

Distinct Neural Signatures of Outcome Monitoring following Selection and Execution Errors

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36 Abstract

37 Losing a point in tennis could result from poor shot selection or faulty stroke execution. To explore
38 how the brain responds to these different types of errors, we examined feedback-locked EEG
39 activity while participants completed a modified version of a standard three-armed bandit
40 probabilistic reward task. Our task framed unrewarded outcomes as either the result of errors of
41 selection or errors of execution. We examined whether amplitude of the medial frontal negativity
42 (the Feedback-Related Negativity/Reward Positivity; FRN/RewP) was sensitive to the different
43 forms of error attribution. Consistent with previous reports, selection errors elicited a large
44 FRN/RewP relative to rewards and amplitude of this signal correlated behavioral adjustment
45 following these errors. A different pattern was observed in response to execution errors. These
46 outcomes produced a larger FRN/RewP, a frontal attenuation in activity preceding this component,
47 and a subsequent enhanced error positivity in parietal sites. Notably, the only correlations with
48 behavioral adjustment were with the early frontal attenuation and amplitude of the parietal signal;
49 FRN/RewP differences between execution errors and rewarded trials did not correlate with
50 subsequent changes in behavior. Our findings highlight distinct neural correlates of selection and
51 execution error processing, providing insight into how the brain responds to the different classes of
52 error that determine future action.

53

54 **Key words:** Credit Assignment, Medial Frontal Negativity, Feedback-Related Negativity, Prediction
55 Error, Reinforcement Learning

56 Introduction

57 When an action fails to produce the desired goal, there is a “credit assignment” problem to resolve:
58 Did the lack of reward occur because the wrong course of action was selected, or was it because
59 the selected action was poorly executed? Consider a tennis player who, mid-game, must
60 determine whether losing the last point was the result of selecting the wrong action or executing
61 the action poorly. The player might have attempted a lob rather than the required passing shot, an
62 error in action selection. Alternatively, a lob might have been appropriate but hit with insufficient
63 force, an error in motor execution.

64 Reinforcement learning presents a framework for understanding adaptive behavior through
65 trial and error interactions with the environment. According to numerous models (e.g. temporal
66 difference learning; Sutton & Barto, 1998), the discrepancy between expected and actual
67 outcomes, the reward prediction error, provides a learning signal that allows an agent to refine its
68 predictions and update its action selection policy. But what happens when a negative prediction
69 error could arise from either poor action selection or poor response execution?

70 To address this question, McDougle et al. (2016) used a “bandit” task in which participants
71 chose between two stimuli to maximize reward. In one condition, choices were made using a
72 standard button-press method, a situation in which the negative prediction errors on unrewarded
73 trials were attributed to poor action selection (given the negligible demands on motor execution). In
74 a second condition, choices were made by reaching to the desired bandit. Here, unrewarded trials
75 were attributed to movement execution errors. In the latter condition, participants strongly
76 discounted the negative prediction errors on unrewarded trials relative to the former condition. The
77 authors hypothesized that errors credited to the motor execution system block value updating in
78 the action selection system. Consistent with this hypothesis, McDougle et al. (2019) reported that
79 reward prediction error coding in the human striatum was attenuated following execution errors,
80 relative to selection errors. Differences between responses to selection and execution errors have
81 been attributed to a greater sense of “agency” in the latter, with participants’ choice biases
82 indicating a belief that they can reduce execution errors by making more accurate movements
83 (Parvin et al., 2018).

84 A window into the processes that underlie outcome monitoring is offered through the
85 discovery of the Feedback-Related Negativity (FRN), a negative deflection in the EEG first
86 identified following the presentation of feedback indicating incorrect responses (Miltner et al.,
87 1997). After its identification, the component quickly became the subject of intense investigation as
88 a marker signaling gains and losses (Gehring & Willoughby, 2002) and outcomes that are worse
89 than expected (Holroyd et al., 2006). The most prominent explanation of its significance, the
90 “reinforcement learning theory of the error-related negativity” (RL-ERN; Holroyd & Coles, 2002)
91 holds that the component indexes the activity of signals from the midbrain dopamine that are
92 conveyed to the anterior cingulate cortex for adaptive modification of behaviour (Holroyd & Coles,
93 2002; Holroyd & Umemoto, 2016). Recent developments reveal that much of the variation in this

94 component is driven a positive going component (a Reward Positivity; RewP) responding to
95 outcomes that are better than expected (Foti et al., 2011; Holroyd et al., 2008; Proudfit, 2015).
96 Irrespective of whether this signal (referred to as the “FRN/RewP” from here onwards) is framed as
97 a feedback negativity or reward positivity, there is a consensus (as indicated by a meta-analysis of
98 55 datasets; Sambrook & Goslin, 2015), that it is sensitive to reward prediction error.

99 The FRN/RewP’s sensitivity to errors of action is more contentious. A series of experiments
100 (Krigolson et al., 2008; Krigolson & Holroyd, 2006, 2007a) contrasting high level (goal-attainment)
101 errors, variously operationalized as a failure to reach a target (Krigolson et al., 2008; Krigolson &
102 Holroyd, 2007a), avoid a collision (Krigolson & Holroyd, 2006, 2007b), and the erroneous selection
103 of the wrong hand or force (de Bruijn et al., 2003) with low-level errors (i.e. mismatch between
104 actual and intended motor command), concluded that the latter do not elicit a FRN/RewP. Instead,
105 reflecting a hierarchical error processing system (Krigolson & Holroyd, 2006), these motor errors
106 are proposed to be mediated within posterior parietal cortex (Desmurget et al., 1999, 2001;
107 Diedrichsen, 2005). Further elaborations indicated that the FRN/RewP may only be generated for
108 action errors that cannot be corrected (Krigolson et al., 2008; Krigolson & Holroyd, 2007a),
109 indicating a binary high level coding of outcomes in the FRN/RewP (i.e. signaling whether the goal
110 was achieved or not). In line with this, a recent experiment isolating reward-based and sensory
111 error-based motor adaptation reported a FRN/RewP in response to binary reward feedback, but
112 not sensory error feedback- which instead generated a P300 (Palidis et al., 2019). Previous work
113 on the P300’s sensitivity to “low level” motor execution errors led to the proposal that this later
114 parietally distributed component might reflect the revision of an internal forward model in posterior
115 parietal cortex (Krigolson & Holroyd, 2007a).

116 A contrasting set of results suggest that the FRN/RewP (and its response-locked variant,
117 the ERN) may in fact be sensitive to motor errors and reflect more than binary coding of outcomes,
118 with evidence showing that it scales with the magnitude of error during sensorimotor adaptation
119 (Anguera et al., 2009) and correlates with the size of hand-path deviations following externally
120 perturbation to target reaches (Torrecillos et al., 2014). These findings are more in line with a
121 growing body of work suggesting that the FRN/RewP indexes a general salience prediction error
122 (Oliveira et al., 2007; Torrecillos et al., 2014). A computational model attempting to unify a broad
123 range of findings on medial prefrontal cortex function (Alexander & Brown, 2011) proposes that this
124 region is responsible for tracking discrepancies between expectations and outcomes, which are
125 reflected in the FRN/RewP. Viewed in this way, the processing of execution and selection error
126 may share a common neural network that signals a mismatch between the outcome and
127 expectations in the service of behavioural adaptation (Cavanagh et al., 2012; Torrecillos et al.,
128 2014).

129 To test whether outcome errors of action and selection can be dissociated in the medial
130 frontal cortex, we recorded feedback-locked ERPs while participants engaged in a modified bandit
131 task where choices were selected via rapid arm movements. Unrewarded trials were either framed

132 as errors in choosing the wrong bandit (a selection error) or the result of an inaccurate movement
133 (an execution error). Following a large body of evidence reporting that the FRN is sensitive to RPE
134 (Sambrook & Goslin, 2015), we expected that unrewarded outcomes attributed to selection error
135 would elicit an FRN/RewP response. If this medial frontal monitoring system also tracks general
136 action-outcome discrepancies, then we should expect a deflection following errors of action
137 execution too. However, should the recently proposed movement-dependent account of RL hold,
138 the FRN/RewP response should be attenuated when errors can be ascribed to the motor system.
139 We would expect P300 amplitude, as a putative index of internal forward model revision (Krigolson
140 & Holroyd, 2007a), should be largest for execution errors.

141 In addition to these predictions, we also examined the relationship between the FRN/RewP
142 and behavioral modification. Specifically, we predicted that participants who exhibited a larger
143 change in the FRN/RewP would be more likely to switch between the different options. Notably, we
144 expected this brain-behavior relationship would hold for selection errors, but not for execution
145 errors. Reasoning that action errors may instead be encoding information about the size of the
146 execution error, with this feedback used to correct discrepancies between the planned and actual
147 outcome, we explored the possibility that these signals may be correlated with the magnitude of
148 error and subsequent change in motor response.

149 Materials and Methods

150 Participants

151 Using an effect size estimate derived from our previously published work on the FRN/RewP
152 ($\eta^2_p = .167$; Mushtaq et al., 2016), with a desired statistical power of 0.8 and alpha criterion set at
153 0.05, we set a minimum sample size of 28 participants. In total we tested thirty-two right-handed
154 participants ($EHI > 40$; Oldfield, 1971). Two participants were excluded due to excessive EEG
155 artifacts, and a technical error during data collection rendered one participant's dataset unusable.
156 All analyses were performed on the resulting sample of 29 participants (19 females, 10 males, μ
157 age = 26.75 years, ± 9.51 years).

158 Participants were told they would be remunerated based on their performance. However,
159 due to the pseudo-veridical nature of outcomes (see Procedure), all received a fixed payment of
160 £10.00. Participants signed an informed consent document, were fully debriefed, and the
161 experiment was approved by the Ethics Committee in the School of Psychology at the University of
162 Leeds, United Kingdom.

