

Raising Awareness of Linguistic Gender Stereotyping among Teacher Trainees and others: Results from the pilot trials of RAVE.

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The problem addressed in the RAVE project

- Most students know what is politically correct but have little awareness of their own preconceptions and prejudice
 - “I will have no stereotypical assumptions about my future students”
- The theoretical knowledge from courses remains just that – factual knowledge (if remembered after the examination ...)



What we want to achieve

Raising students' awareness of **their own** linguistic stereotyping, biases and prejudice – from experiences.

In doing so, we hope to stimulate their factual knowledge to develop into metacognitive knowledge.



The teaching background

Social stereotypes and language

- Stereotyping is a **reductive** cognitive phenomenon in the categorization of groups of people. A **quick** and **efficient** shorthand, but ignores individuality and variation.
- As a signal of identity and a tool for conceptualization – language is at the heart of social stereotyping.
- Folklinguistic beliefs about women's language: talkative, gossipy, trivial.
- Also, Lakoff (1975) : women's language as **weak** and **uncertain**
 - Use of tag questions (*isn't it?*), questions, hedges (*kind of, like*), empty adjectives (*lovely, pretty, charming*), the intensifier *so*.



The teaching background (cont'd)

Gender as performance

- Hegemonic masculinity and femininity (Connell, 1987,1995; Schippers, 2007)

can be challenged by

- Competing femininities and masculinities
- One arena for these challenges is conversations:
 - Topic choices
 - Use of conversation features



The teaching background (cont'd)

Conversational styles

COLLABORATIVE

Overlaps

Hedges

Backchannels

Tag questions/ Q to invite

Rapport

Private

Intimacy

COMPETITIVE

Interruptions

Assertive

Floor dominance

Q to inform

Report

Public

Independence

The preferred use of style correlates with gender (for example, Coates (2004)).

Tools and method

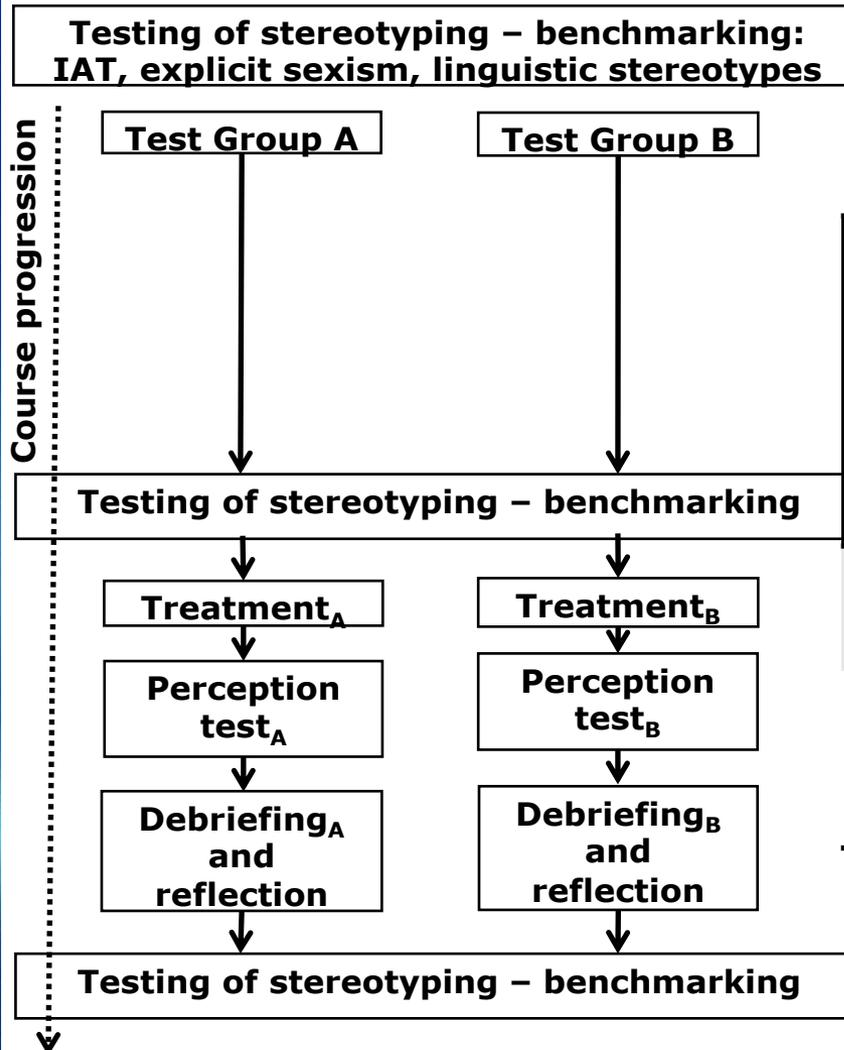
- **New digital media** is well suited for different types of so-called *match-guise experiments*.
- Prototype test in Second Life – a virtual world:

