

Overview

Previous research indicates that native speakers frequently struggle to understand speech from non-native speakers of the same language. Consequently, native speakers are more likely to judge non-native speakers as less credible and perceive their speech as vague due to their accent. This perception could potentially cause native speakers to pay less attention to the conversation, which leads to specific details of the message being overlooked or misunderstood. The current study investigates a potential mechanism underlying this phenomenon.

Keywords: Accent, Speech processing

Background

Previous research has reported that foreign-accented speech is processed in less detail compared to native-accented speech (Lev-Ari, 2015). One potential explanation for this observation is that foreign-accented speech is more difficult to process because of its higher signal variability.

Another potential explanation is that listeners expect non-native speech to be less reliable and accurate (i.e., speakers are less competent), leading them to process it in less detail.

In the current series of experiments, we contrast these potential accounts by manipulating speaker accent (native vs. non-native) and information about the speaker's expertise (expert vs. non-expert).

If listeners process non-native speech in less detail because of their expectations, then we expect this to be modulated by information about the speaker.

Hypotheses

Study 1: Native speaker (expert vs. non-expert)

Prior knowledge of a native speaker's identity (expert vs. non-expert) will affect the processing of information by a native listener.

Study 2: Non-native speaker (expert vs. non-expert)

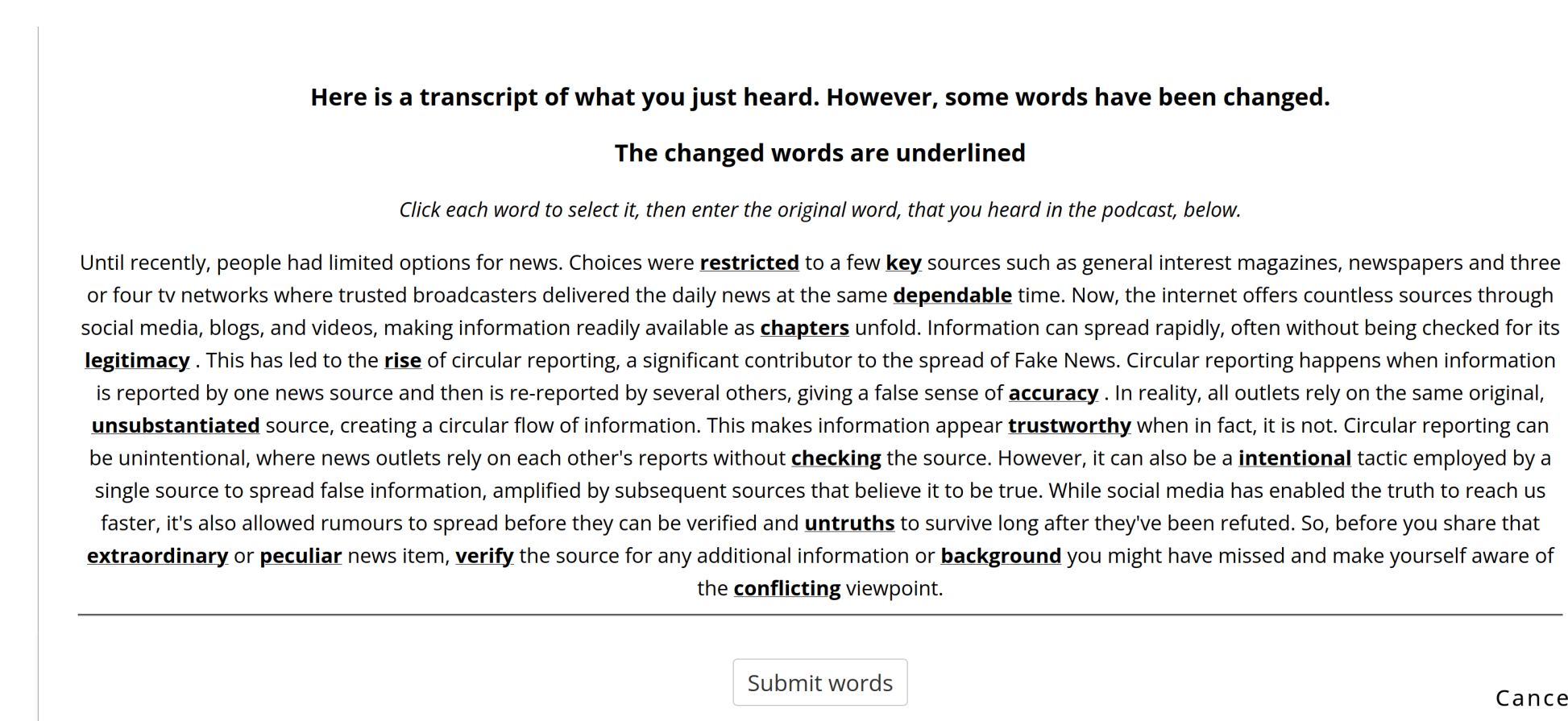
Prior knowledge of a non-native speaker's identity (expert vs. non-expert) will affect the processing of information by a native listener.