163 Design and Procedure

164 We employed a novel three-armed bandit task (**Figure 1**) where the absence of reward on a given
165 trial could be the product of a poorly executed action or an error in action selection (McDougle et
166 al., 2019). Following EEG set-up, the participant was seated in a chair approximately 50 cm away
167 from a 24" ASUS monitor (53.2 X 30 cm [2560 x 1600 pixels], 100 Hz refresh rate). The participant
168 was instructed to make a choice by making a reaching movement, sliding their right arm across a
169 graphics tablet (49.3 X 32.7 cm, Intuos 4XL; Wacom, Vancouver, WA) while holding a digitizing
170 pen encased inside a customized air hockey paddle. The tablet was placed below the monitor on
171 the table and between an opaque platform that occluded the hand.

172 The experimental session comprised 400 trials, with opportunity for self-paced breaks. To
173 initiate each trial, the participant made a reaching movement, sliding their right arm to position a
174 white cursor (diameter of 0.5 cm) inside the home position, indicated by a solid white circle at the
175 center of the screen. After maintaining this position for 400 ms, the start circle turned green and
176 three bandits appeared on the screen (positioned at a radial distance 8 cm from the center at 90°,
177 210° and 330° degrees relative to the origin). The bandits were colored light blue, dark blue, or
178 purple and the color-position mappings were maintained for the entire experiment (randomized
179 across participants).

180 Following the appearance of the 3 bandits, participants had 2 seconds to initiate a reaching
181 movement. If the reaction time (RT) was greater than 2 s, the trial was aborted and the message
182 "Too Slow" appeared. After movement onset, participants had 1 s (Movement Time; MT) to
183 complete a rapid straight-line "shooting" movement through one of the bandits. Upon movement
184 initiation, the cursor indicating hand position disappeared and did not reappear until feedback
185 presentation. If the movement was not completed within the required 1 s window, the trial was
186 terminated and the error message "Too Slow" was displayed. If the movement was completed
187 within the 1 s window, there were three possible outcomes: If the movement was accurate (hand
188 passed through the bandit) the cursor was displayed within the spatial extent of the bandit. On
189 these trials, there were two possible outcomes: (1) The bandit could turn green, indicating that a
190 reward would be earned for the trial (reward outcome), or (2) the bandit would turn red, indicating
191 that, while the movement was accurate, no reward would be given on that trial (selection error). If
192 the movement missed the bandit, a cursor would appear indicating the position when the hand was
193 at the radial distance of the bandits, and thus indicate if the execution error was clockwise or
194 counterclockwise relative to the target. The bandit would turn yellow, further signaling an execution
195 error. Participants were informed of the three possible outcomes prior to the start of the experiment
196 and presented with demonstrations of the three outcomes.

197 Following McDougle et al. (McDougle et al., 2019), each bandit had its own fixed
198 probabilities for the three trial outcomes. All bandits had a 40% reward outcome, and thus, the
199 expected value for the three bandits were identical. However, the frequency of selection error and

200 execution error trials varied. For one bandit, 50% of the trials resulted in execution errors and 10%
201 resulted in selection errors. We refer to this as the “High Execution/Low Selection Error” bandit. A
202 second bandit resulted in execution errors on 10% of trials and 50% resulted in selection errors (a
203 “Low Execution/High Selection Error” bandit). A third, “Neutral” bandit produced an equal number
204 (30%) of execution and selection errors.

205 To achieve these probabilities, outcomes were surreptitiously perturbed so that they aligned
206 with predetermined feedback (a randomized sequence for each run) for the selected bandit. On
207 trials in which the actual movement produced the desired outcome in terms of hitting or missing the
208 bandit, the cursor was shown at its veridical position. However, if the participant’s movement
209 missed the bandit, but the trial outcome was set as either a reward or selection error (i.e.,
210 outcomes requiring successful motor execution), the feedback showed the cursor landing inside
211 the bandit, albeit near the side consistent with the actual hand position. Conversely, where a trial
212 was set to be an execution error, but the stylus successfully intersected the bandit, the cursor was
213 shifted just outside the bandit, with the side again consistent with the actual hand position (e.g., if
214 the hit was slightly clockwise to the center of the bandit, the cursor appeared outside the spatial
215 boundary of the bandit on the clockwise side). On trials in which feedback needed to be perturbed
216 (i.e., deliver a false hit or false miss) to control the frequency of outcomes, the cursor position was
217 shifted by randomly sampling from a normal distribution ($\pm 6.24^\circ$, equivalent to .5 cm with an 8 cm
218 reach) until a new cursor position was chosen that landed inside the bandit (for false hits) or
219 outside the bandit (false misses).

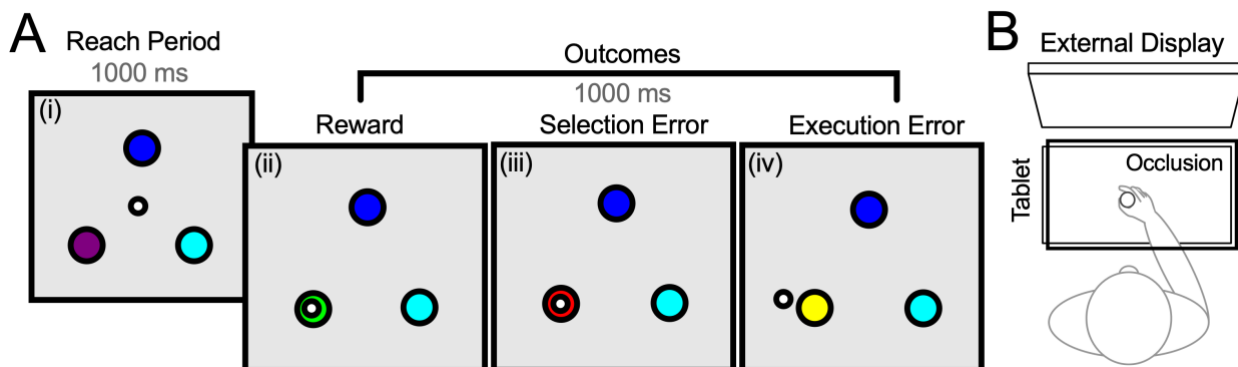
220 We included three further constraints to minimize the likelihood that participants would
221 recognize that the outcomes were not always directly reflective of their movements: (i) No online
222 movement feedback was available; (ii) end-point feedback was presented 1 s after the stylus had
223 passed the bandit location (this also helped reduce the impact of motor artefacts contaminating the
224 ERP); and (iii) if the actual reaching angle was greater than 10° from the closest bandit on any trial
225 (irrespective of the set outcome), no outcome was shown, the experiment software instructed
226 participants to “Please Reach Closer to the Bandit.” Trials in which the movement was not
227 completed within 1 s of the onset of the bandits or in which the reach angle was greater than 10°
228 from the closest bandit were repeated, ensuring a full data set of 400 trials for each participant.

229 To increase motivation, participants were told that at the end of the experiment the software
230 would randomly select five trials, and based on the outcomes from these trials, a cash bonus
231 between £1-5 would be provided. As such, the goal was to accumulate as many reward trials as
232 possible. In actuality, all participants received a fixed payment of £10 for taking part in the
233 experiment.

234 Finally, given that it is possible that the execution error feedback could be interpreted in
235 different ways (for example, participants may have assumed these errors were the result of faulty
236 technical equipment), participants were invited to complete a brief post-experiment survey where
237 they were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “I felt that that the miss (yellow)

238 outcomes were the result of poor arm reaches" on a 7-point Likert scale, where a score of 7
239 indicated strongly agree and 1 indicated strongly disagree. From 21 respondents, a mean score of
240 5.57 (SD = 1.6), which was statistically significantly different to the mid-point (neither agree nor
241 disagree) on the scale ($t(20) = 4.41$, $p < .001$), indicated general agreement with the intended
242 experimental manipulation.

243 The experimental task was programmed using the Psychophysics Toolbox (Brainard, 1997;
244 Kleiner et al., 2007) and lasted approximately 35 minutes, with an additional 25-30 minutes of
245 technical set up for EEG data acquisition.



246
247 **Figure 1- Experimental Task:** (A) Participants moved a stylus on a tablet to make rapid shooting
248 movements (i) through one of 3 bandits (large circles) at 90°, 210° and 330° degrees relative to the
249 home position (small circle). Following a 1000 ms delay (not pictured), pseudo-veridical feedback (white
250 cursor) was provided indicating if the outcome was a reward (ii), a selection error (iii) or an execution
251 error (iv). (B) The hand was occluded throughout, and stimuli were presented on a monitor positioned in
252 front of the participants at approximately eye level.

253

254 Electrophysiological data recording and preprocessing

255 EEG data were recorded continuously from 64 scalp locations at a sampling rate of 1024 Hz using
256 a BioSemi Active-Two amplifier (BioSemi, Amsterdam). Four electrooculograms (EOG) – above
257 and below the left eye, and at the outer canthi of each eye – were recorded to monitor eye
258 movements. Two additional electrodes were placed on the left and right mastoids. The CMS and
259 DRL active electrodes placed close to the Cz electrode of the international 10-20 system served as
260 reference and ground electrodes, respectively. EEG pre-processing was performed using the
261 EEGLAB (Delorme & Makeig, 2004) and Fieldtrip (Oostenveld et al., 2011) toolboxes, combined
262 with in-house procedures running using Matlab (The MathWorks, Inc., Natick, Massachusetts).

263 All data were first re-referenced offline to the average of all channels, and downsampled
264 from 1024 Hz to 256 Hz. The continuous time series data were filtered using a high-pass filter with
265 a cut-off at 0.1 Hz (Kaiser windowed-sinc FIR filter, beta = 5.653, transition bandwidth = .2 Hz,
266 order = 4638) and a low-pass filter with a cut-off at 30 Hz (Kaiser windowed-sinc FIR, beta = 5.653,
267 transition bandwidth = 10 Hz, order = 126). A second filtering of the data was performed for
268 subsequent independent component analysis using a high-pass filter cut-off at 1 Hz (Kaiser
269 windowed-sinc FIR filter, beta = 5.653, transition bandwidth = 2 Hz, order = 4666). ICA typically
270 attains better decompositions on data with a 1 Hz high-pass filter (Winkler et al., 2015). The data

271 were segmented into epochs beginning 1s before and lasting 1s after the onset of feedback.

