



# The Role of Native Language in Attitudes toward and Perceptions of Non-native and Native American English



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## Introduction

### Alleviating negative attitudes toward foreign accent

- Foreign accents mark “other”<sup>1</sup> in college classrooms<sup>2,3</sup>
- Interventions include accent reduction and accent awareness<sup>4</sup>

### Chinese students in the U.S.

- 30% of international students nationwide in 2015-16<sup>5</sup>
- 60% of international students and 6% of student body at Pitt in Fall 2016<sup>6</sup>

### Developing an intervention in Chinese-accented English

- Target language-specific speech traits
- Include both native and non-native speakers

### Questions for an intervention in Chinese-accented English

- How does a speaker’s accent and intelligibility affect their approachability and identity to Chinese and English NS?
- How do Chinese and English NS perceive specific linguistic traits of Chinese-accented English?

### Linguistic traits

- Segmentals mark Chinese accent to English NS<sup>7</sup>
- Non-native speakers rate phonological accuracy differently than native speakers<sup>8</sup>
- Segmental features*: [i] versus [ɪ], [p] versus [b]<sup>9</sup>
- Influence of lexical tone on English stress processing<sup>10,11</sup>
- Suprasegmental features*: compounds, deaccentuation<sup>10</sup>

## Methods Overview

	Speech Samples	Test Materials
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Semi-spontaneous</li><li>Stories</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Qualtrics survey</li><li>Remote</li></ul>
Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scripted</li><li>Sentences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Qualtrics survey</li><li>In-person</li></ul>
Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(None)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In-person interview</li></ul>

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## Methods

### Speech sample selection

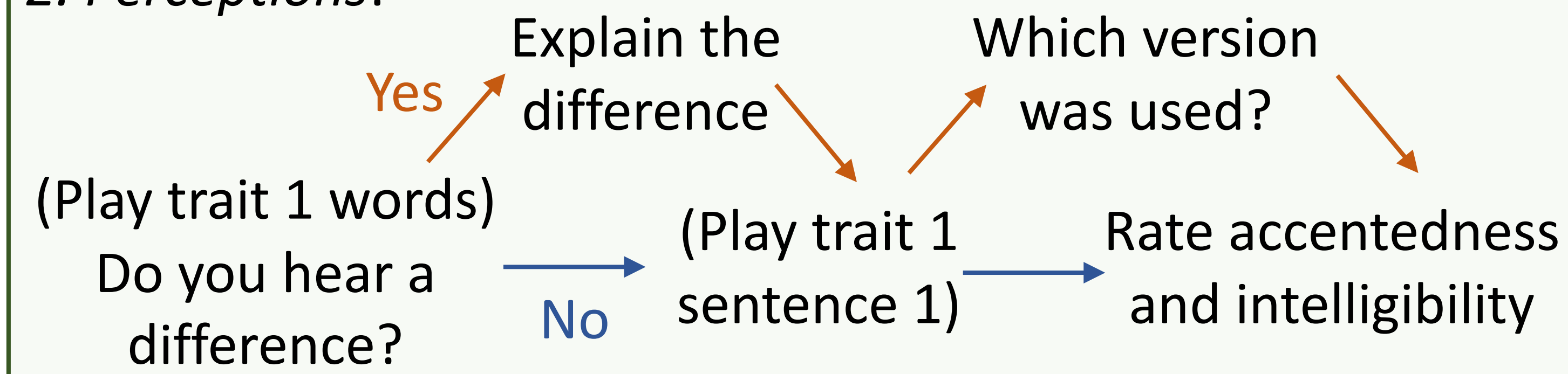
12 speaker groups (2 L1 x 2 genders x 3 accentedness levels)

Attitudes	Perceptions
2 speakers per group	4 speakers total (L1 x gender)
12 speakers representing 7 groups	L1 Chinese: high accentedness L1 English: low accentedness

### Procedure

1. *Attitudes*: Sample 1 → Ratings for Sample 1

2. *Perceptions*:



