Speech is a fast, temporally fleeting perceptual signal. In order to keep up with this constant stream of sensory input, listeners must compress the complex acoustic signal into more abstract representations, e.g., phonemes and words [1]. However, listeners may want to maintain uncertainty about such compressed representations, in case they need to update these beliefs at a later time. Consider the sentence “When the ?ent in the fender was well camouflaged, we sold the car.” Depending on the voice onset time (VOT) of the ?-sound, listeners may interpret the word as either tent or dent. Later semantic context (e.g., fender), however, can disambiguate (e.g., towards dent). If listeners maintain uncertainty about linguistic input, their perception of ?ent should be influenced by disambiguating context even when it comes after the critical word. Previous studies have found that listeners are in certain circumstances influenced by later context [2, 3, 4]. However, previous work has left open some important aspects of this maintenance process. (Q1) Are listeners capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? (Q2) Even if listeners are capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? (Q2) Even if listeners are capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? Are listeners capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? (Q2) Even if listeners are capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? Are listeners capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? (Q2) Even if listeners are capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? Are listeners capable of maintaining uncertainty for all linguistic input, or only ambiguous input? 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Figure 1: Expt 1 and 2 (all trials) responses by biasing context. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals after by-subject aggregation.

Figure 2: Expt 1 and 2 (all trials) context effects as estimated by our mixed logit model. Note that the most ambiguous VOT (60ms, see (a)) does not show a larger context effect than less ambiguous points.

Figure 3: Experiment 2: likelihood of responding before disambiguating information by ambiguity of perceptual signal (points further to the right on the x-axis are less perceptually ambiguous). Error bars are 95% confidence intervals.