272 Infomax ICA, as implemented in the EEGLAB toolbox, was run on the 1 Hz high-pass-filter
273 epoched data, and the resulting component weights were copied to the .1 Hz high-pass-filter
274 epoched data. All subsequent steps were conducted on the .1 Hz high-pass-filtered data.
275 Potentially artefactual components were selected automatically using SASICA (Chaumon et al.,
276 2015), based on low autocorrelation, high channel specificity, and high correlation with the vertical
277 and horizontal eye channels. The selections were visually inspected for verification purposes and
278 adjusted when necessary. After removal of artefactual components, the Fully Automated Statistical
279 Thresholding for EEG Artefact Rejection plugin for EEGLAB (Nolan et al., 2010) was used for
280 general artefact rejection and interpolation of globally and locally artefact contaminated channels,
281 supplemented by visual inspection for further periods of non-standard data, such as voltage jumps,
282 blinks, and muscle noise.

283 Following artifact-removal, 93.5% of total trials were available for analysis. There was no
284 difference in the percentage of trials removed across conditions ($F(2, 56) = 2.09, p = .133$).
285 However, as a product of the experimental design, there was a difference in the total number of
286 trials across the conditions ($F(2, 56) = 85.2, p < .001$), with more reward trials ($\mu = 150, \pm 9$)
287 available for analysis relative to execution error ($\mu = 114, \pm 12; t(28) = 12.21, p < .001$) and
288 selection error trials ($\mu = 110, \pm 11; t(28) = 13.89, p < .001$). There was no difference in trial counts
289 for the two types of errors ($t(28) = .82, p = .693$). To increase the reliability of our conclusions by
290 addressing potential problems of distribution abnormalities and outliers, averaged waveforms were
291 constructed for each individual by taking the bootstrapped ($n = 100,000$) means from the EEG time
292 series epochs. The waveforms were baseline corrected using a 200 ms time window pre-feedback
293 onset.

294

295 **ERP Quantification**

296 Given that we had specific hypotheses, we focused our analysis on two locations. First,
297 meta-analyses (Sambrook & Goslin, 2015; Walsh & Anderson, 2012) have shown the feedback-
298 locked FRN/RewP effect to be maximal over the frontocentral region of the scalp. As such, we
299 averaged activity across three frontocentral electrodes FC1, FCz, and FC2. Second, given that the
300 P300 (specifically, the P3b sub-component) is commonly present in feedback-locked ERPs and
301 typically maximal over parietal electrodes (Polich, 2007), we averaged over electrodes P1, Pz, and
302 P2. Averaging across electrodes improves the signal-to-noise ratio of the ERP measures (Oken &
303 Chiappa, 1986).

304 To test whether our results might be biased by the specific configurations of electrodes
305 included in the averaged cluster and use of bootstrapped waveforms, we calculated the similarity
306 between four different approaches to calculating the ERPs: (i) grand averaged activity from the raw
307 waveforms in the clustered electrodes, (ii) grand averaged activity from the bootstrapped
308 waveforms in the clustered electrodes, (iii) grand averaged activity from raw waveforms from a

309 single electrode (FCz for frontal analysis and Pz for parietal); and (iv) grand averaged activity from
310 bootstrapped means extracted from a single electrode. An intraclass correlation coefficient
311 indicated a high level of agreement between all four approaches (Frontal ICC = .995, 95% CI
312 0.989- 0.997; Parietal ICC: = .996, 95% CI 0.994- 0.997). Clustered bootstrapped averaged ERP
313 waveforms are reported here.

314 With growing evidence that most of the variation in the FRN/RewP is driven by a reward
315 positivity, we decided to make use of difference waveforms for our analysis to detect differences
316 irrespective of whether they were driven by positive or negative deflections in the ERP (Krigolson,
317 2018). A difference waveform procedure has the added benefit of more easily isolating the
318 FRN/RewP from components that precede (P2) and follow (a large P3 component comprising a
319 frontal P3a and parietal P3b), eliminating activity in common between two conditions (Kappenman
320 & Luck, 2017). The majority of research on the FRN/RewP has typically computed “reward
321 prediction error” (RPE) difference waveforms, derived by subtracting error/loss trials from reward
322 trials (Sambrook & Goslin, 2015). Here, we created a “Selection Error” difference waveform by
323 subtracting the average activity associated with Selection Error trials from the average activity
324 related to all Reward trials, and an “Execution Error” difference waveform by subtracting the
325 average activity associated with Execution Error trials from the average activity associated with
326 Reward trials. Finally, we directly contrasted Execution and Selection Error ERPs by subtracting
327 the Execution Error waveform from the Selection Error waveform to create an “Error Sensitivity”
328 difference waveform. For statistical analysis, the parent waveform outcome trials were subjected to
329 a one-way ANOVA and where main effects emerged, one-sample t tests were conducted to
330 identify where these difference waveforms were significantly different to zero.

331 To reduce the number of false positives (Luck & Gaspelin, 2017), the ERP data were
332 downsampled to 250 Hz and only activity between 150 and 500 ms (spanning the P2, FRN/RewP
333 and P3 ERPs) was analysed. For each analysis, p values were corrected by applying a false
334 discovery rate (FDR) control algorithm (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995; Lage-Castellanos et al.,
335 2010). The Benjamin-Hochberg correction approach was adopted as previous studies have shown
336 it to reliably control the FDR when data are correlated, even when the number of comparisons are
337 relatively small (Hemmelmann et al., 2005). This method is also ideally suited for the exploration of
338 focally distributed effects (Groppe et al., 2011).

339 To aid the interpretation of the difference waveforms, we first visualised the grand averaged
340 ERPs related to each outcome. For every statistically significant contrast, we present the mean
341 amplitude from the cluster for each parent waveform. Differences between relevant conditions at
342 each electrode site are also visualized through topographical maps to support interpretation of
343 underlying components: Predicated on previous research (Walsh & Anderson, 2012), we
344 anticipated that the FRN/RewP should show a frontocentral topography and, following an early
345 frontocentral peak, there would be a subsequent posterior maximum corresponding to the P3b
346 sub-component of the P300 (Holroyd & Krigolson, 2007).

347 Brain-Behavior Relationships

348 A key question in this study is whether electrophysiological signatures of different types of
349 outcomes correlate with the participants' choice behavior (see San Martín, 2012 for a review).
350 Based on a reinforcement learning account of the FRN/RewP (Holroyd and Coles, 2002), we would
351 expect the amplitude of the FRN/RewP to scale with the degree of behavioral adjustment: large
352 differences in the FRN/RewP should be more likely to lead to changes in choice behavior
353 compared to small differences in the FRN/RewP. Here we can ask this question with respect to
354 both selection and execution errors.

355 To examine brain-behavior correlations, we calculated a behavioral adjustment score, or
356 "Switch Bias" rate, for each participant (operationalized as the ratio of the percentage of trials that
357 the participant switched following an error to the percentage of switching following a reward). This
358 served as an intuitive index of how much participants favored one outcome over another. Mean
359 amplitudes from the statistically significant clusters of EEG activity were then correlated with these
360 behavioral adjustment scores.

361 Rather than signaling a need to switch from one target to another, feedback from Execution
362 Errors might be more readily used to modify a motor plan for future action. To quantify the
363 magnitude of cursor error, we calculated the angular deviation of the cursor relative to the center of
364 the selected target. The degree of motor correction was examined on a subset of data where
365 participants selected the same target on consecutive trials and quantified as the degree of angular
366 change in hand position relative to cursor position on the previous outcome. Mean cursor error and
367 motor correction scores were correlated with mean amplitudes from the previously identified
368 statistically significant clusters of EEG activity.

369

370 Statistical Analysis

371 For reporting purposes, time points are rounded to the nearest millisecond, amplitude (in
372 microvolts; μV) to two decimal places and p values to three decimal places. The range for the
373 scalp maps was time-interval specific and determined by the 1st and 99th percentile values across
374 all electrodes. Spearman's rho (r_s) was used to examine correlations between amplitude and
375 behavior. For correlations between behavior and neural activity, peak and mean amplitudes were
376 extracted. Both are reported and the strongest correlations are visualized. Where appropriate,
377 pairs of correlations were directly compared with Hittner, May, and Silver's (2003) modification of
378 Dunn and Clark's (1969) approach, using a back-transformed average Fisher's Z procedure as
379 implemented in the R package Cocor v. 1.1-3 (Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015). The statistical
380 significance threshold was set at $p < .05$. Generalized eta squared (η_G^2) is used as a measure of
381 effect size for repeated measures ANOVAs. This measure was selected over eta squared and
382 partial eta squared because it provides comparability across between- and within-subjects designs
383 (Bakeman, 2005; Olejnik & Algina, 2003); we considered $\eta_G^2 = 0.02$ to be small, $\eta_G^2 = 0.13$ medium
384 and $\eta_G^2 = 0.26$ to be a large effect size. All statistical analyses were performed using R (R Core
385 Team, 2015).

386 Results

387 Behavioral Responses

388 A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in bandit preference ($F [2, 56] = 8.27, p$
389 $< .001, \eta^2_g = .23$), with participants exhibiting bias towards the High Execution/Low Selection Error
390 bandit. Overall, this bandit was chosen on average on 39% (SE = 2%) of the trials, which was
391 significantly greater than the Low Execution/High Selection error bandit (M = 29%; SE = 1%; $t(28)$
392 $= 4.03, p = .001$) and Neutral bandit (M = 32%; SE = 2%; $t(28) = 2.58, p = .046$), with no difference
393 for the latter two ($t(28) = 1.07, p = .877$). Consistent with previous work, when expected value is
394 equal, the data show that participants prefer choices in which unrewarded trials are attributed to
395 errors in movement execution rather than errors in action selection (Parvin et al., 2018; Green et
396 al., 2010; Wu et al., 2009).