Method



Figure 1: Procedure

- Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: Expert or Non-expert
- All participants listened to the same native-accented (Exp1) or Non-native (Exp2) speaker giving an talk about the topic.
- After listening, participants received a transcript with some words replaced by synonyms. They had to recall the original words.



Here is a transcript of what you just heard. However, some words have been changed.

The changed words are underlined

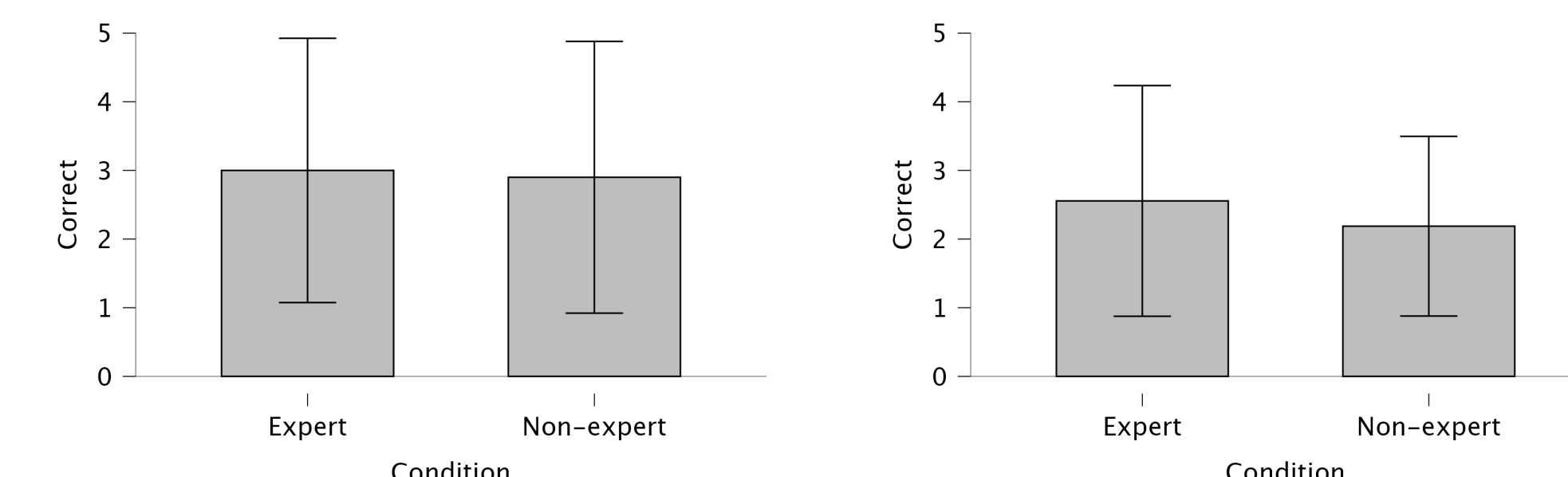
Click each word to select it, then enter the original word, that you heard in the podcast, below.

Until recently, people had limited options for news. Choices were **restricted** to a few **key** sources such as general interest magazines, newspapers and three or four tv networks where trusted broadcasters delivered the daily news at the same **dependable** time. Now, the internet offers countless sources through social media, blogs, and videos, making information readily available as **chapters** unfold. Information can spread rapidly, often without being checked for its **legitimacy**. This has led to the **rise** of circular reporting, a significant contributor to the spread of Fake News. Circular reporting happens when information is reported by one news source and then is re-reported by several others, giving a false sense of **accuracy**. In reality, all outlets rely on the same original, **unsubstantiated** source, creating a circular flow of information. This makes information appear **trustworthy** when in fact, it is not. Circular reporting can be unintentional, where news outlets rely on each other's reports without **checking** the source. However, it can also be a **intentional** tactic employed by a single source to spread false information, amplified by subsequent sources that believe it to be true. While social media has enabled the truth to reach us faster, it's also allowed rumours to spread before they can be verified and **untruths** to survive long after they've been refuted. So, before you share that **extraordinary** or **peculiar** news item, **verify** the source for any additional information or **background** you might have missed and make yourself aware of the **conflicting** viewpoint.

Submit words Cancel

Figure 2: Word replacement memory task

Preliminary results



(a) Native speaker

(b) Non-native speaker

Figure 3: Preliminary data from Exp1 and Exp 2

Discussion

The preliminary results indicate that the expert manipulation does not have an effect in the native-speaker condition.

On the other hand, in the non-native speaker condition, the trend indicates that participants remembered more when the speaker was an expert.

The results support the idea that listeners expect non-native speech to be less reliable and accurate (i.e., speakers are less competent), leading them to process it in less detail.