

Myths about understanding accented speech

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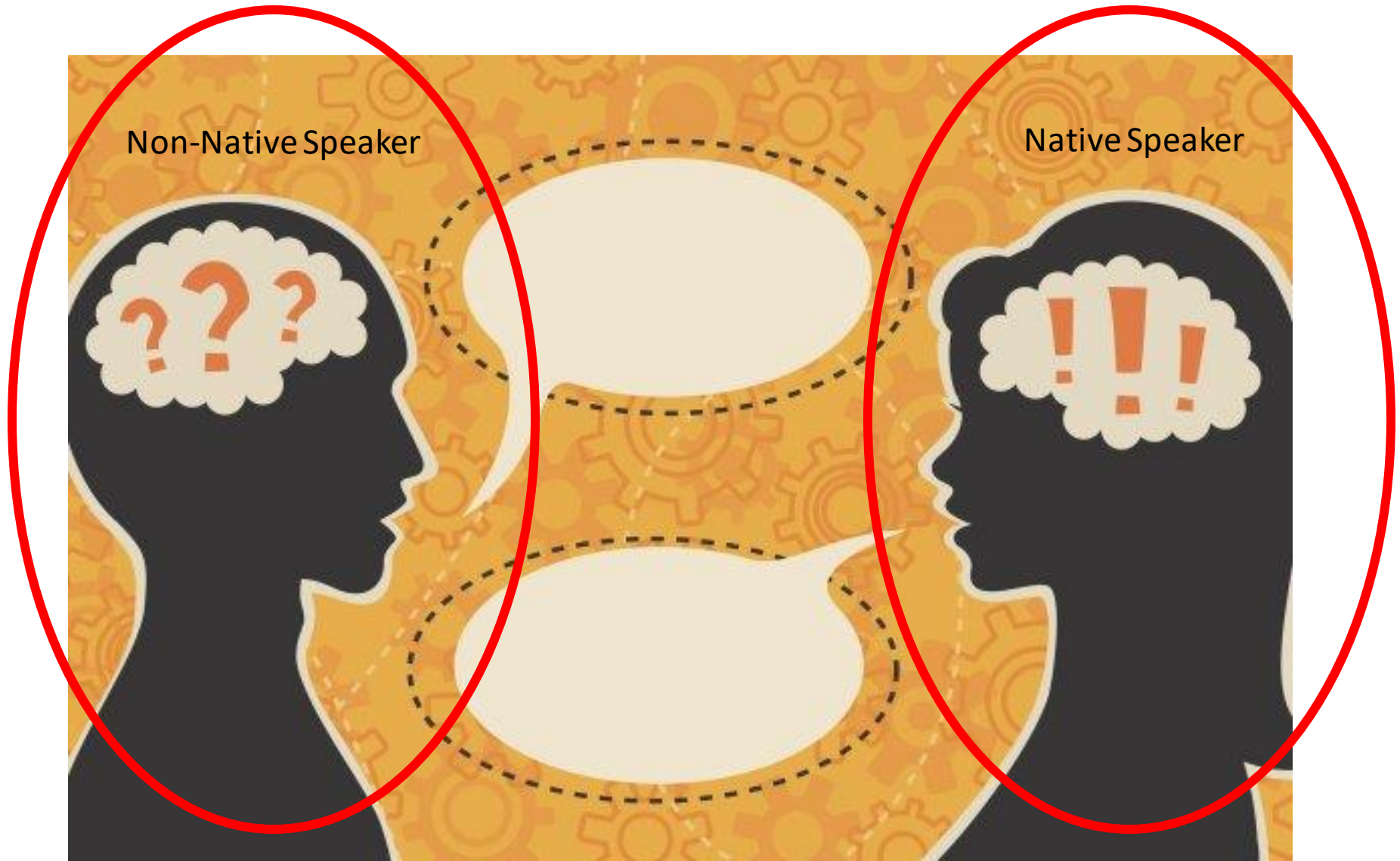
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Funding Sources:



Non-Native Speaker

Native Speaker



Non-native speech

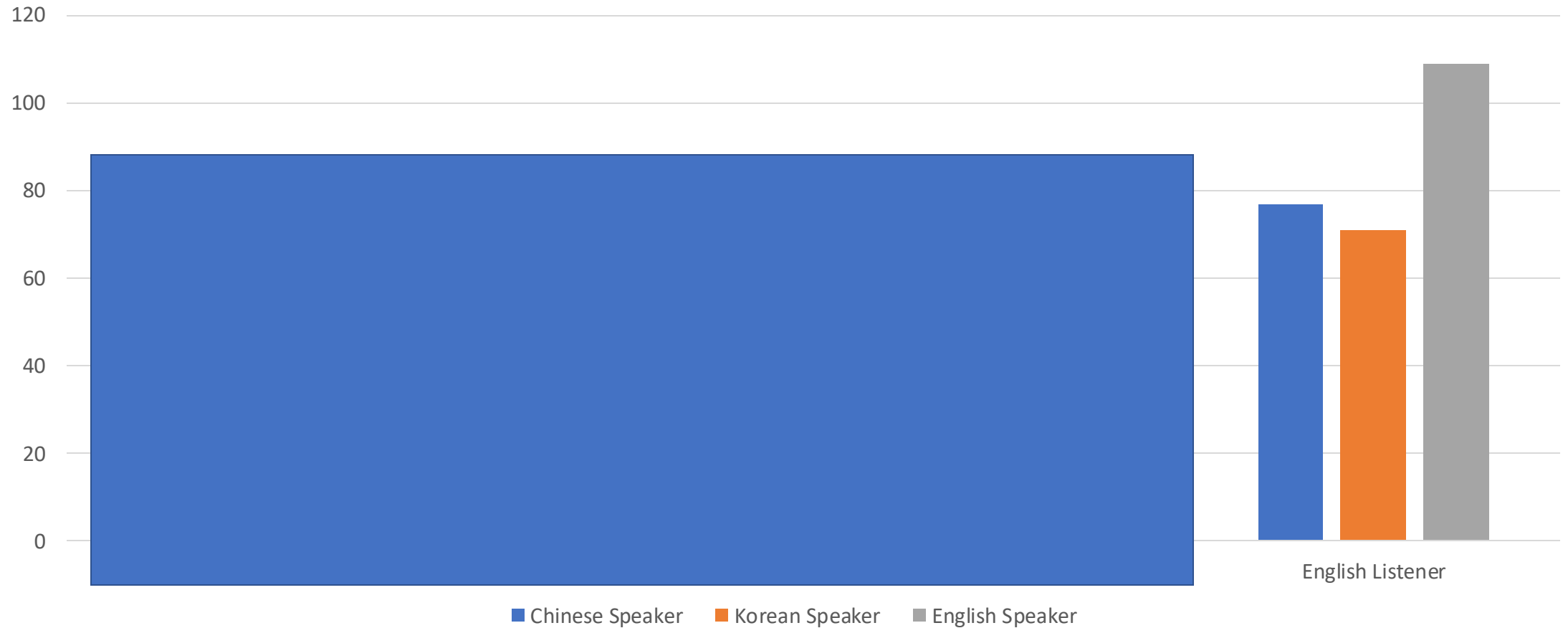
- Differs from native speech in a variety of ways
 - Slower
 - Segmental differences
 - Suprasegmental differences
- Non-native speech is also more difficult for native speakers to understand.
 - Both in terms of “intelligibility” and “comprehensibility”

Myths about understanding accented speech

- Myth 1: Non-native speech is always harder to understand than native speech.
- Myth 2: It's just the unfamiliar speech that makes non-native speech hard to understand
- Myth 3: It is the non-native speaker's responsibility to speak more clearly/understandably.