397 We then examined the effect of the different outcomes on the subsequent choice, asking
398 how they influenced switching behavior (**Figure 2A**). Participants exhibited high switching rates
399 overall (54%), but the rate differed according to outcome type ($F [2, 56] = 10.23, p < .001, \eta^2_g =$
400 $.11$). Switching was highest following selection errors (M = 66%; SE = 5%) and markedly lower
401 following execution errors (M = 42%, SE = 5%; $t(28) = 5.22, p < .001$). This difference is consistent
402 with the hypothesis that motor errors attenuate value updating, perhaps because participants
403 believe they have more control to correct for execution errors (Parvin et al., 2018).

404 Interestingly, switch rates following rewarded trials fell between the other two outcome
405 types (M = 55%, SE = 6%). There was no difference between switch rates following reward relative
406 to selection errors ($t(28) = 1.85, p = .227$) or execution errors, although the latter approached
407 significance ($t(28) = 2.46, p = .062$, following Bonferroni correction). The fact that many participants
408 (18 of 29) were so prone to switching after a rewarded outcome and even more so (numerically)
409 than after an execution error was unexpected. The high switching rates would suggest a bias
410 towards exploratory behavior in this task- which might have been promoted by the relatively low
411 rewards and/or the highly probabilistic nature of the outcomes (Cohen et al., 2007; Daw et al.,
412 2006). Notably, there were very large individual differences in the treatment of the outcomes:
413 Switch rates ranged from 3% to 98% following rewards, 7%-99% following selection errors and
414 4%-81% following execution errors.

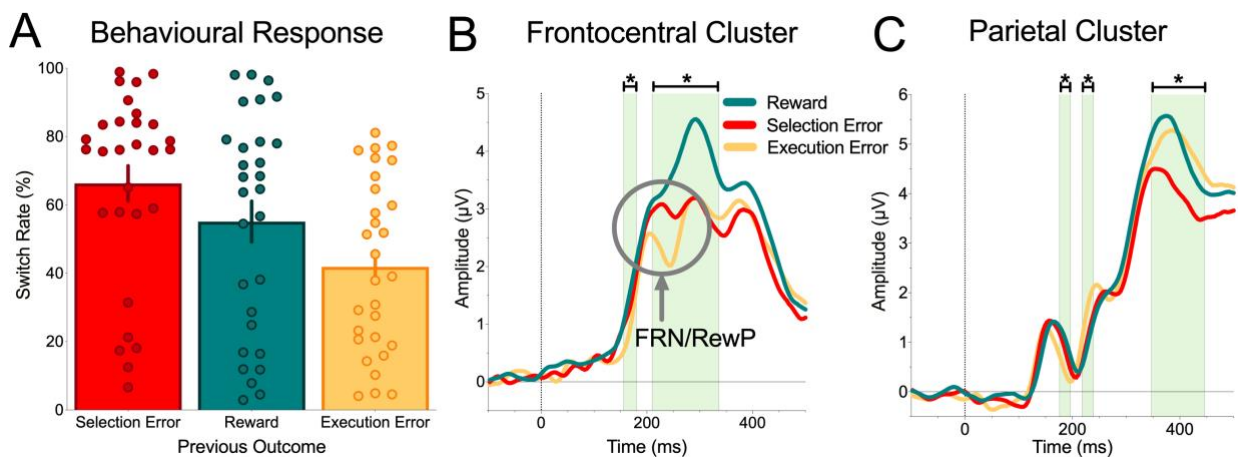
415

416 ERP Responses

417 Our primary aim was to examine whether selection and execution errors could be reliably
418 distinguished in outcome-locked ERPs. To start, we ran an exploratory 3 (Bandit Type: High
419 Execution/Low Selection Error vs. Low Execution/High Selection Error vs. Neutral) X 3 (Outcome:
420 Reward vs. Selection Error vs. Execution Error) ANOVA at each time point for the frontocentral and
421 parietal clusters. The main effect of Bandit Type was not significant (p 's $\geq .702$) and there was no
422 Bandit Type X Outcome interaction (p 's $\geq .671$). Thus, we collapsed across the three bandits in

423 our primary analyses of the three outcomes, allowing us to avoid increasing the family-wise error
424 rate.

425 The grand averaged ERPs related to each outcome are shown in **Figure 2B and 2C**. F
426 tests revealed two significant clusters in the frontocentral region between 156 -180 ms and 210-
427 336 ms, and three clusters in the parietal region (176-196 ms; 218-239 ms; and 355-438 ms).
428 Descriptively, the first cluster in the frontocentral region was driven by a delay in the onset of an
429 initial P200-like signal following an execution error, and the second cluster incorporated
430 FRN/RewP deflections following selection and execution errors, along with subsequent positive
431 deflections, likely reflecting the P3a subcomponent of the P300 signal (Polich, 2007). The early two
432 clusters in the parietal region reflect shifts in the latency and amplitude of the execution error ERP,
433 with the third cluster driven by the attenuation of the P3b subcomponent of the P300 following
434 selection errors.



435

436 **Figure 2- Behavioral Responses and ERP Grand Averages.** (A) Switching rates following the three
437 trial outcomes. Participants were more likely to repeat a choice (indexed by lower switch rates)
438 following execution errors relative to selection error feedback. Error bars represent ± 1 SEM. Feedback-
439 locked ERPs for each outcome type, recorded from (B) frontocentral and (C) parietal electrode clusters.
440 Zero on the abscissa indicates feedback onset. The green shaded regions indicate the significant
441 clusters identified in the mass univariate analysis. Pairwise differences in these clusters are visualized
442 in Figures 3-5 through the comparison of difference waveforms.

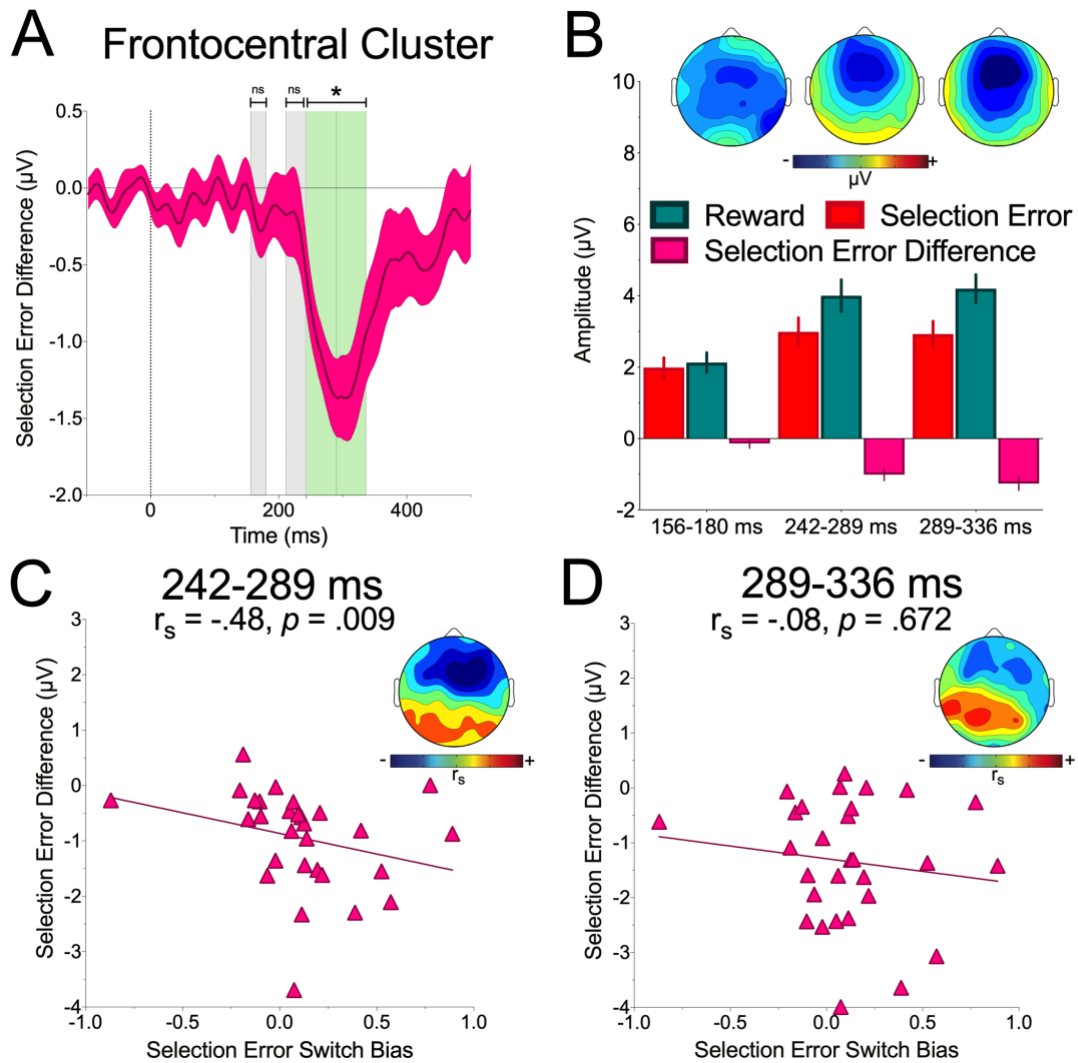
443

444 **Figure 3A** depicts the Selection Error difference waveform, derived by subtracting the
445 Selection Error waveform from Reward ERPs for the frontocentral cluster (shown in **Figure 2B**)
446 and shows a statistically significant cluster of time points between 242-336 ms (one-sample t-tests
447 of the difference wave against zero). An examination of the scalp topography of the first (242-289
448 ms) and second half of this window (289- 336 ms) indicated a clear frontocentral maximum in the
449 early phase, followed by a shift towards centroparietal maximum in the later part of the window
450 (**Figure 3B**).