<http://www.umu.se/3c>





Procedure in RAVE



Discussant	Collaborative style	Competitive style
Perceived gender, Gr A	MALE	FEMALE
Perceived gender, Gr B	FEMALE	MALE



The problem of measuring attitude change:

Some different methods

IAT – implicit-association test.

Test from Project Implicit testing implicit associations

Explicit sexism – combination of Ekehammar et al. (2000) and Glick and Fiske (1996)

Linguistic stereotypes – our own test based on folk linguistic beliefs and research



Pilot manipulation: **Telephone discussion between two** **“researchers”: Robin Simpson and Terry Walker**

Robin and Terry on Gender



Robin Simpson
(collaborative)

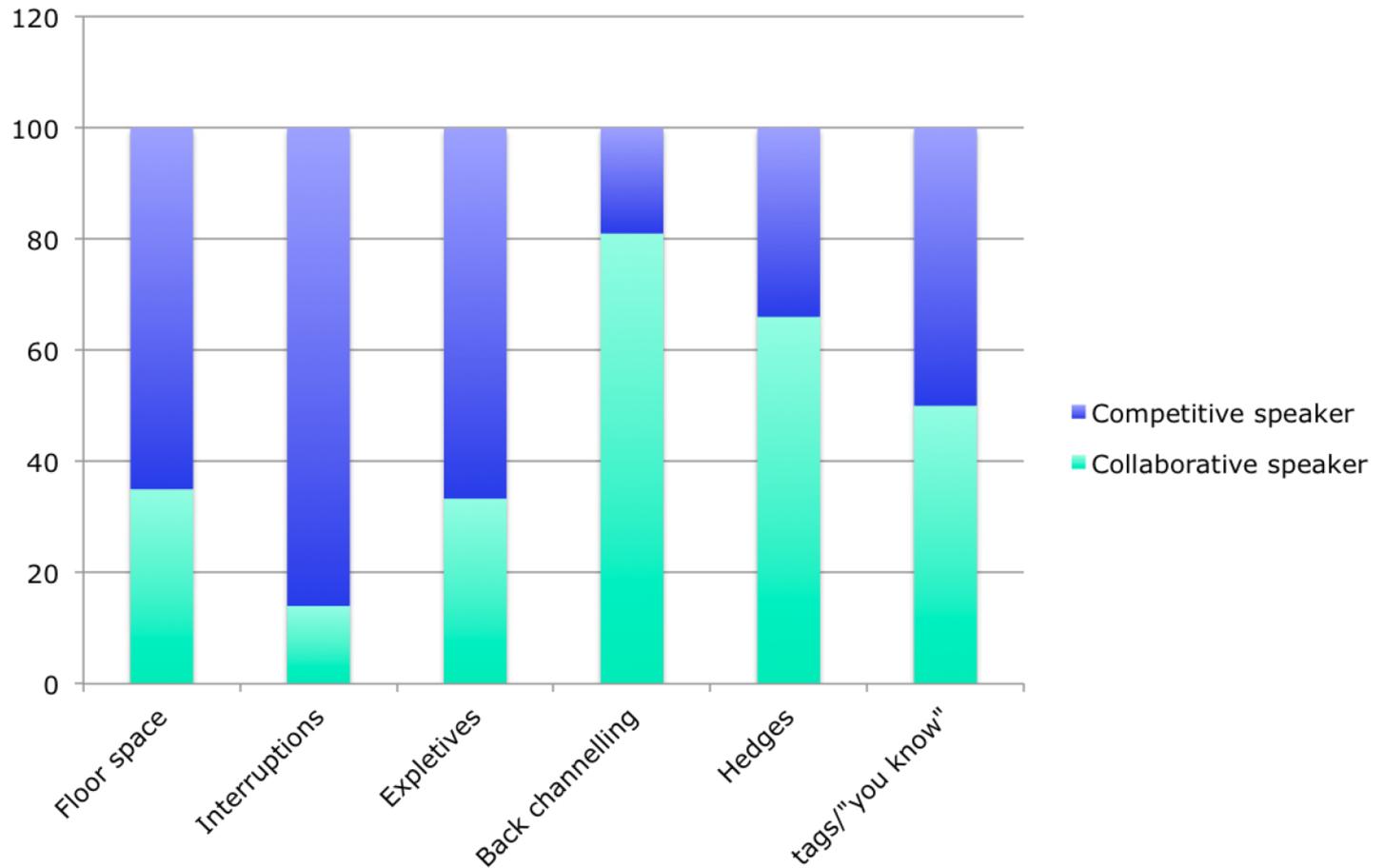


Terry Walker
(competitive)

Norm conforming text: Robin = female; Terry = Male
Norm breaking text: Robin = male; Terry = female

