Figure 8 Acceptability judgments by list position of CNPC violations for each participant. Each tile shows the judgments for one subject, according to the list position of each CNPC violation relative to other CNPC violations.

“Notably, some individuals seem fairly accepting of island violations, while others reject the same tokens. This type of variation in acceptability judgments, both within and across subjects emerges naturally on the processing account of islands. Individuals are known to differ significantly from one another in terms of working memory capacity (Daneman & Carpenter 1980; King & Just 1991; Just & Carpenter 1992), and the same individual may have more or fewer resources available, depending upon factors such as fatigue, distractions, or other concurrent tasks.”
Average priming estimates

L&B ~1 rating point increase with 5 repetitions
H&S ~0.7 rating point increase per 32 repetitions
Relationship to McElree & Griffith (1998)

- Why is island detection so fast, if comprehenders attempt to complete the dependency?

(41) **Time course measures**

**Relationship to Hahne & Friederici 1999**

- Proportion of ungrammatical input affects brain response associated with structural complexity/repair
Relationship to filler-gap dependency formation diagnostic techniques

Pickering & Trxler (2001) [discussion on H.S. p. 57]
The coach had brought a number of her students down to the swim meet. She hoped they would learn a lot while they were there.

That’s the diver that the coach persuaded a few pupils to watch before the tournament.
That’s the event that the coach persuaded a few pupils to watch before the tournament.

General Discussion

The experiments showed that readers experienced more difficulty with sentences with plausible object analyses than sentences with implausible object analyses after disambiguation. Since the conditions did not differ in plausibility on the correct clausal analysis, readers must have considered the object analysis by the time at which they reached the point of disambiguation. This finding rules out the delay account (as well as an account in which the clausal analysis is initially adopted) and is compatible with the first-resort account and the parallel account. Hence, these experiments provide strong evidence that the parser rapidly forms unbounded dependencies during normal reading.

However, the experiments did not find clear evidence that readers encountered more difficulty with the implausible sentences than the plausible sentences before disambiguation (i.e., at the critical verb). It is possible that the failure to detect a plausibility effect at the verb in either experiment was a Type II error (i.e., that the conditions really did differ). For this to be the case, we would have had to have failed to detect the effect twice, the second time with a particularly sensitive technique (eye tracking). Likewise, Boland et al. (1995) did not detect such an effect using the stop-making-sense task. Hence, it does not appear that readers initially adopted just the object analysis in our experiments.

One possible reason for the lack of a plausibility effect at the verb is that most of the verbs (e.g., urge, invite, advise, coax, warn, help, convince, employ, pressure, encourage, and remind) normally require an animate direct object (except in some figurative uses). It is possible that the processor uses a first-resort strategy conditional on a minimal semantic feature check between filler and verb: The processor does not postulate an unbounded dependency just in case the features mismatch. In this account, the processor would normally form the unbounded dependency at the verb in the plausible condition but not in the implausible condition. If so, neither condition should cause difficulty at the verb, because the analysis adopted for both conditions is plausible at this point. However, the processor would then have to abandon its analysis in the disambiguating region for the plausible condition but not for the implausible condition. Note that Traxler and Pickering (1996) and McElree and Griffith (1998) found that the processor does not form unbounded dependencies according to a first-resort strategy when such dependencies are rendered ungrammatical by island constraint information (see above), so the first-resort strategy is clearly not an unconditional strategy (cf. Stevenson, 1994).