Myth 1: Non-native speech is always harder to understand than native speech

Interlanguage Intelligibility Benefit



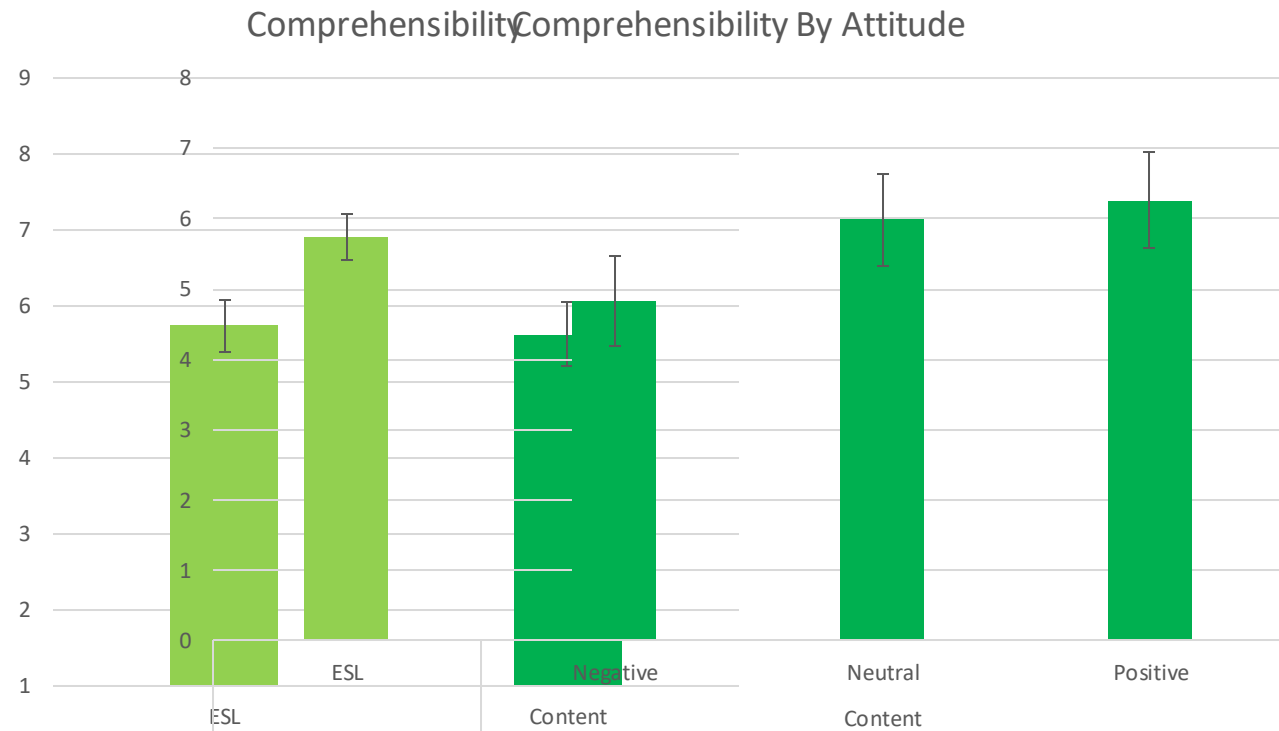
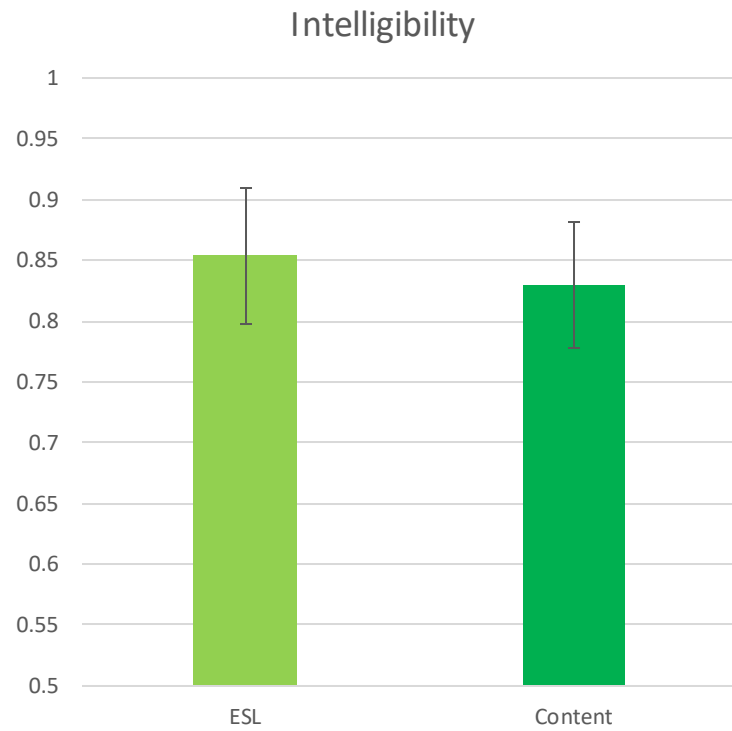
Bent & Bradlow, 2003

Myth 2: It's just the unfamiliar speech that makes non-native speech hard to understand

Myth 2

- Ask whether ESL instructors vs. content faculty understand non-native speech differently
- Focus on intelligibility and comprehensibility
- Comprehensibility = 9 point likert scale
- Intelligibility = transcribe speech
- Also asked about listener's attitude and experience
 - Experience coded for both ESL & content faculty (high vs. low)
 - Attitude coded for content faculty (positive vs. neutral vs. negative)