451 In line with the reinforcement learning account of the FRN/RewP, there was a relationship
452 between neural activity and behavior. Specifically, amplitude (mean: $r_s = -.483$, $p = .009$; peak: $r_s =$
453 -0.36 , $p = .052$; **Figure 3C**) from the early part of the cluster (capturing the FRN/RewP) negatively

454 correlated with behavioral adjustment: The larger the difference waveform (i.e., greater negative
455 deflection for selection errors relative to rewards), the greater the bias for the participant to switch
456 to a different bandit following a selection error outcome relative to a reward outcome. We note that
457 one participant had a switch rate score of -0.87, which was 2.97 standard deviations away from the
458 mean. Re-running the analysis without this participant showed a weaker relationship, but the
459 pattern remained statistically significant (mean: $r_s = -.39$, $p = .042$; peak: $r_s = -.34$, $p = .074$).

460 The topographical map (**Figure 3C** inset) demonstrates that this effect was localized to the
461 frontocentral region. We found no evidence for such a relationship in the later, P3a, part of the time
462 window ($r_s = -.08$, $p = .672$; **Figure 3D**). The mean FRN/RewP and P3a correlations were
463 marginally different from one another ($z = 1.96$, $p = .05$), providing support that the FRN/RewP, but
464 not the P3a, is a reliable correlate of behavior change.



465

466 **Figure 3- Selection Error in the Frontocentral Cluster:** (A) The Selection Error waveform, defined as
 467 the difference in the ERPs on trials resulting in selection errors and rewards. The green shaded regions
 468 indicate significant clusters for this contrast and the grey shaded regions indicate where the clusters
 469 identified in the original time-series analysis did not reach statistical significance for this difference
 470 waveform. Zero on the abscissa indicates feedback onset. (B) Mean amplitudes for the early and late
 471 phases of the statistically significant clusters, with insets showing scalp maps of the distribution of
 472 differences across sites for each time interval. Selection Error difference waveform amplitude (shown
 473 on the ordinate, where negative values indicate more negative amplitude for selection errors relative to
 474 reward) correlated with an increase in the Switch Bias score (shown on the abscissa, where positive
 475 values indicate more switching following selection errors relative to reward) at a time interval
 476 corresponding to the FRN/RewP (C), but not the P3 (D). The insets show scalp maps of the distribution
 477 of amplitude differences across sites, revealing a frontocentral maxima for the FRN/RewP correlation.

478

479 Execution Errors

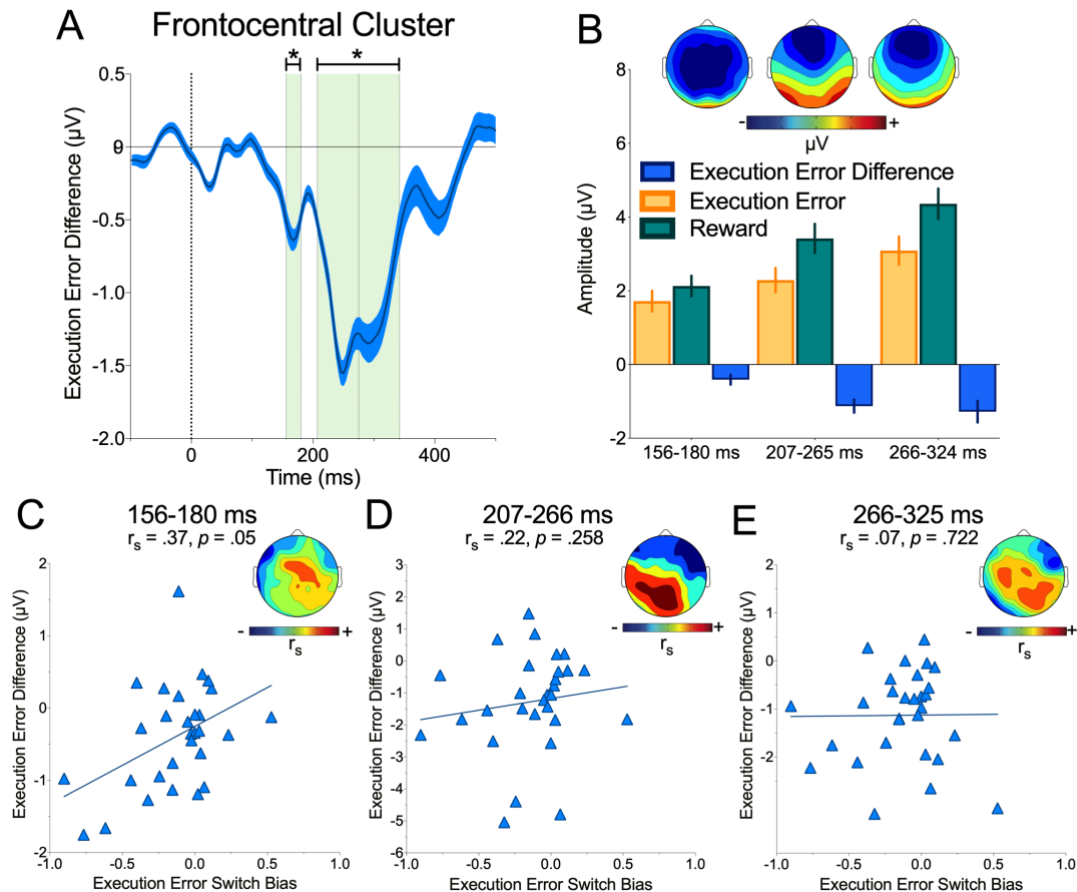
480 To examine the electrophysiological correlates associated with unrewarded outcomes
 481 attributed to motor execution errors, we performed similar analyses, but now focus on the
 482 comparison between execution error trials and reward trials (the Execution Error difference
 483 waveform- the result of subtracting the Execution Error ERP from Reward ERPs in the

484 frontocentral cluster shown in **Figure 2B**). This comparison revealed two statistically significant
485 clusters- one ranging from 156-180 ms and a second between 207-325 ms (**Figure 4A**).

486 The first cluster showed an amplitude reduction in response to Execution Errors relative to
487 reward trials. Similar to the Selection Error waveform result, we expected the second cluster would
488 be contaminated by a P3a signal. Thus, we followed the same protocol, splitting this cluster into
489 two equal intervals – (i) an early phase marked by the time interval 207-266 ms; and (ii) a later
490 phase for activity between 266-325 ms. There was a clear frontocentral distribution for the early
491 phase, and in the later time window, a shift towards centroparietal electrodes (**Figure 4B**).

492 We next examined the relationship between these three epochs (156-180 ms; 207-266 ms;
493 266-325 ms) and behavioral adjustment (**Figure 4C-E**). The peak amplitude difference in the
494 earliest interval (156-180 ms) correlated positively ($r_s = 0.37$, $p = .05$) with switching rates following
495 an execution error relative to reward. Following execution errors, smaller peaks in the 156-180 ms
496 time window were associated with a lower tendency to switch. Note that this pattern is opposite to
497 that observed between the amplitude of the FRN/RewP and behavioral adjustments following
498 selection errors. The mean amplitude measure had a similar pattern of results, but was not
499 significant ($r_s = 0.35$, $p = .065$). An examination of topography revealed this correlation to be
500 maximal in the frontocentral cluster, suggesting that smaller amplitudes in response to execution
501 errors early in the feedback processing stream are associated with a higher tolerance to this
502 outcome.

503 In contrast to the results for Selection Errors, the FRN/RewP captured in the 207-266 ms
504 time window did not correlate with behavioral adjustment ($r_s = .07$, $p = .722$). We tested, and
505 confirmed, that this correlation was reliably different to the correlation observed for Selection Errors
506 in the FRN/RewP time interval ($z = 2.40$, $p = .016$). There was no correlation between the
507 Execution Error waveform in the P3a time window (266-325 ms) and behavioral adjustment ($r_s =$
508 $.22$, $p = .258$).



509

510 **Figure 4- Execution Error in the Frontocentral Cluster:** (A) The Execution Error difference
 511 waveform, defined as the difference amplitude for execution error and reward ERPs. The green shaded
 512 regions indicate clusters showing statistically significant differences. Zero on the abscissa indicates
 513 feedback onset. (B) Mean amplitudes for the early and late phases of the significant clusters. (C) The
 514 Execution Error difference waveform amplitude (shown on the ordinate, where positive values indicate
 515 larger amplitude for execution errors relative to reward) positively correlated with an increase in the
 516 Switch Bias score (shown on the abscissa, where positive values indicate more switching following
 517 execution errors relative to reward) in this early time window, but there were no correlations in the later
 518 time windows (D & E).

519

520 We conducted the same analysis for the Execution Error waveform in the parietal cluster of
 521 electrodes. Execution errors elicited smaller amplitude responses relative to rewards in an early
 522 time window (176-196 ms) but elicited larger amplitude responses at 218-239 ms post feedback. In
 523 the later time window, there was a positive correlation between amplitude and behavior ($r_s = .47, p$
 524 $= .01$) in the posterior region, suggesting a shift from frontocentral to parietal regions in the
 525 processes driving behavioral adjustment (Dhar & Pourtois, 2011; Overbeek et al., 2005).
 526 Interestingly, and unexpectedly, the amplitude of the P3b subcomponent of the P300 signal—
 527 proposed to reflect the revision of internal forward models in posterior parietal cortex (Krigolson &
 528 Holroyd, 2007a) showed no difference in the processing execution errors and rewards (see **Figure**
 529 **2C**) and there was no relationship with behavioral adjustment ($r_s = -0.01, p = .946$).

