

# L2 Learners' Sensitivity to Contrastive Accents in Memory for Discourse

Eun-Kyung Lee<sup>1</sup> and Scott Fraundorf<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Yonsei University, <sup>2</sup>University of Pittsburgh  
 eunkyunglee@yonsei.ac.kr

## Previous Work

- ❑ Contrastive reading of the L+H\* accent  
*Mary like oranges, right?*  
*Mary like APPLES.*
- ❑ L+H\* improves native speakers' memory for discourse, relative to H\*
  - by enhancing a representation of a relevant contrast item (Fraundorf et al., 2010)
    - "Mary did not like oranges"
- ❑ What about L2 listeners?
  - Non-native-like processing of contrastive accents (Akker & Cutler, 2003; Braun & Tagliapietra, 2011)
  - Poor memory for accenting patterns of L2 utterances (Pennington & Ellis, 2000)
  - L1-L2 differences in how contrastive accents are encoded in memory?

## Competing Predictions

- ❑ The contrast representation account
  - L+H\* enhances a contrast representation ("not French").
  - Helps reject contrast probes (French)
- ❑ The granularity account
  - L+H\* enhances a representation of a focused word ("definitely British).
  - Helps reject all incorrect probes (b/c they're not the focused word)
- ❑ The shallow representation account
  - L+H\* evokes a contrast set ("British or French").
  - But, which is the contrastive alternative not fully encoded (lack of memory resources)
  - Helps reject unmentioned probes outside the contrast set, but doesn't distinguish correct vs. contrast

## Current Study

- ❑ Tests whether and how contrastive accents lead L2 learners to differently represent the discourse itself
- ❑ 60 L2 learners
  - L1-Korean, L2-English
- ❑ Used the same task and material as Fraundorf et al. (2010)
- ❑ 36 recorded spoken discourses

Context: Both the British and the French biologists had been searching Malaysia and Indonesia for the endangered monkeys.

Continuation: Finally, the (British<sub>H\*</sub>/BRITISH<sub>L+H\*</sub>) spotted one of the monkeys in (Malaysia<sub>H\*</sub>/MALAYSIA<sub>L+H\*</sub>) and planted a radio tag on it.

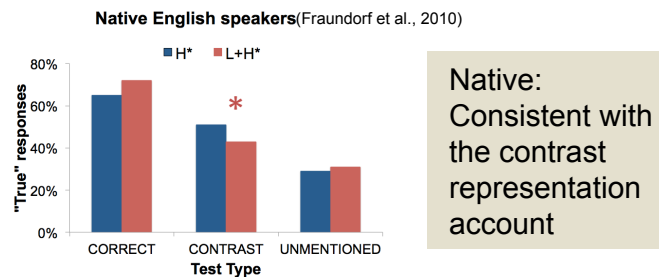
- ❑ Probe recognition task

CORRECT: The British spotted the endangered monkey.  
 CONTRAST: The French ...  
 UNMENTIONED: The Portuguese ...

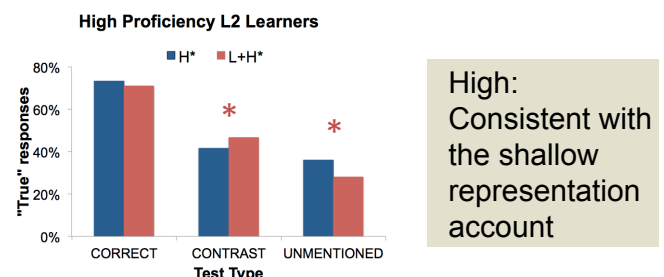
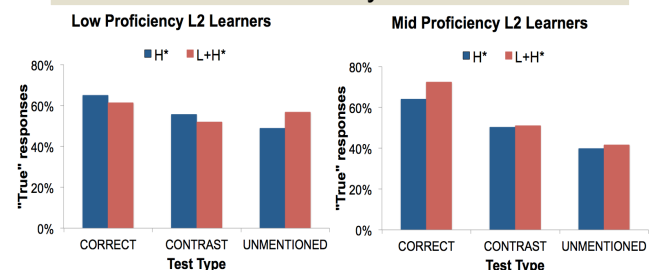
## Discussion

- ❑ L1-L2 differences in the depth of processing of contrastive accent information might underlie previously established non-native performance.

## Results



### Low & Mid: No memory benefit from L+H\*



- ❑ Mnemonic effects of contrastive accents are developmental.