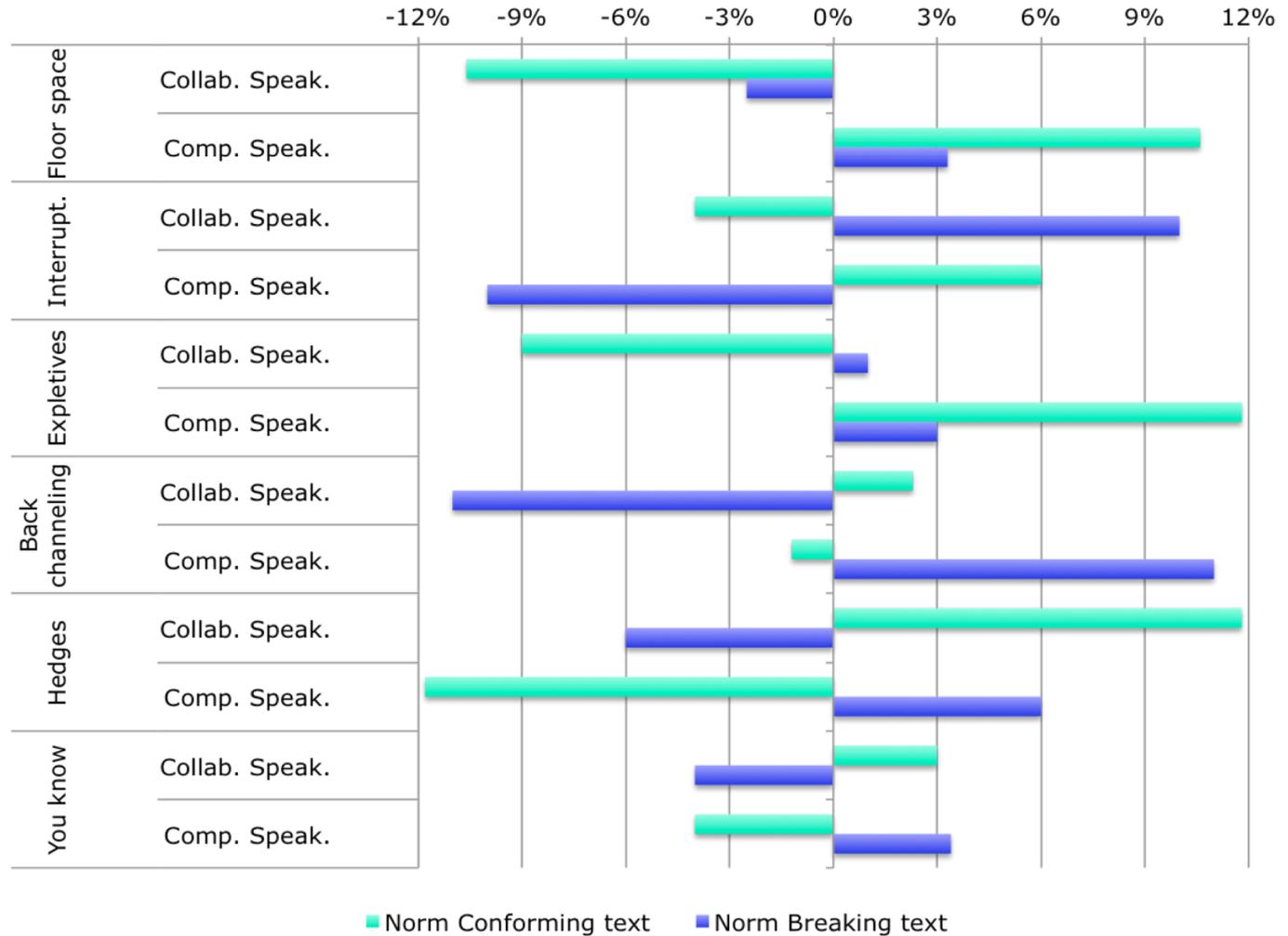


Real data round 1





Run 1, 2015: % Diversion of student estimates of linguistic features from real data.