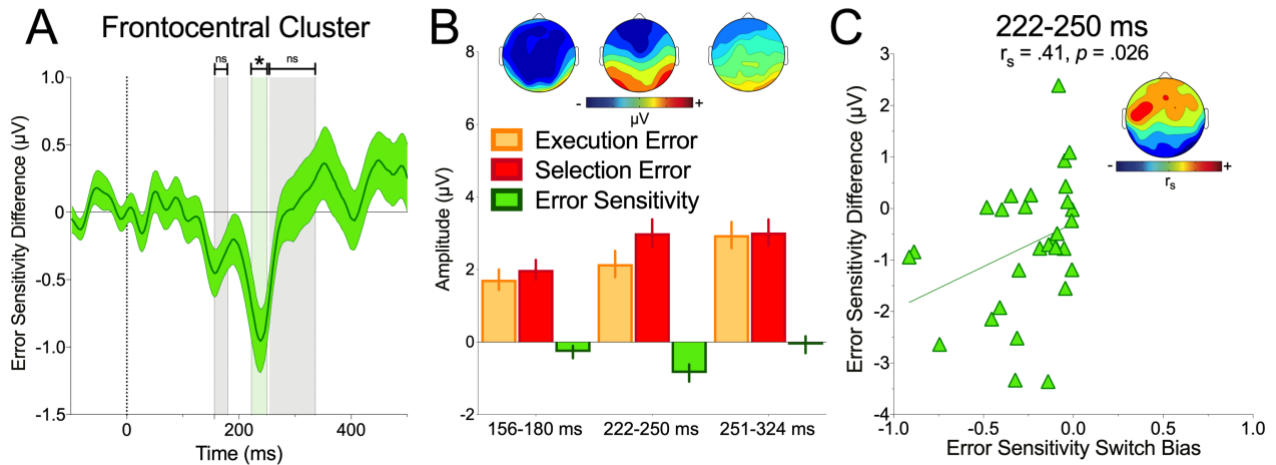
530 Error Sensitivity Difference Waveform

531 As described in the previous two sections, when using a common baseline (rewarded
532 trials), we observed differences in both the ERP results and correlational analysis between
533 unrewarded trials that were attributed to failures in movement execution or action selection. We
534 performed a direct comparison between these two types of unrewarded outcomes by analyzing an
535 Error Sensitivity difference waveform, subtracting the ERP for selection errors from the ERP for
536 execution errors (see **Figure 2B** for the parent waveforms).

537 In the frontocentral cluster there was a significant difference in the range of the FRN/RewP
538 (222-250 ms; **Figure 5 A, B**). We had anticipated that the amplitude of the FRN/RewP would be
539 attenuated following execution errors, assuming a lower response would be reflective of reduced
540 value updating (McDougle et al., 2019). However, the observed effect was in the opposite
541 direction: Execution errors elicited a larger FRN/RewP deflection, relative to selection errors.

542 We also examined whether the magnitude of this difference correlated with the “Switch
543 Bias” rate. For this measure, the proportion of switches following execution errors was subtracted
544 from the number of switches made following selection errors. Note that these values range from 0
545 to -0.91, due to the fact no participants produced more switches following execution errors relative
546 to selection errors. Although the parent waveforms for this correlation are included in the previous
547 analyses, the EEG activity in this analysis is specific to the range 220-250 ms, the window in which
548 the error outcome ERPs differed significantly.

549 There was no relationship between mean amplitude in this window and Switch Bias ($r_s =$
550 $.23$, $p = .23$). However, the peak negative amplitude revealed a positive correlation with Switch
551 Bias ($r_s = .41$, $p = .026$; **Figure 5C**). Participants who had relatively similar switching rates to the
552 two unrewarded outcomes had smaller FRN/RewP differences, while individuals with a large
553 negative bias (i.e., less switching after execution errors) also exhibited larger FRN/RewP
554 amplitudes for motor execution errors relative to selection errors. This correlation was maximal in
555 frontocentral sites (**Figure 5C inset**).



556

557 **Figure 5- Error Processing Differences in the Frontocentral Cluster:** (A) The Error Sensitivity
558 difference waveform, calculated by subtracting ERPs for selection error from execution error ERPs. The
559 green shaded region indicates the single cluster in which there was a significant difference for this
560 contrast and the grey shaded regions indicate where the clusters identified in the original time-series
561 analysis did not reach statistical significance in this comparison. Zero on the abscissa indicates
562 feedback onset. (B) Mean amplitudes for the early and late clusters indicated by shaded regions in
563 panel A. Inset scalp maps show topographical distribution for each cluster. (C) Peak amplitude
564 difference in the FRN/RewP (shown on the ordinate, where negative values indicate a larger negative
565 deflection for execution errors relative to selection error) correlated with a larger Switch Bias score
566 (shown on the abscissa, where larger negative values indicate more switching following selection error
567 relative to execution error). Note that no participants showed higher rates of switching following
568 execution error relative to selection error. This correlation shows that as the similarity in the behavioral
569 response to execution and selection error increased, amplitude differences in the processing of
570 execution and selection error decreased.

571

572 Examining the parietal cluster revealed no differences in the earliest interval (176-196 ms).
573 However, differences emerged in the 218-239 ms and 359-445 ms epochs, with larger positive
574 amplitudes for execution errors relative to selection errors. The mean amplitude across each of
575 these clusters (218-239 ms and 359-445 ms) was not correlated with the behavioral adjustment
576 scores ($r_s \leq .179$, p 's $\geq .352$).

577 Kinematic Analysis

578 To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between brain activity and task
579 performance, we examined correlations between task kinematics and the statistically significant
580 periods identified in the time series analysis in the frontocentral and parietal difference waveforms.
581 We reasoned that, in contrast to Selection Errors, where there was a relationship between
582 FRN/RewP amplitude and choice selection, the Execution Error FRN/RewP may instead be
583 encoding information about cursor position and subsequent movement correction.

584 In the first analysis, we examined whether there was a relationship between cursor error
585 magnitude and ERP activity. As expected from the task manipulation, the kinematic data revealed
586 a significant difference in mean absolute end-point cursor error as a function of Outcome ($F(2, 56)$
587 $= 8209, p < .001, \eta^2_g > .99$). There were no differences ($t(28) = 1.26, p = .655$) between Rewards
588 ($M = 1.37^\circ, SE = 0.01^\circ$) and Selection Errors ($M = 1.4^\circ, SE = 0.01^\circ$), both of which presented the
589 cursor within the boundaries of the target, but Execution Errors ($M = 5.87^\circ, SE = 0.22^\circ$) elicited
590 more error relative Selection Error ($t(28) = 91.68, p < .001$) and Reward ($t(28) = 99.57, p < .001$).
591 Despite this, there were no statistically significant correlations between the mean activity of the
592 statistically significant clusters in the difference waveforms and corresponding differences in cursor
593 error magnitude (Selection Error Difference Waveforms: $r_s \leq 0.176, p's \geq .359$; Execution Error
594 Difference Waveforms: $r_s \leq 0.228, p's \geq 0.233$; Error Difference waveform: $r_s \leq 0.152, p's \geq .429$).

595 In the second analysis, we asked whether ERP amplitude on the current trial would
596 correlate with the degree of change in cursor position on subsequent trials. Here, we restricted
597 analysis to the subset of trials in which participants chose the same target consecutively. The
598 amount of motor correction in response to feedback (computed as the mean absolute change in
599 end-point position relative to the cursor position on the previous trial), varied as a function of
600 Feedback ($F(2, 56) = 75.37, p < .001, \eta^2_g = .66$). As both outcomes indicated a successful
601 movement, we expected, and found, no difference ($t(28) = 0.47, p > .999$) in the subsequent
602 degree of correction for Selection Error ($M = 3.73^\circ, SE = 0.15^\circ$) and Reward ($M = 3.64^\circ, SE =$
603 0.17°) trials. In contrast, Execution Error, signaling a need to change one's motor response to hit
604 the target ($M = 6.53^\circ, SE = 0.22^\circ$) had higher rates of correction relative to both Selection Error
605 ($t(28) = 8.95, p < .001$) and Reward ($t(28) = 8.95, p < .001$) outcomes. Despite these behavioral
606 differences, there were no correlations between mean activity of the statistically significant clusters
607 in the difference waveforms and the magnitude of subsequent corrections (Execution Error: $r_s \leq -$
608 $0.239, p's \geq 0.211$; Selection Error: $r_s \leq -0.328, p's \geq 0.083$; Error Sensitivity: $r_s \leq .152; p's \geq 0.429$).

609 To ensure that we did not miss any potential sensitivity to task kinematics in other time
610 ranges, we undertook an exploratory search of the full time series data by correlating cursor error
611 and motor correction with mean amplitude from 150ms to 500ms.

612 We found no correlations between ERP difference waveforms and Cursor Error in the
613 frontal (p 's $\geq .45$) or parietal sites (p 's $\geq .75$) following correction. We also note, with a degree of
614 caution given the corrected p values were not significant, that there was one statistically significant
615 pattern prior to correction- a positive correlation between the Error Sensitivity difference waveform
616 and Cursor Error ($r_s = .43$, 406 ms). In correlating motor correction rates with ERP amplitude, we
617 found no significant relationships in the frontocentral cluster (p 's $\geq .454$). Here, we noted that the
618 strongest relationship ($r_s = .456$) was a positive one between motor correction and the Error
619 Sensitivity difference waveform at 164 ms – a pattern that was sustained across 156- 174 ms. As
620 participants made larger degrees of correction following Execution Errors relative to Selection
621 Errors, they also exhibited greater amplitude. In the parietal cluster, we found no reliable patterns
622 of activity following (p 's $\geq .97$) or prior to correction (p 's $\geq .1$).

623 **Perturbation Awareness**

624 In a final set of explorations, we examined whether participants were sensitive to the
625 feedback manipulation that had been applied to control the frequency of our three outcomes. In
626 almost half the trials ($M = 47.8\%$, $SE = 0.01\%$) we delivered perturbed instead of veridical
627 feedback (52.2%, $SE = 0.01\%$). We had taken measures to minimize the likelihood of participants
628 becoming aware of these changes (e.g., no online movement feedback was provided, and end-point
629 feedback was presented 1 s after the stylus had passed the bandit) and in a post-experiment
630 survey, participants indicated that they believed execution error outcomes to be the result of poor
631 reaches, suggesting no explicit awareness of the manipulation. Nevertheless, we did find
632 differences in cursor error (**Figure 6A**), as revealed through a 3 (Outcome: Reward vs. Selection
633 Error vs. Execution Error) X 2 (Veracity: Veridical vs. Perturbed) interaction ($F(2, 56) = 27.4$, $p <$
634 $.001$, $\eta^2_g = .25$). In all cases, Veridical cursor error was largest in the Perturbed trials, but the effect
635 was greatest for Reward (Veridical $M = 1.68^\circ$, $SE = 0.02^\circ$, Perturbed $M = 0.98^\circ$, $SE = 0.01^\circ$; $t(28) =$
636 26.83 , $p < .001$) and Selection Error (Veridical $M = 1.72^\circ$, $SE = 0.02^\circ$, Perturbed $M = 0.97^\circ$, $SE =$
637 0.02° ; $t(28) = 30.95$, $p < .001$) outcomes, with differences of 0.7° and 0.75° respectively. For
638 Execution Error, there was a visual difference of 0.27° (Veridical 5.99° , $SE = 0.07^\circ$, Perturbed $M =$
639 5.72° , $SE = 0.04^\circ$; $t(28) = 3.5$, $p = .045$).