Myth 2



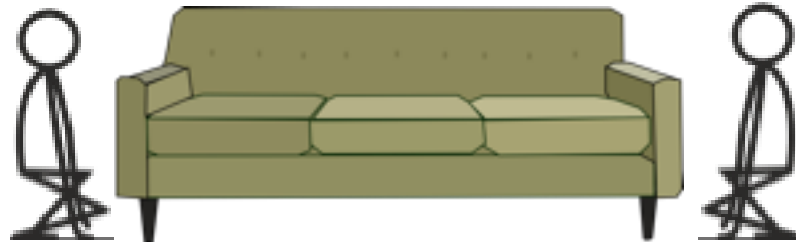
Sheppard, Elliott, & Baese-Berk (2017)

Myth 3: It is the non-native speaker's responsibility to speak more clearly

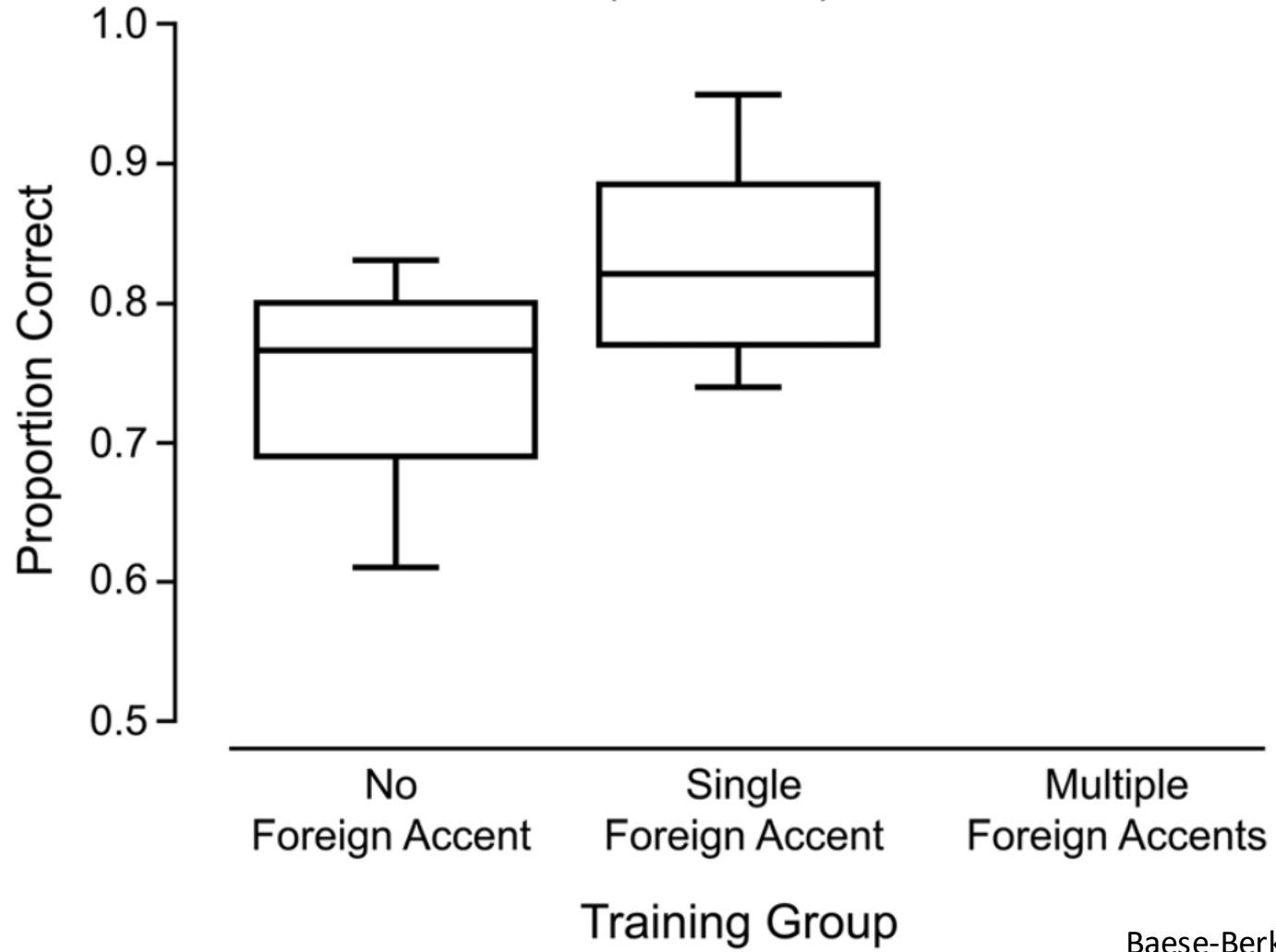
Myth 3: What can listeners do? Lifting the couch

–The speaker and the listener are *mutually responsible* during the communication act for creating successful communication