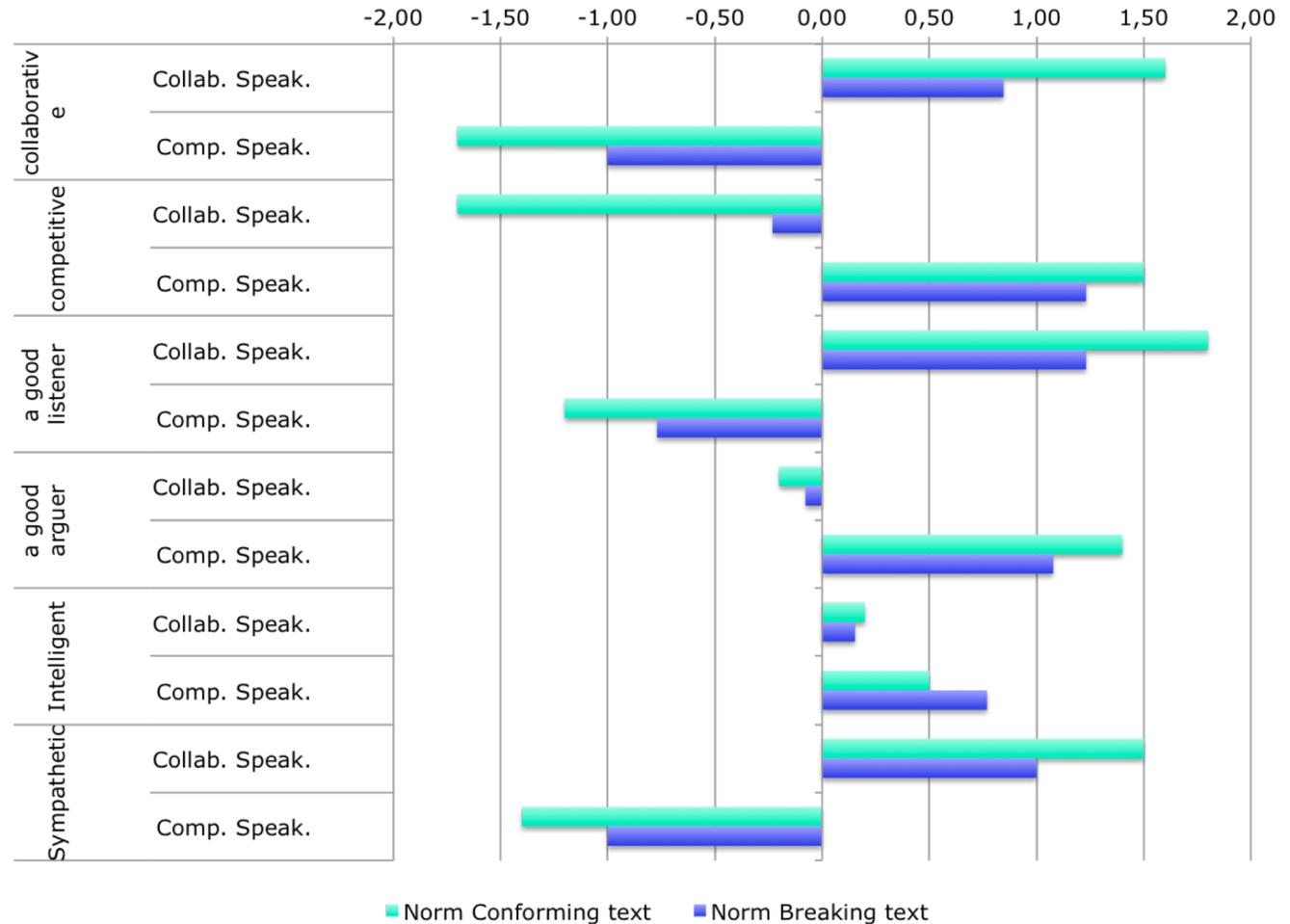


In summary

- It seems that students overestimated linguistic features that were associated with masculinity when they thought they were listening to a man, and underestimated these when they thought they were listening to a woman:
 - Taking space, interrupting, using expletives
- It seems that students overestimated linguistic features that were associated with femininity when they thought they were listening to a woman, and underestimated these when they thought they were listening to a man:
 - Signalling interest, signalling uncertainty (hedges), using tag questions
- In short it seems that students “see what they are looking for” – stereotypes taint judgements.



Divergence from neutral (3 on the Likert scale) in student evaluative responses – round 1