3. *Experiences interview*

### Response scoring

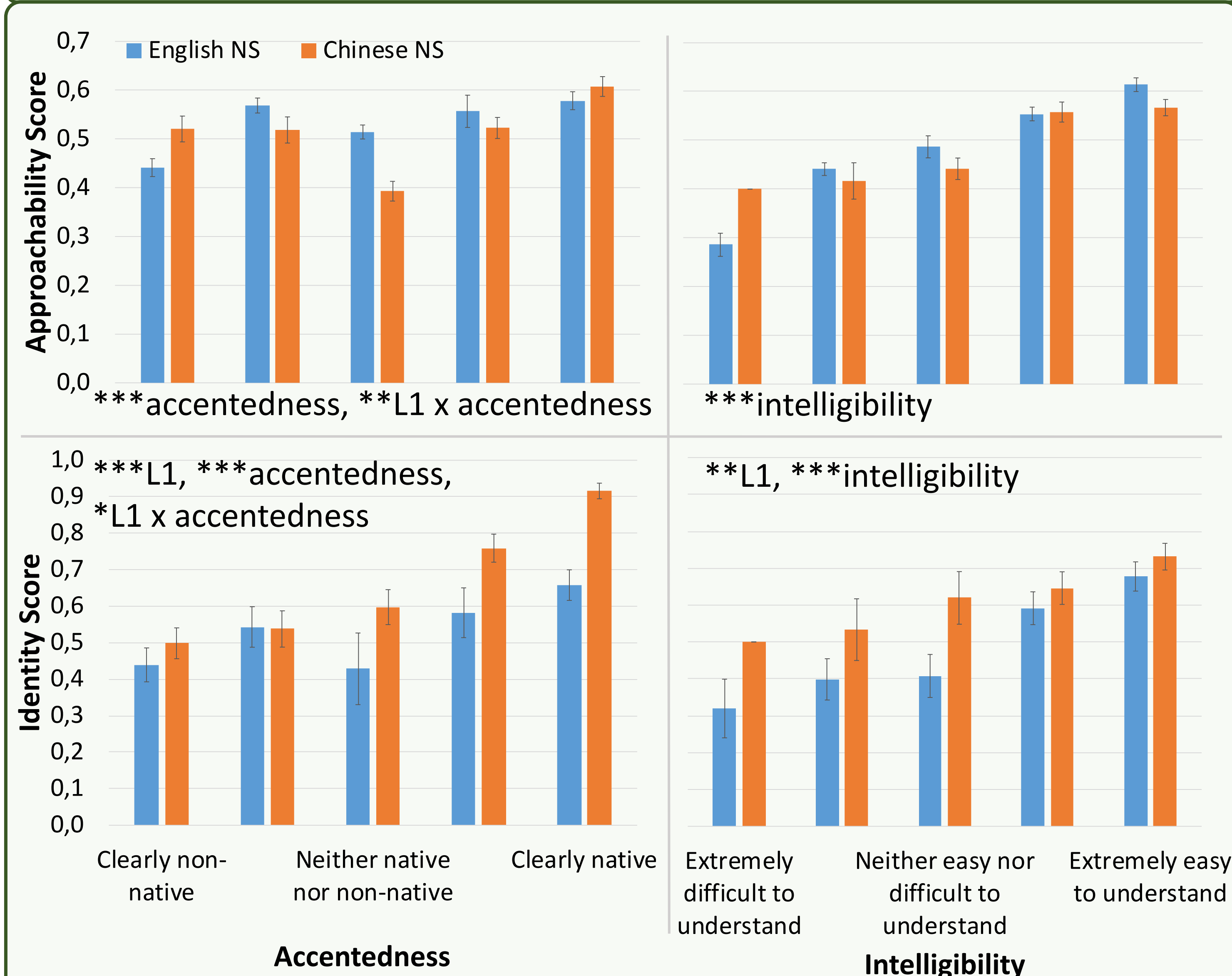
#### Attitudes

- Approachability: 0.2 (low) – 1.0 (high)
- Identity: 0.2 (Chinese) – 1.0 (American)