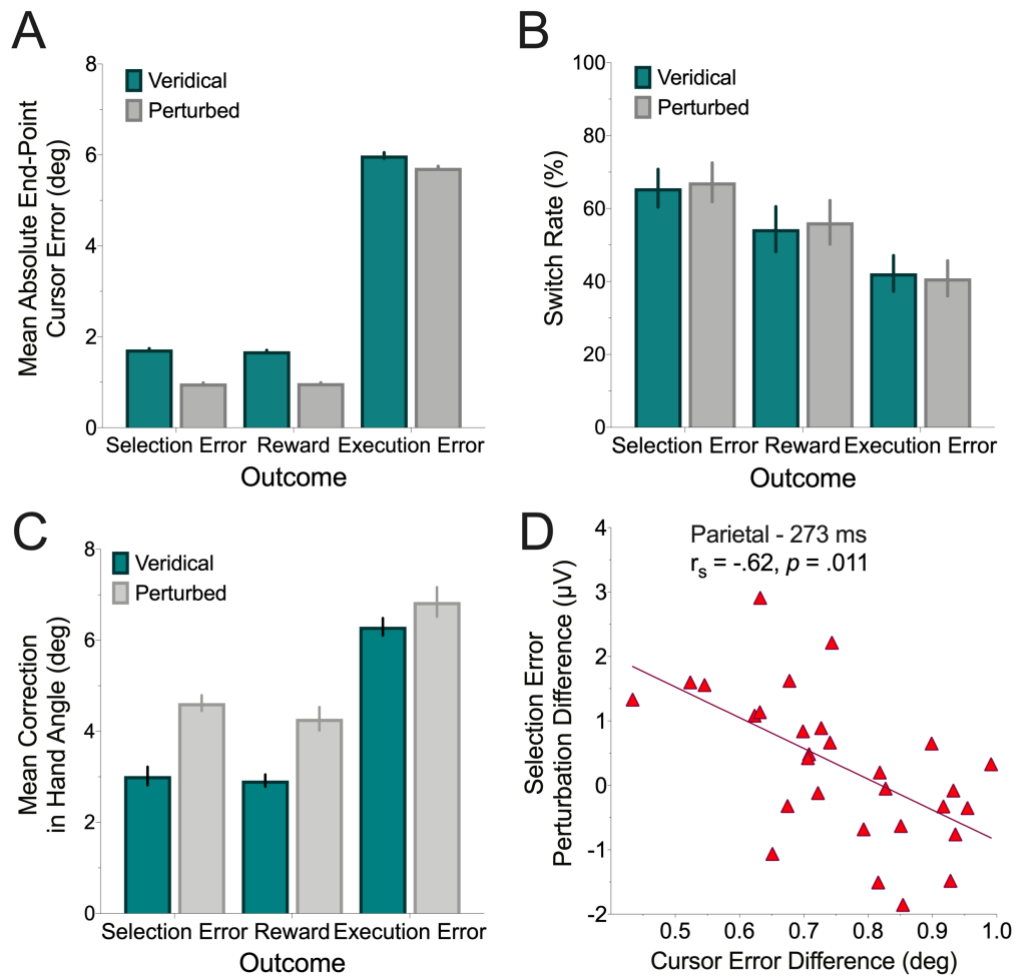
640 Participants did not alter their behavioral strategy in response to feedback perturbations
641 (Veracity: $F(1, 28) = 0.899$, $p = .351$, $\eta^2_g < .01$); Veracity X Outcome: $F(2, 56) = 1.42$, $p = .251$,
642 $\eta^2_g < .01$; **Figure 6B**). However, a suggestion that they might have been implicitly sensitive to
643 these differences is indicated by the degree of motor correction following veridical and perturbed
644 feedback (**Figure 6C**). One participant had no stay trials following perturbed feedback in this
645 subset of data and was excluded from this analysis. In the remaining participants, we observed an
646 Outcome X Veracity interaction ($F(2, 54) = 4.49$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2_g = .04$). There were no differences in
647 the degree of motor correction following Execution Error (Veridical $M = 6.3^\circ$, $SE = 0.19^\circ$, Perturbed
648 $M = 6.84^\circ$, $SE = 0.32^\circ$; $t(27) = 2.07$, $p = .718$), but greater corrections (Reward: Veridical $M = 2.92^\circ$,
649 $SE = 0.13^\circ$, Perturbed $M = 4.28^\circ$, $SE = 0.26^\circ$; $t(27) = 4.56$, $p < .001$; Selection Error: Veridical $M =$
650 3.02° , $SE = 0.20^\circ$, Perturbed $M = 4.62^\circ$, $SE = 0.17^\circ$; $t(27) = 6.30$, $p < .001$) followed false hits trials.
651 These positively surprising outcomes (real reaches had missed the target on these trials, hence
652 the perturbation) may have prompted overcompensation as participants sought to calibrate their
653 movements to task feedback.

654 Given these differences, we explored the extent to which the ERP signal was sensitive to
655 the veracity of the feedback. We re-ran the ERP time-series analysis, performing a 3 (Outcome:
656 Reward vs. Selection Error vs. Execution Error) X 2 (Veracity: Veridical vs. Perturbed) at each time
657 point for the frontocentral and parietal clusters. There were no statistically significant main effects
658 of Veracity (F 's ≤ 6.99 , p 's $\geq .397$) and no Outcome X Veracity interactions (F 's ≤ 2.55 , p 's $\geq .79$) in
659 the frontocentral cluster and similarly, no main effects (F 's ≤ 5.42 , p 's $\geq .853$) or Veracity X
660 Outcome interactions (F 's ≤ 1.83 , p 's $\geq .986$) in the parietal cluster.

661 We then explored whether there were any differences in the relationship between ERP
662 activity and kinematic adjustment as a function of Feedback Veracity. As perturbed feedback
663 elicited larger corrective movements than veridical, we speculated that an ERP signal sensitive to
664 positive surprise may scale in response to this behavior for Selection and Execution error trials. To
665 explore this idea, a difference wave subtracting perturbed ERP amplitude from veridical was
666 computed. The amplitude of this "Perturbation Difference" waveform was correlated with (i) the
667 mean difference in cursor error for veridical and perturbed feedback per outcome; and (ii) the mean
668 difference in degree of correction following veridical relative to perturbed feedback per outcome.

669 In analysing the relationship between the Perturbation Difference waveform and Cursor
670 Error in the frontocentral cluster, we found no correlations that survived correction for multiple
671 comparisons (p 's $\geq .616$). However, in the parietal cluster, the Selection Error waveform strongly
672 correlated with Perturbation Difference amplitude at 273 ms ($r_s = -0.62$, $p = .011$; **Figure 6D**),
673 indicating a sensitivity to discrepancies between actual and presented hand position. Specifically,
674 this correlation shows that for participants with larger veridical errors, perturbed feedback elicited
675 larger positive amplitudes in a manner consistent with the P300 signaling surprise (Donchin, 1981;
676 Nassar et al., 2019). The Error Sensitivity difference waveform showed a similar pattern but did not
677 reach the significance threshold after correction ($r_s = -.47$ at 343 ms). The pattern for Execution
678 Error was reversed, with the strongest correlation observed later ($r_s = .45$ at 492 ms)- with
679 amplitude highest when both cursor error and amplitude were higher in the veridical condition
680 relative to the perturbed condition. However, this too was not significant following correction.

681 Finally, in terms of the relationship between perturbation amplitude differences and the
682 degree of motor correction, there were no significant effects in the frontocentral (p 's $\geq .120$) or
683 parietal clusters (p 's $\geq .82$). With the same note of caution for non-significant correlations offered
684 above, two patterns suggest a further dissociation in the processing of selection and execution
685 error: In the time frame of the FRN/RewP, there was a relationship between frontocentral
686 amplitude of the Perturbation Difference waveform and motor correction ($r_s = -.542$ at 289 ms).
687 Here, greater corrective movements in response to perturbed feedback correlated with larger
688 differences in the FRN/RewP; and (ii) later in the window, the Perturbation Difference waveform for
689 Execution Errors positively correlated ($r_s = .52$ at 335 ms) with the degree of motor correction,
690 indicating that larger cursor error corrections in response to perturbed feedback have
691 correspondingly larger amplitudes for perturbed feedback in the time range of the P3a. Despite the
692 finding that Selection Error, like Reward, resulted in adaptation following perturbed relative to
693 veridical outcomes, no relationship was observed, with the strongest effect at 420 ms ($r_s = -.299$).



694

695 **Figure 6- Feedback Perturbation and Awareness:** (A) Cursor error was larger for veridical
696 feedback relative to perturbed; (B) Despite smaller cursor error, participants made larger
697 corrections in response to perturbed feedback, with the pattern most pronounced for false hits; (C)
698 Perturbed feedback did not impact on the likelihood of switching bandits; (D) Amplitude differences
699 between perturbed and veridical feedback in the Parietal cluster for Selection Errors at 273 ms
700 (shown on the ordinate, where positive values indicate larger amplitude for veridical relative to
701 perturbed outcomes) correlated with magnitude of the difference in cursor error for these outcomes
702 (shown on the abscissa, where positive values indicate larger veridical cursor errors relative to
703 perturbed).