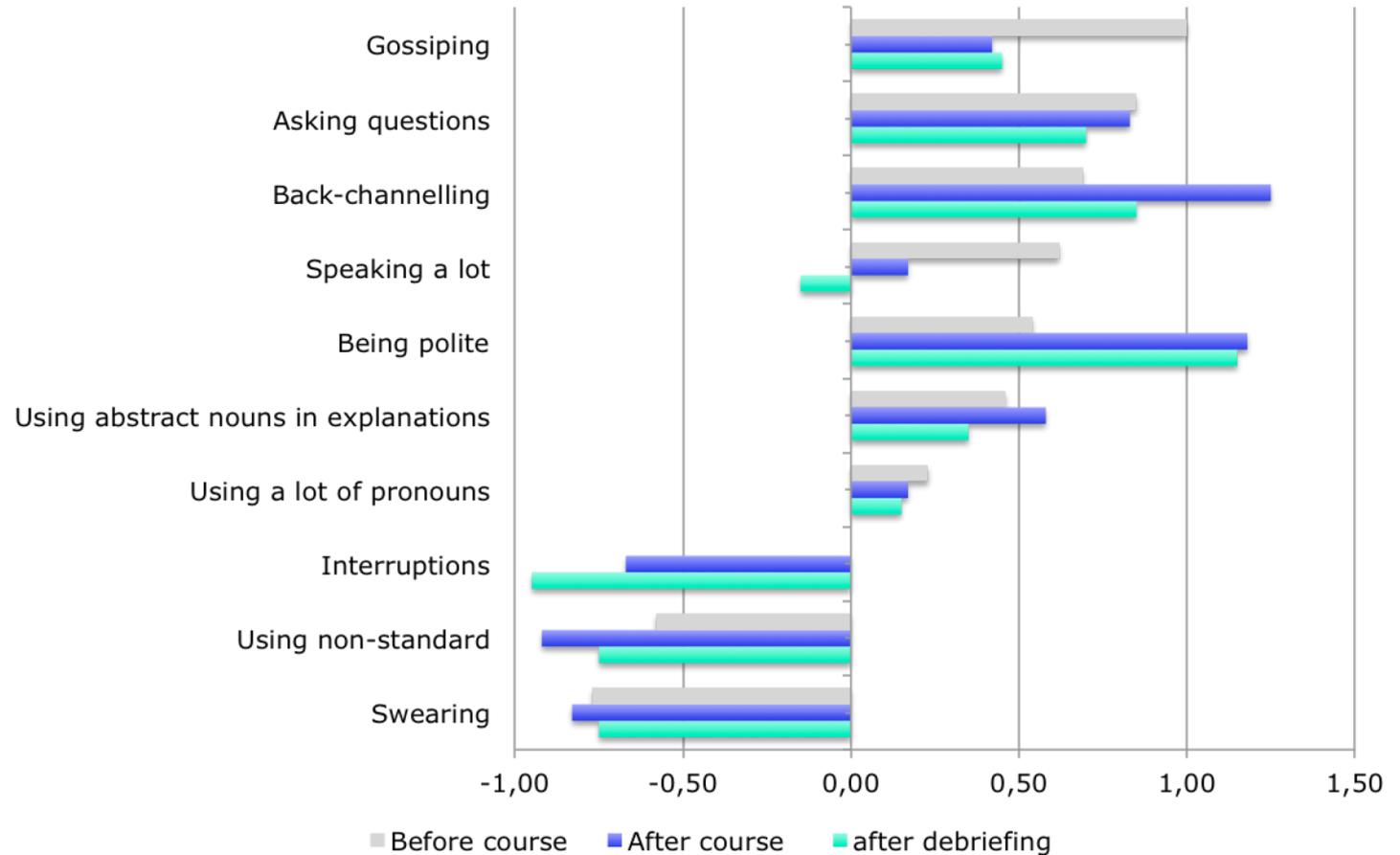


In summary

- It seems that students gave speakers relatively high scores on characteristics that are associated with masculinity when they thought they were listening to a man, and gave relatively low scores on these when they thought they were listening to a woman:
 - Being good at arguing, being competitive
- It seems that students gave speakers relatively high scores on characteristics that are associated with femininity when they thought they were listening to a woman, and gave relatively low scores on these when they thought they were listening to a man:
 - Being collaborative, a good listener, sympathetic.
- For intelligence, no patterns were found.
- Note also that the sample was too small to reach statistical significance (n= 23)



Students stereotypic views of linguistic features at different points. Note that positive values indicate feminine features and vice versa





In summary and conclusions run 1.

- Students seem to see what they are looking for.
- Our courses seem to strengthen some stereotypic views
- Our experiments did little to change these and in some cases even strengthened certain preconceptions.
- The model was too complex.
- Too few participants to confirm tendencies
- So we try again



Run 2: 2016

- Simpler design
 - only one speaker was point of focus, fewer variables, Likert scale measurements throughout
- More participants
 - 2 classes (teachers trainees, English A)
 - Internet responses.