#### Perceptions

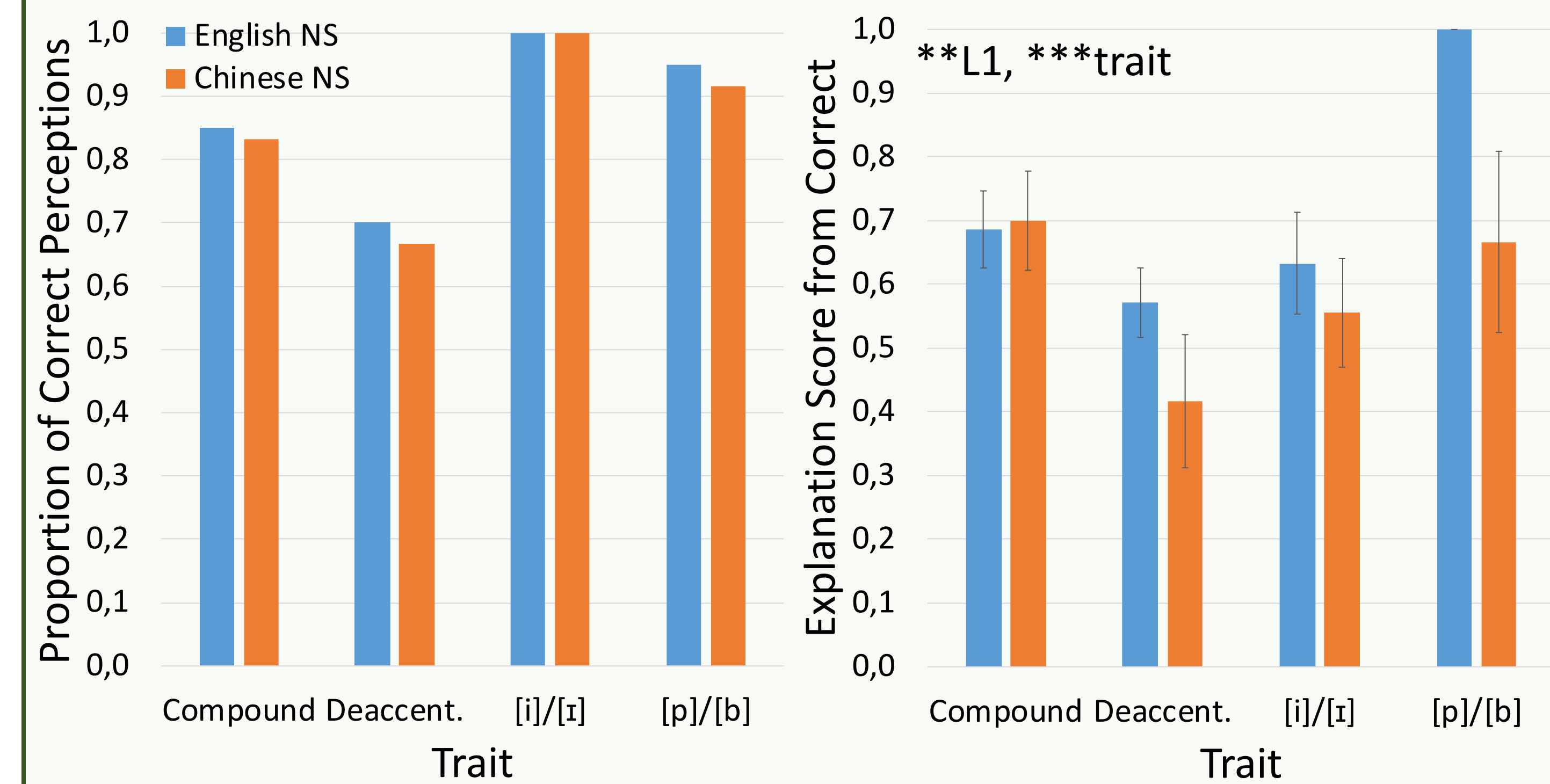
- Trait explanations: 0 (incorrect) – 3 (completely correct)

