
- Words were selected from the English Lexicon Project (ELP; Balota et al., 2007) and by the researchers.

Procedure

- Questionnaires were distributed and completed on Qualtrics.
- Participants were assigned randomly to one of four versions of the questionnaire.
- Participants rated words based on familiarity (Fam) and when they first learned the word (AoA) on a scale from 1 to 7.
- Regression slopes were computed for each word to assess the trajectory of AoA and Fam ratings from Fall 2019 to Spring 2023.

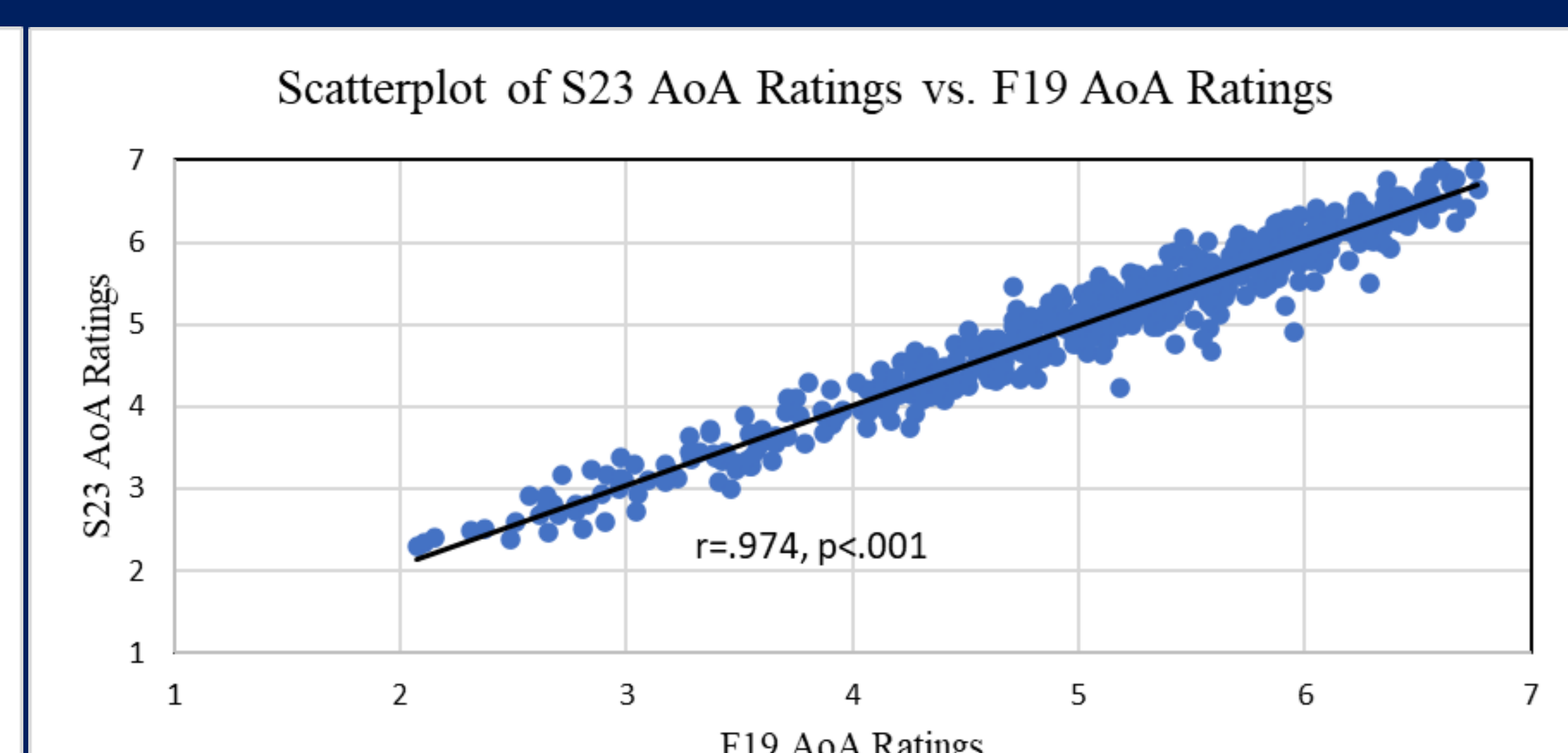
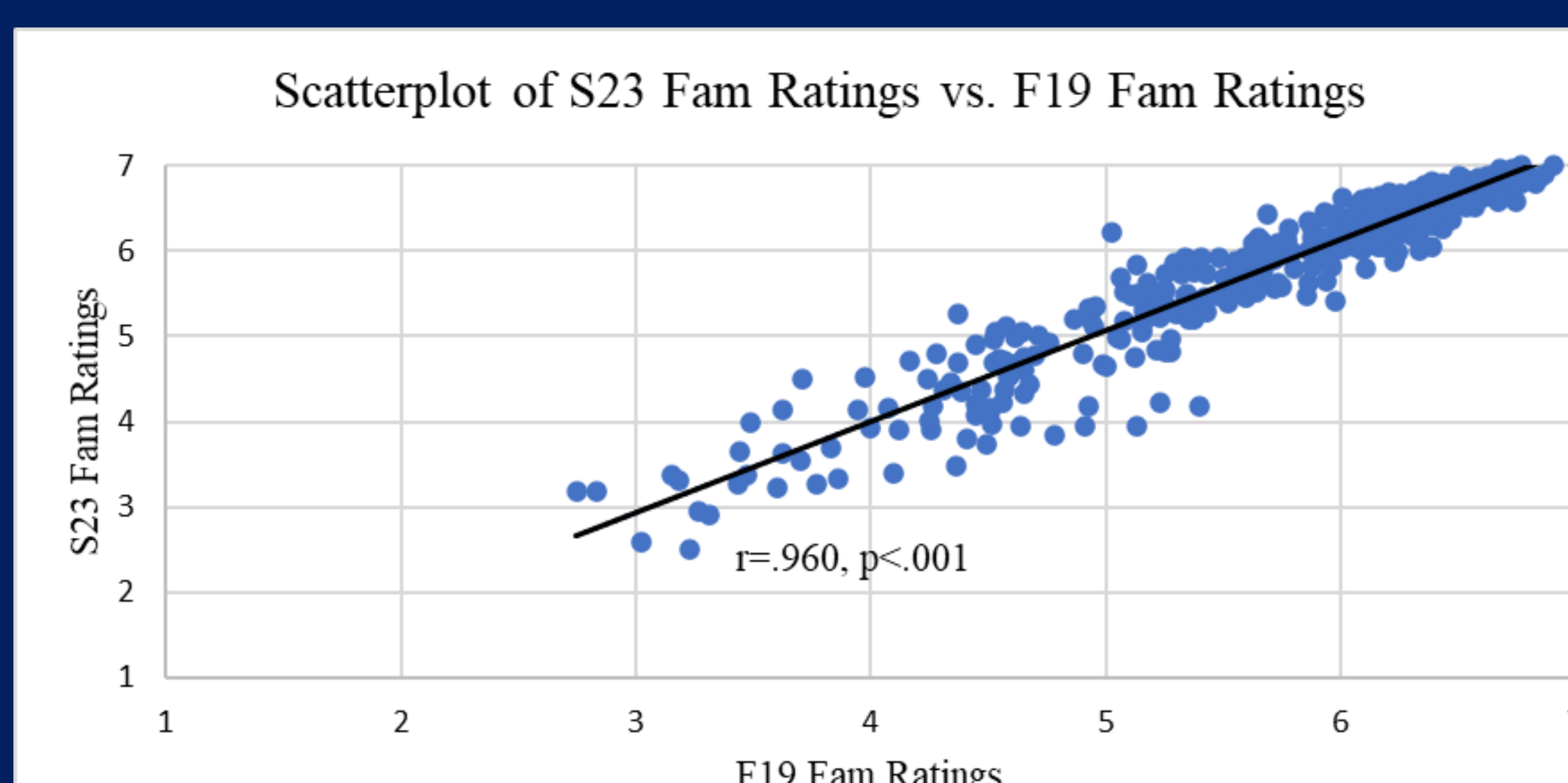
Results



- We found a strong correlation between F19 and S23 AoA and Fam ratings
- The correlation between F19 and S23 AoA ratings is $r=.974, p<.001$
- The correlation between F19 and S23 Fam ratings is $r=.960, p<.001$
- The correlation between F19 and S23 AoA ratings is significantly higher than that of Fam, $z=3.45, p<.001$

Additional findings:

- “tofurkey”, “portraiture”, and “teleton” show a downward trend in Fam rating
- “blockchain”, “glamping”, and “meteorite” show an upward trend in Fam rating
- “emoji”, “smartphone”, and “minion” show a downward trend in AoA rating
- “camcorder”, “skort” and “monopoly” show an upward trend in AoA rating



Summary and Conclusions

- As seen through the data above, there is high interrater reliability, and the two scatterplots demonstrate the notably high correlation between ratings across years, with the AoA ratings being the most stable over time—from Fall 2019 (F19) to Spring 2023 (S23).
- There are several words that are outliers in the distribution of both AoA and FAM regression slopes, signifying some especially strong changes in word ratings for certain words over time.
- Overall, year 4 of the Wesleyan Word Experience Project has uncovered the progression of the rating trends in AoA and Fam.

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