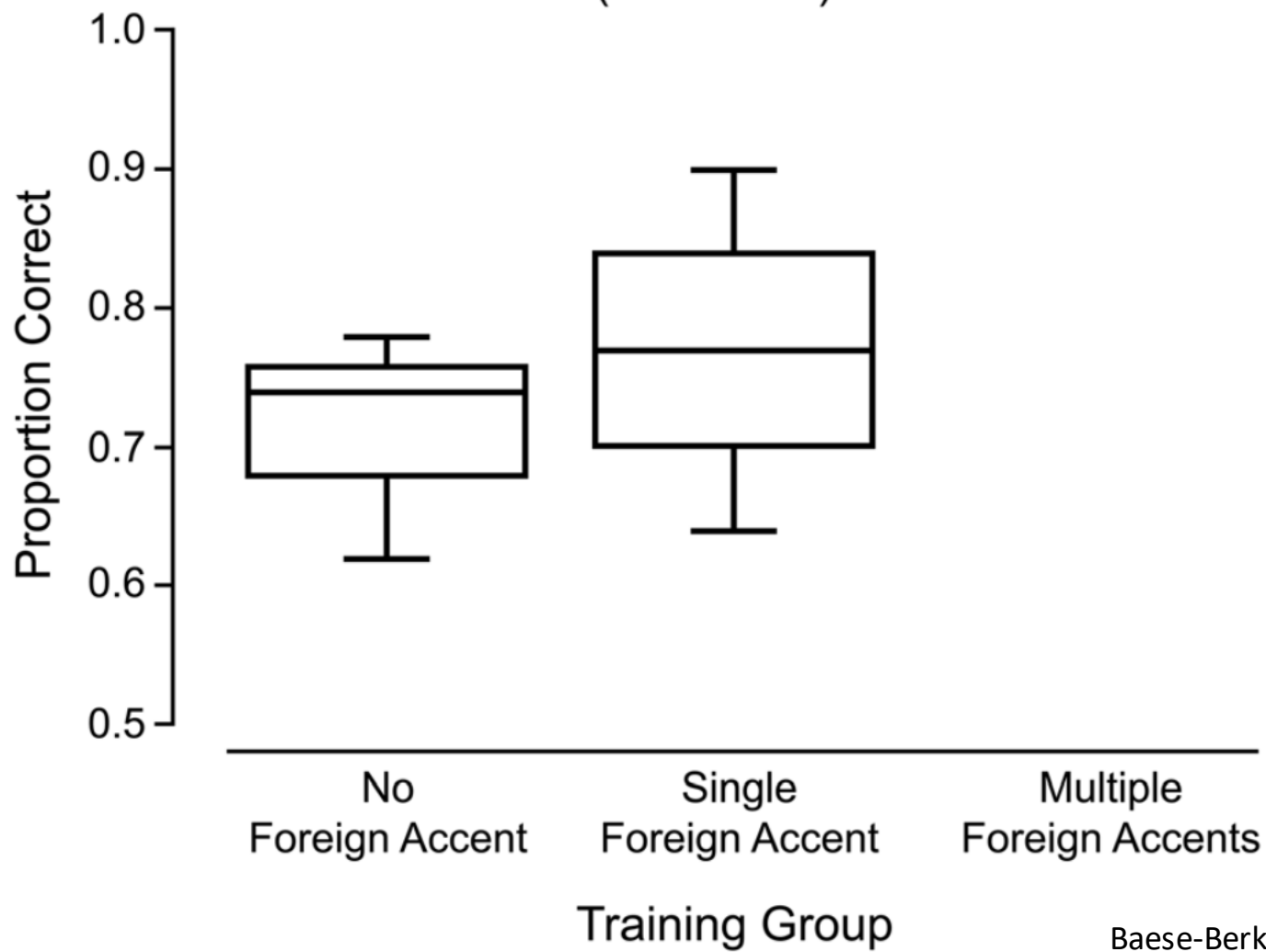
- For successful communication, the *communicative burden* has to be shared



Novel talker with a familiar accent
(Mandarin)



Novel talker with a novel accent
(Slovakian)



Myths about understanding accented speech

- Myth 1: Non-native speech is always harder to understand than native speech.
 - Depends on the listener and the talker!
- Myth 2: It's just the unfamiliar speech that makes non-native speech hard to understand
 - Attitudes can also influence this!! (Maybe also incentives?? Stay tuned!)
- Myth 3: It is the non-native speaker's responsibility to speak more clearly/understandably.
 - Conversation is a two-way street! Help lift the couch!
- Ongoing work is examining how best to help learners adapt!



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