

The encoding of salient alternatives in L2 discourse

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BACKGROUND

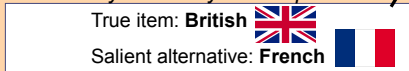
In **L1** English, successful discourse comprehension & memory is supported by representations of **salient alternatives**

- “What did *not* happen” as well as “what happened”
- Supported by **contrastive pitch accents** and **font emphasis**
- “SCOTT didn’t break the eye-tracker” → (*someone else did*)

METHOD OVERVIEW

STUDY: Hear (Expt. 1) or read (Expt. 2) 36 stories with pairs of alternatives

“Both the British and the French biologists were searching Malaysia and Indonesia for the endangered monkeys. Finally, the British spotted one of the monkeys in Malaysia and planted a radio tag on it.”






Manipulate emphasis on critical word: **British** vs. **BRITISH**





TEST: (30 min later)

True/false memory test with 3 kinds of probes:

- TRUE: *The endangered monkey was found by the British.* 
 ALTERNATIVE: *The endangered monkey was found by the French.* 
 OTHER FALSE: *The endangered monkey was found by the Germans.* 

For L1 speakers (Fraundorf et al., 2010, 2013):

- Emphasis **helps reject salient alternative** 
- Emphasis **does NOT help reject other false items** 
- Suggests encoding of particular salient alternatives

PRESENT STUDY

Can **L2 learners** use prominence cues similarly?

- Qualitative differences in L2 processing
- vs.**
- Quantitative differences driven by processing resources

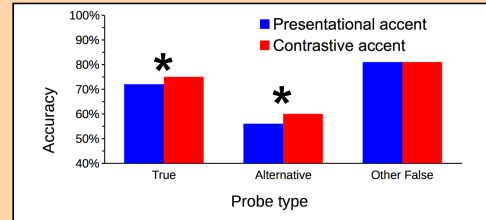
Population: **L1 Korean learners of L2 English**

- Yonsei University students
- Moderate to high L2 English proficiency
- Mean age ≈ 24
- Mean age of first English exposure ≈ 9
- Daily use of English ≈ 13%

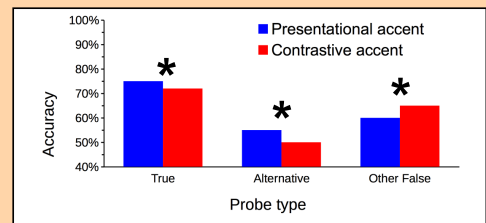


Test both **listening** (Expt 1) and **reading** (Expt 2)

EXPT 1: LISTENING (PITCH ACCENTS)



Native speakers (Fraundorf et al., 2010)

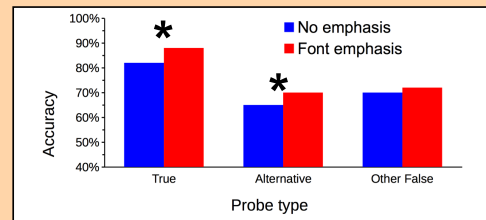


High-proficiency L2 learners (N = 21)

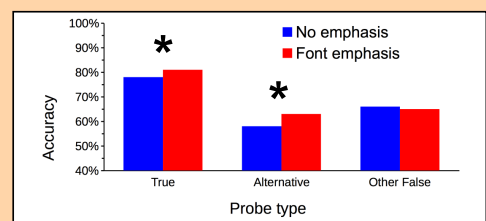
Non-native-like!

- **Do** distinguish contrastive alternatives & from other kinds of false statements
- But, contrastive pitch accents **impair** discriminating between true & alternative
- May evoke the set of alternatives, but **not enough processing resources** to encode which is which

EXPT 2: READING (FONT EMPHASIS)



Native speakers (Fraundorf et al., 2013)



Moderate & high-proficiency L2 learners (N=49)

Native-like!

- Non-native-like discourse memory may reflect **demands of processing** online speech, rather than qualitative difference in representation