Shared provenance = more trustworthy?
How highlighting a shared geographic identity interacts with accents to determine trust

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Background

o Foreign and non-standard **accents** often evoke **negative social evaluations**, resulting in unfair treatment and discrimination [1].

o Accents can serve listeners as a **cue of group-membership**, signalling a speaker's linguistic or geographic background [2].

o Group-membership influences social interactions by promoting in-group vs. out-group cooperation and support, with the **in-group usually favored over the out-group** [3].

o How does **highlighting alternative group-membership cues** about accented speakers influence listeners' **trust decisions**?

Methods

o *Participant*s. 56 Montrealers (half Anglophone and Francophone).

o *Stimuli.* Recordings of Canadian English, French, Spanish and Southern US English accented speakers obtained from the *speech accent archive** [4].

o *Social Categorization Dimensions.* In the 1st condition, recordings were labelled with the speaker's **native language**. In the 2nd condition, labels specified the speakers' **geographic origin** (from Montreal/not from Montreal).

o *Trust Game.* The number of tokens transferred from first player (participant) to second player (accented speaker) captures trust [5].
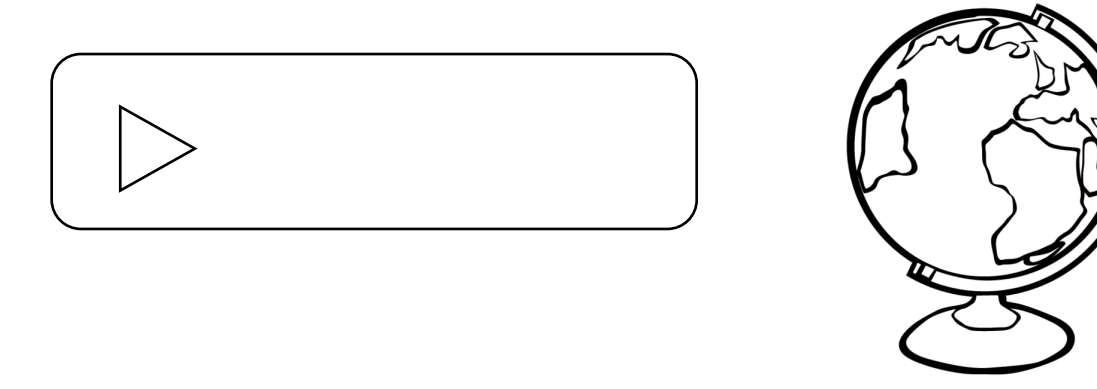
PLAYER 1   ① ×3   PLAYER 2
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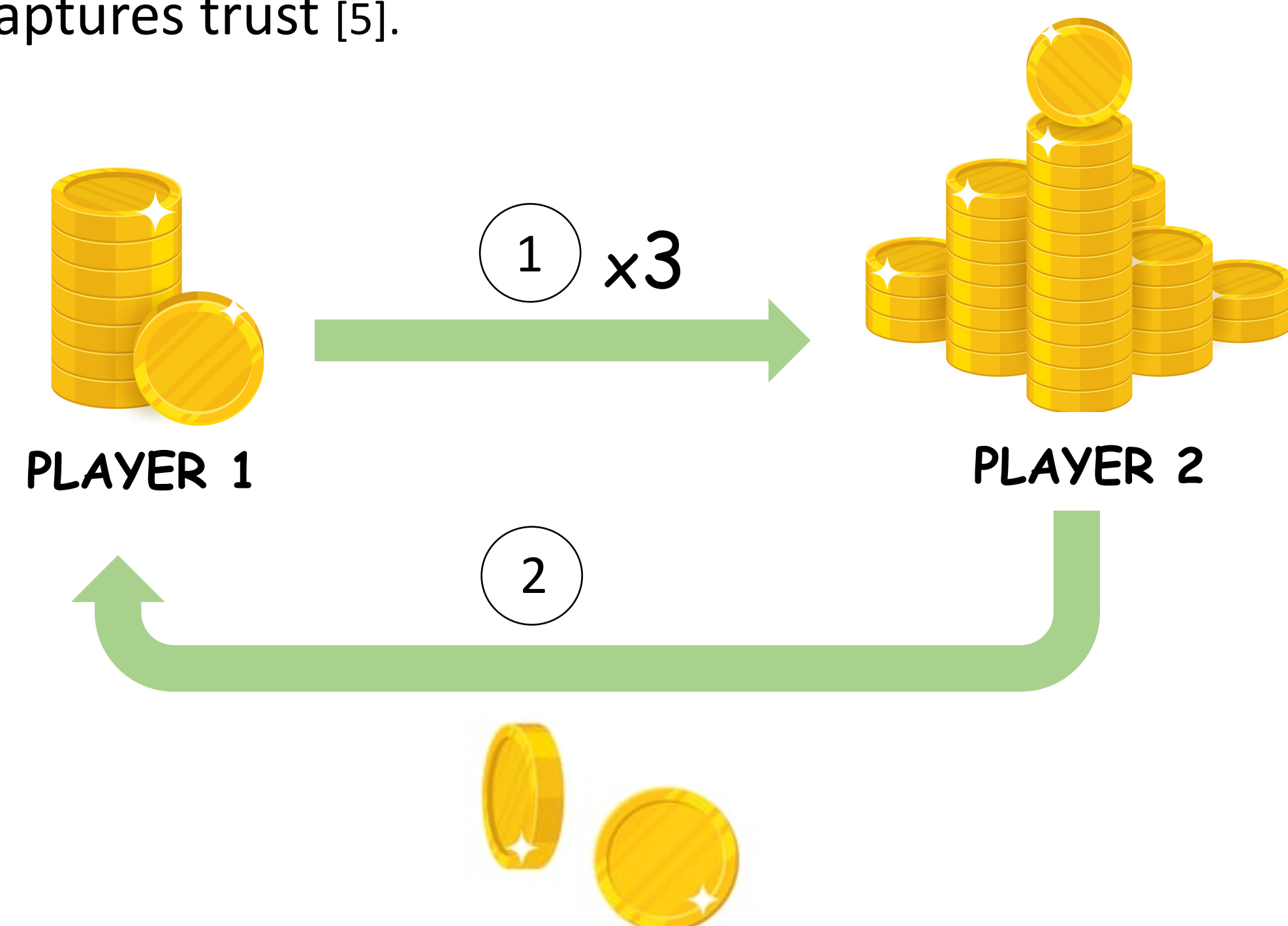
Social Categorization Dimensions

