

People reject free gifts from robots because they infer bad intentions

Benjamin Lebrun*, Andrew Vonasch, and Christoph Bartneck

University of Canterbury, New Zealand

*benjamin.lebrun@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Introduction

Insufficient explanation about a behavior leads people to:

- be suspicious (e.g., bad intentions)
- look for hidden reasons to explain why (i.e., phantom costs) (Vonasch et al., 2024)

RQ: Do people perceive phantom costs when interacting with a robot?

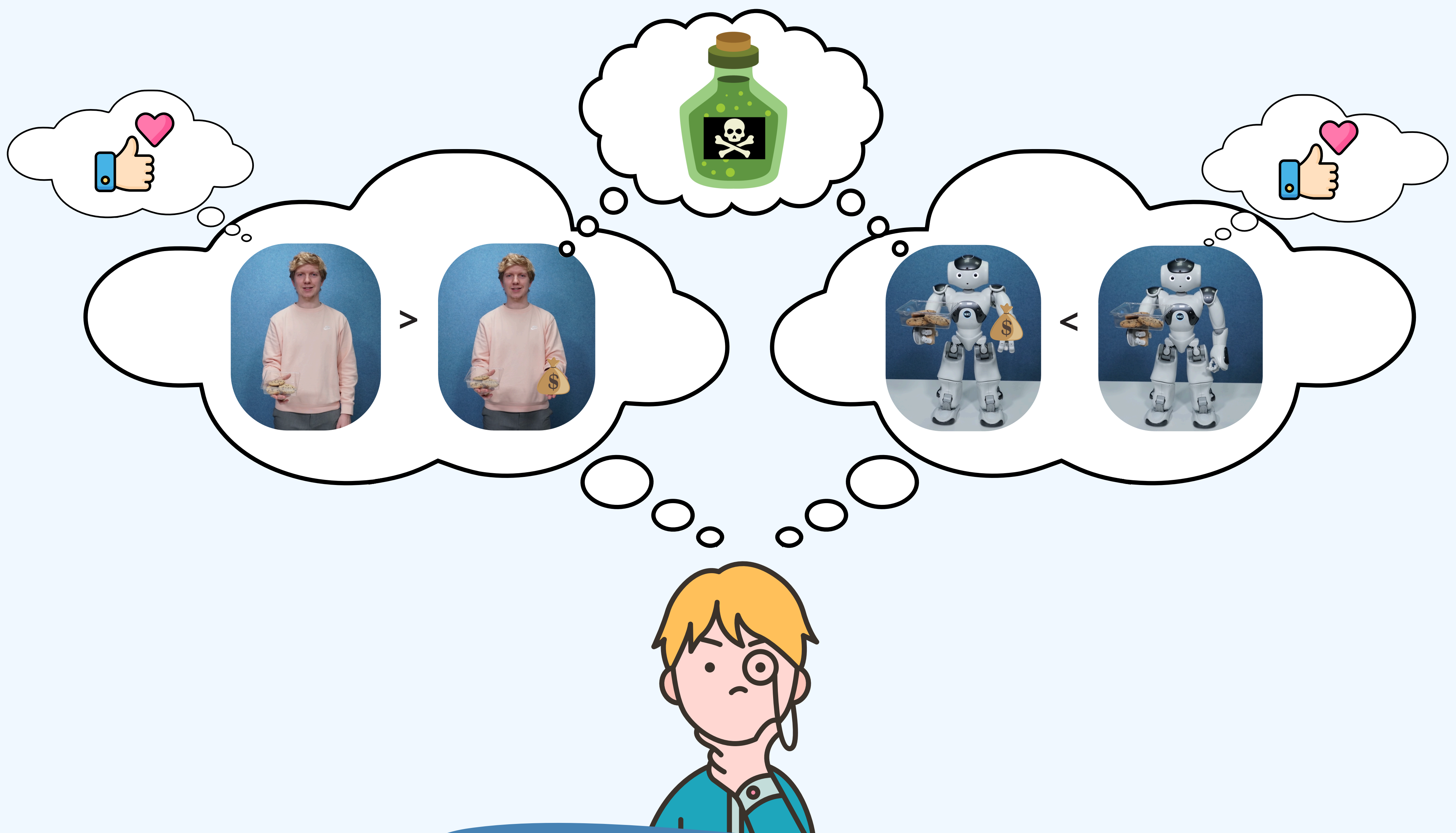
Method

An agent (human or robot) offered people a cookie or a cookie + \$2 (overly generous).

➤ no explanation justifying why they gave money

DV1: accept or refuse to eat the cookie

DV2: open-entry box to justify behavior



Discussion

- People eat the cookie more often when it is not associated with money.
- People perceive phantom costs when interacting with a human and a robot (e.g., poisoning cookies).
- **Important to make agents' behaviors and intentions sufficient and clear to avoid people being suspicious and perceiving phantom costs.**

Preprint



References

Vonasch, A. J., Mofradidoost, R., & Gray, K. (2024). People Reject Free Money and Cheap Deals Because They Infer Phantom Costs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0(0).