## Results: Attitudes

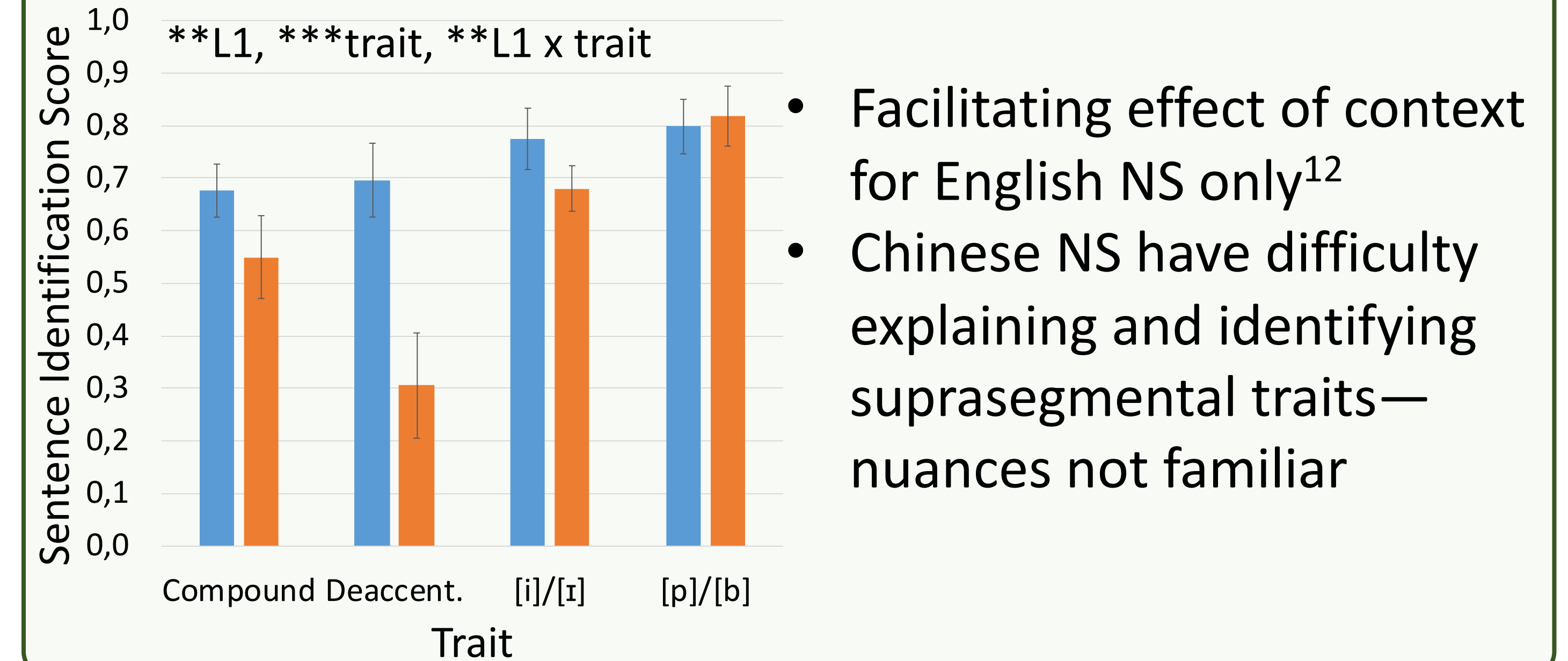


## Results: Perceptions

### Isolated words



### Sentences



- Facilitating effect of context for English NS only<sup>12</sup>
- Chinese NS have difficulty explaining and identifying suprasegmental traits—nuances not familiar

## Discussion

### Implications for future interventions

Result	Intervention
Increase approachability by increasing intelligibility	Increase intelligibility in both L1 groups
Retain markers of Chinese accent to retain identity	Leave traits that are not barriers to intelligibility
Chinese NS perceive segmentals better	Focus on segmentals for efficiency

### Future directions

- Linguistic traits of intelligibility
- Teach English as a lingua franca<sup>13</sup>
- Train English NS for familiarity with Chinese accent<sup>14</sup>
- Include more American English dialects
- Interventions for many language pairs and communities

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