Native language
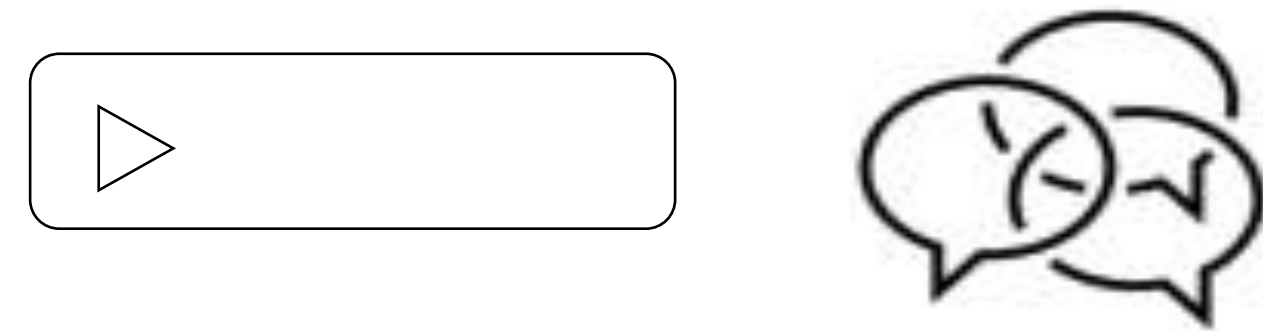
This person's native language is English/French/Spanish.

Geographic origin

This person is from Montreal.
This person is not from Montreal.

Results: Trust (Tokens Given)

o Linear Mixed Models including *Accent*, *Group* (Anglophone/Francophone participants) and *Condition* (native language/geographic origin) were built to analyze their effects on *Trust.*