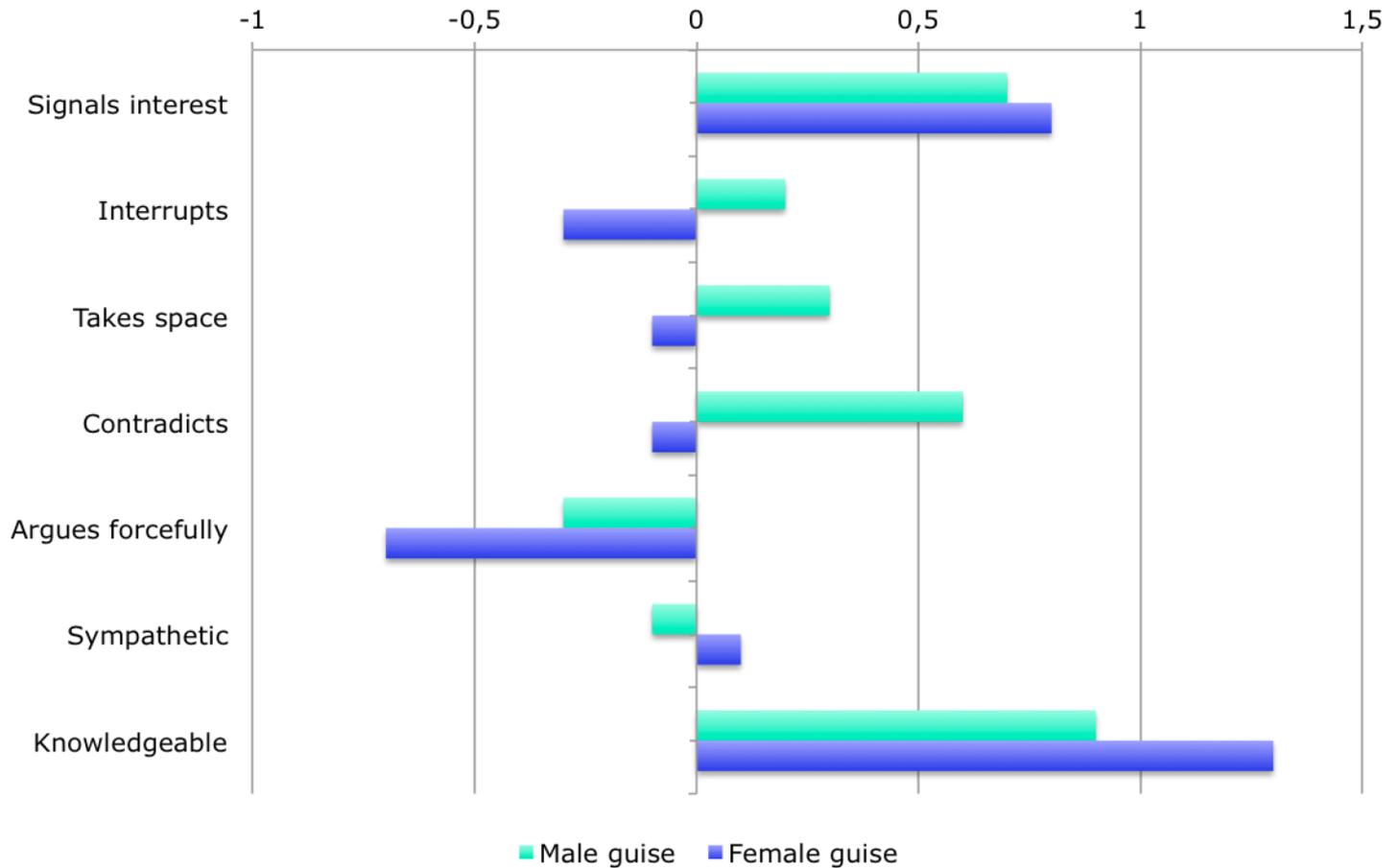


Text 1: The “Disney text” Collaborative

- A discussion between two researchers of a study on the gender roles in the Disney Princess Movies.
- A friendly discussion with speakers supporting each other (collaborative) .
- Only one speaker (recognised by an American accent) was morphed.
- n= 132



Disney text: Divergence from neutral (4 on the Likert scale) in student evaluative responses.