704 **Discussion**

705 Adaptive behavior necessitates distinguishing between outcomes that fail to produce an
706 expected reward due to either the selection of the wrong action plan or poor motor execution.
707 Although the majority of decision-making research, in neuroscience as well as economics, have
708 focused almost exclusively on the former, a few studies have shown that failed outcomes attributed
709 to sensorimotor errors can markedly biases choice behavior (Green et al., 2010; McDougale et al.,
710 2016, 2019). Here, we examined this issue by asking how an ERP signature of reinforcement
711 learning, the Feedback-Related Negativity/Reward Positivity (FRN/RewP), varied in response to
712 selection and motor errors. Predicated on the theory that the FRN/RewP is a scalp-related
713 prediction error (Holroyd & Coles, 2002), we tested the hypothesis that errors attributed to failures
714 in execution should lead to an attenuation in the FRN/RewP.

715 Consistent with our expectations, selection errors elicited a larger FRN/RewP relative to
716 reward outcomes. Moreover, in line with a reinforcement learning account, the amplitude of the
717 FRN/RewP following selection errors was negatively correlated with the probability that participants
718 switched between the response options following feedback. Behaviorally, participants showed
719 lower switch rates following execution errors, a pattern consistent with the hypothesis that the
720 reinforcement learning system discounts these errors (McDougale et al., 2019). However, contrary
721 to the prediction that FRN/RewP amplitude would be attenuated following execution errors, these
722 errors actually produced the largest FRN/RewP. A striking difference between the ERPs in
723 response to selection and execution error was that the amplitude of the FRN/RewP following
724 selection errors was predictive of behavioral biases and learning, whereas this ERP response
725 following execution errors did not correlate with these variables.

726 While almost all participants were more likely to switch after a selection error compared to
727 an execution error, the differential response to these two error outcomes varied considerably
728 across participants. Moreover, this behavioral difference was correlated with the neural response
729 to the two types of feedback: The more similarly participants treated the two outcomes at a
730 behavioral level, the smaller the difference in FRN/RewP amplitude in response to these
731 outcomes.

732 These findings could be reconciled by considering the top-down mechanisms that may
733 modulate how execution errors are processed. Behavioral experiments have shown that a sense of
734 agency related to the perceived ability to correct for motor errors biases choice behavior (Parvin et
735 al., 2018). In the present experiment, the finding that participants persevered with a bandit
736 following execution error but switched more often following selection errors also points towards
737 differences in agency. Previous work on the FRN/RewP has shown that outcomes that can be
738 controlled lead to a more negative FRN/RewP than those that cannot (Sidarus et al., 2017) and the
739 FRN/RewP is attenuated in the absence of actively performed actions (Donkers et al., 2005;
740 Donkers & van Boxtel, 2005). The finding that execution errors produced a larger FRN/RewP
741 relative to selection error is consistent with the presumed greater sense of agency associated with

742 this type of unrewarded outcome.

743 A recent fMRI experiment using a 3-arm bandit task similar to that employed here, revealed
744 an attenuation of the signal associated with negative reward prediction error in the striatum
745 following execution failures (McDougle et al., 2019). Our observation of a larger negative deflection
746 for execution error trials in the FRN/RewP may appear contrary to these previously reported striatal
747 results. However, the fMRI investigation did show increased ACC activity in response to execution
748 errors compared to selection errors, suggesting that the former have their own neural signature.
749 With regards to the EEG response, there have been a number of studies reporting FRN/RewP
750 deflections in response to execution error (Anguera et al., 2009; Krigolson et al., 2008; Torrecillos
751 et al., 2014). These studies, in line with the Prediction-Response Outcome model of medial frontal
752 cortex function (Alexander & Brown, 2011), point to the existence of a general monitoring system
753 that responds to violation of expectations. However, an important aspect of these tasks is that
754 errors in movement execution typically resulted in high level goal errors (e.g., failure to reach or
755 remain on target in a manual tracking task) and/or involved the introductions of perturbations
756 during the movement phase (Krigolson et al., 2008). This makes it difficult to rule out the
757 contribution of cognitive control and response inhibition processes- which are known to generate
758 an N200 component that shares similar spatial and temporal characteristics to the FRN/RewP
759 signal (Holroyd, 2004; Holroyd et al., 2008). A recent study separating reward and sensory
760 prediction errors in a motor adaptation task showed that the FRN/RewP responds to the former,
761 but not the latter (Palidis et al., 2019). The present findings, indicating qualitatively different
762 relationships between the two medial frontal negativities with behavioral modification, add weight to
763 the possibility that execution error processing may be distinct from dopamine-related reinforcement
764 learning processes.

765 We also observed two distinct patterns of activity in time windows preceding and following
766 the FRN/RewP that provide further support for the claim of differential processing of execution and
767 selection error. First, smaller amplitude responses were observed following execution errors
768 relative to rewards in frontocentral sites 156-180 ms post-feedback, and the amplitude of this
769 component correlated with switch rates. Second, in parietal sites (218-239 ms), larger amplitude
770 responses occurred following execution errors relative to reward and this difference was also
771 correlated with switch rates. Importantly, in a reversal of the FRN/RewP pattern, magnitude
772 differences in these early frontal and late parietal signals correlated with behavioral adjustment
773 linked to execution errors. This pattern points towards the existence of distinct error monitoring
774 systems operating at different levels of behavioural control (Yordanova et al., 2004).

775 Exploratory analysis on the relationship between ERP amplitude and task showed that the
776 degree of motor correction following execution errors relative to selection errors correlated with
777 amplitude differences in an early frontal cluster (156-174 ms). The time course of this cluster
778 closely mirrored that of the earliest difference between execution error and reward – where
779 amplitude differences correlated with switch rates. Given that we had no a priori expectations for

780 such a result and that this specific result did not survive correction for multiple comparisons,
781 interpretations must be treated with caution and require further robustly powered replication work
782 to confirm. Should future work replicate this pattern it would add weight to the idea that the need to
783 make a behavioural modification following an error in the motor system precedes the generation of
784 the FRN/RewP.

785 A pertinent question of the present task and data is the extent to which participants were
786 aware of the perturbations applied to the feedback to control outcome frequencies. Participants did
787 not have access to online feedback and end-point cursor information was presented with a 1
788 second delay to minimize the likelihood of participants becoming aware of the perturbations. In a
789 post-experiment survey, participants indicated that they had attributed execution errors to poor
790 motor control. Consistent with this we found that during the task, perturbed feedback did not alter
791 choice strategy, nor did it result in any significant differences in the ERP. However, participants did
792 make larger corrective movements following perturbed feedback- this was despite these outcomes
793 showing smaller cursor errors than veridical feedback. In an exploratory search we also found a
794 correlation between the degree of cursor error in veridical and perturbed outcomes and amplitude
795 differences at 273 ms, likely reflecting the onset of the P300. Here, amplification of the signal
796 following perturbed feedback reduced as the amount of veridical error increased. That the P300
797 shows a sensitivity to discrepancies between actual and presented hand position is consistent with
798 the theory that the signal is generated through the active updating of an internal model of the
799 environment (Donchin & Coles, 1988). The P300 is also notable for being a putative marker of
800 conscious perception (Rutiku et al., 2015). If participants did indeed have access to this information
801 during the task, it may be that these perturbations were not sufficiently large enough to signal a
802 need to change strategy.

803 These findings also raise a broader question of whether the present results might be
804 specific to outcomes that are framed as execution errors, or extend to any endogenous or
805 exogenous event that results in an unrewarded trial in which the outcome does not provide
806 information about the reward probability associated with the selected object (Green et al., 2010).
807 For example, if an unexpected gust of wind blew a tennis lob out-of-bounds, would that be treated
808 as an “execution error”? Or, if after pulling the lever on a slot machine, a power failure caused the
809 game to terminate without a payoff, would this affect how the choice is judged? A future study
810 could test endogenous execution errors (e.g., reaching error) and exogenous errors (e.g., the task
811 screen goes blank randomly before an outcome is delivered) more explicitly than the perturbations
812 applied here. If similar results are found in both settings, elements of the early activity observed in
813 frontocentral sites may indicate the establishment of a sensory “state”, representing that the
814 intended action plan was not properly implemented, irrespective of whether this mismatch was due
815 to endogenous or exogenous factors, even before the prediction error is evaluated. This echoes
816 the sequential ordering in models of temporal difference learning, where first the agent perceives
817 its state, and then computes reward prediction errors relevant to that state (Sutton & Barto, 1998).

818 **Limitations and Future Directions**

819 While we have hypothesized that execution errors impact choice behavior, either by
820 attenuating the operation of reinforcement learning processes or via an enhanced sense of
821 agency, it is also important to consider alternative hypotheses. In the behavioural data we
822 observed a high base rate for switching between bandits. The highly probabilistic nature of the
823 outcomes, coupled with the relatively low reward rate increased made the task of determining the
824 optimal choice difficult (while each bandit different frequencies of execution and selection errors,
825 they all had the same expected value). This may have biased participants towards an exploration
826 strategy to reduce uncertainty by focusing on gathering more information about the reward
827 likelihood of each bandit for later exploitation (Cohen et al., 2007; Daw et al., 2006). Viewed in this
828 way, repetition of target selection following execution error might not be due to increased agency
829 or RL discounting but may instead reflect a failure to acquire information on the reward probability
830 of the chosen target on the previous trial and a drive to reduce uncertainty. Future work could
831 disentangle these explanations by, for instance, assigning lower expected value to high
832 execution/low selection error bandits and/or through the presentation of fictive outcomes for motor
833 errors.

834

835 **Conclusion**

836 We observed a robust FRN/RewP in response to both selection and execution errors, but
837 only the former correlated with behavioral adjustment. In contrast, the amplitude of a positive
838 deflection in the ERP, both prior and after the FRN/RewP, correlated with choice behavior following
839 execution errors. These results indicate a need for a more nuanced interpretation of what the
840 FRN/RewP represents, and how it may be shaped by contextual information. More generally, the
841 results provide insight into how the brain discriminates between different classes of error to
842 determine future action.

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