o Significant interaction between Accent and Label $(F_{(3, 3497)} = 4.02, p < .001)$. The effect of Group was not significant – participants converged in their trust decisions.
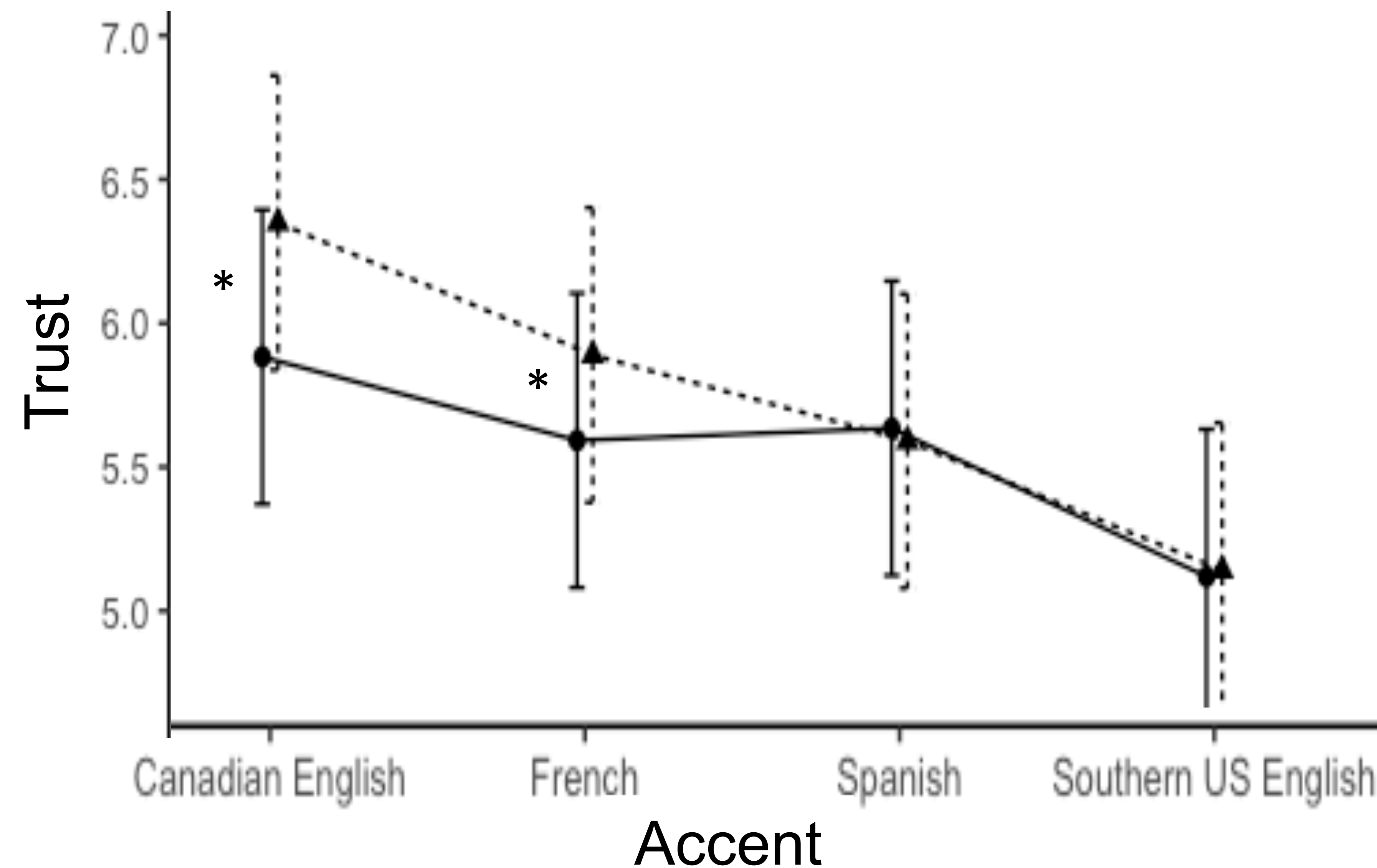
— Native language
---▲ Geographic origin

o CAN English = French = Spanish
o CAN English > South US English

o CAN English > Spanish
o CAN English, French > South US English
o CAN English = French

Discussion

o Native language condition**: factors other than group-membership mediate trust decisions** (e.g. familiarity and negative social evaluations).

  o Francophone participants did not trust French accented speakers more despite the label signalling a shared group-membership.

  o Anglophone participants did not trust Canadian and Southern US English accented speakers equally despite the label signalling a shared group-membership.

o **Significant increase in trust** for the Canadian English and French accents in the geographic origin condition suggests an **effect of group-membership.**

o Geographic origin condition: **in-group accents are trusted more than out-group accents.**

Conclusions & Future Directions

o **Accents influence listeners' trust decisions** – this can have tangible implications for people whose accents are mistrusted.

o **Labels and categories are powerful** – how we refer to certain people can significantly influence others' trust in them.

o Non-native and native speakers behave similarly, indicating that **biases against accented speakers are wide-spread and pervasive** [5].

o Future studies would benefit from including experimental stimuli which vary with respect to their truth content (i.e. lies and disinformation), given that in real-life interactions the speech content plays an important role in modulating trust judgments.

References & Notes

[1] Fuertes, J. N., Gottdiener, W. H., Martin, H., Gilbert, T. C., & Giles, H. (2012). A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers' accents on interpersonal evaluations. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 42*(1), 120-133. [2] Ikeno, A., & Hansen, J. H. L. (2007). The effect of listener accent background on accent perception and comprehension. *EURASIP Journal on Audio, Speech, and Music Processing, 2007,* 1-8. [3] Balliet, D., Wu, J., & De Dreu, C. K. (2014). Ingroup favoritism in cooperation: A meta analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 140*(6), 1556-1581. [4] Weinberger, S. (2015). *Speech Accent Archive.* George Mason University. Retrieved from http://accent.gmu.edu. [5] Berg, J., Dickhaut, J., & McCabe, K. (1995). Trust, reciprocity, and social history. *Games and Economic Behavior, 10*(1), 122-142.

*an online repository providing a standard recording paragraph in English spoken by people with different accents.