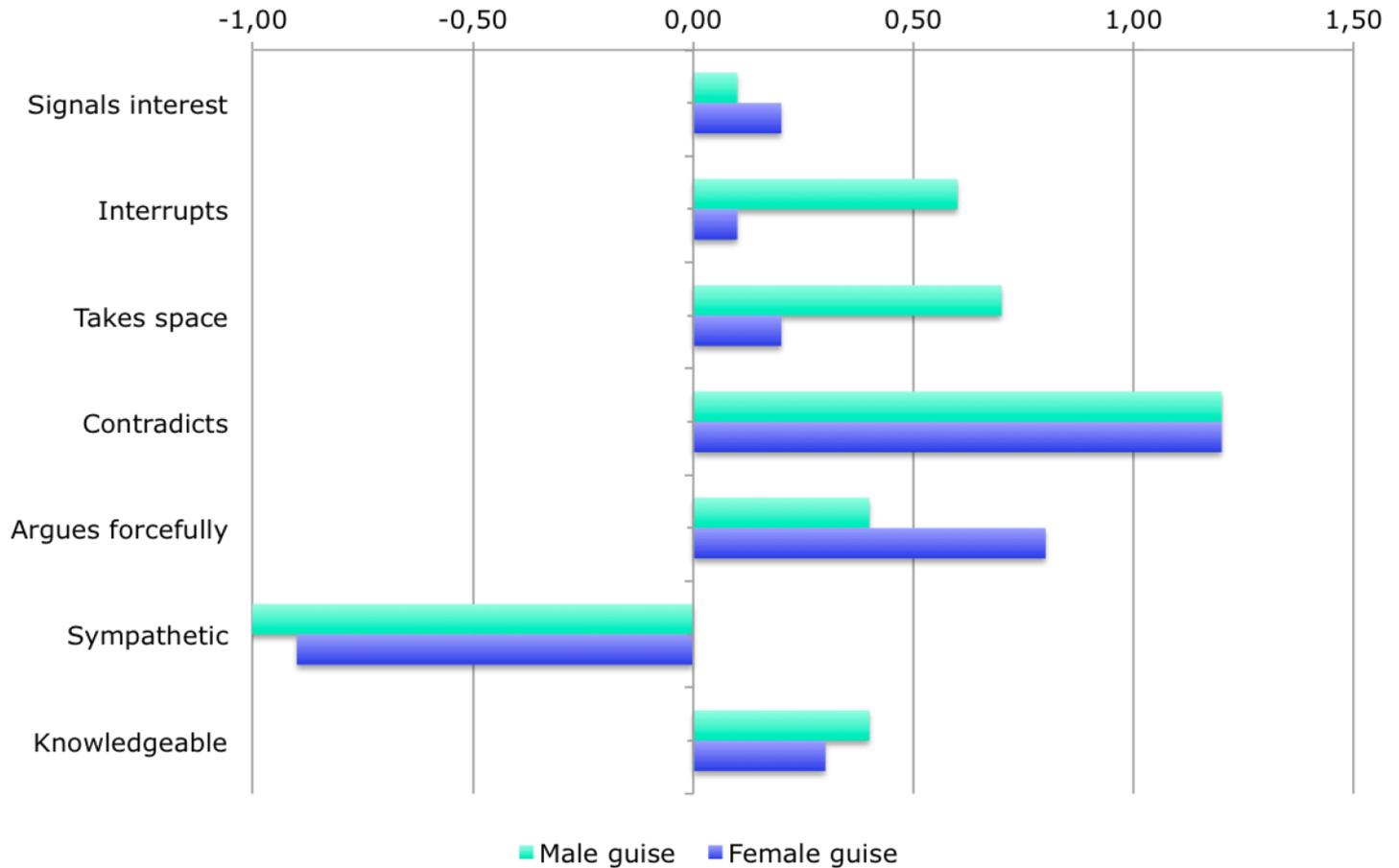


Text 2: The “Gender Discussion” Competitive

- A discussion between two researchers of how we should present research on gender gender differences to students
- A heated discussion with speakers disagreeing with each other (competitive) .
- Only one speaker (recognised by an American accent) was morphed.
- n= 37



Gender discussion text: Divergence from neutral (4 on the Likert scale) in student evaluative responses.





Summary of some of the results round 2

- After factor analysis (ANOVA, MANOVA and MANCOVA), we could elucidate two clear factors in the way responses for the male and the female guises differed - collaborative and competitive.
- There were statistically significant differences between how male and female guises were evaluated on these two factors: The female guise was rated higher on the collaborative variables and the male was rated higher on the competitive.
- This supported our earlier findings.



But what about awareness raising?

- Do you think this experiment helped to make you more aware of how stereotyping affects you in your judgement of others. How?
 - “Absolutely! I definitely perceived the male recording differently than the female recording. This study brought my own stereotypes to light.”
 - “Yes, it will be something I think about when speaking to people of both genders on the same subject”
 - “Yes! it is a strange feeling to know that stereotyping is a natural issue. Through the society we live in it should be made more of a problem to be solved, than a problem to be ignored.”
 - “Yes I definitely think so! I think it made me realize that we use our stereotypes in the back of our minds, and we don't even realize that we are using them to interpret the meaning of a situation. That is crazy to me.”



Issues remaining

- Sound quality:
 - “The "male" voice sounded really fake- I knew from the start it was modified, I just didn't know why.”
 - -“ The male voice sounds augmented, that may affect how sympathetic or interested he sounds, although I did not have any clue it was actually a females voice that was augmented”
 - “When I started listening to the male version, without knowing what the experiment was, I could tell that the American's voice sounded manipulated in some way, but I couldn't tell that it was really a woman, just that it had been manipulated somehow”
- And how do you measure awareness raising!?



- Thank you!