

Background

- **High Rising Terminals (HRTs)** are a speech feature where there is a rising intonation contour at the end of an utterance where a falling intonation contour would normally be used. HRTs are commonly referred to as “uptalk” or “upspeak.”

- HRTs are generally considered a speech feature **used by women to seem less imposing**. As a result, HRTs are interpreted as a **sign of uncertainty in female speakers**.

- HRTs are **used for a range of purposes** in conversation (e.g., signaling a topic change, gauging responsiveness or understanding).

- This project investigates the interplay between **race, gender, and social status** in the interpretation of HRTs.

Questions

1. Do **race, gender, and social status** (i.e., profession) of the speaker affect **listener’s ratings of their trustworthiness**?
2. Do the listener’s **ratings of trustworthiness** of a speaker **affect their interpretation of HRTs** from that speaker? Additionally, because HRTs are commonly considered a women’s tool, **is this different across gender?**

Method

Participants. 94 people from Prolific were recruited and shown a series of photographs. The people in the photographs varied by:

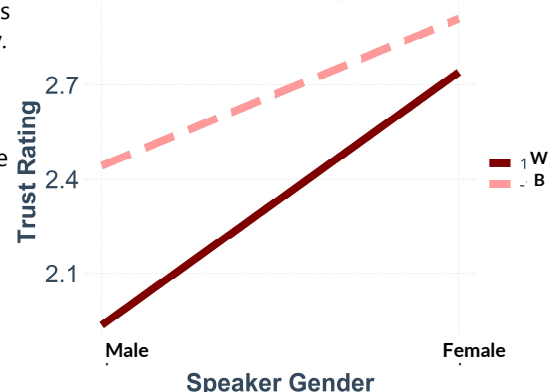
- **Race** (Black or White)
- **Social Status** (Doctors, Professionals, or in Plain Clothing)
- **Gender** (Male or Female)

Method. Participants rated knowledge and trustworthiness. They listened to voice recordings for each photo and 1) rated confidence and 2) whether statements were true.

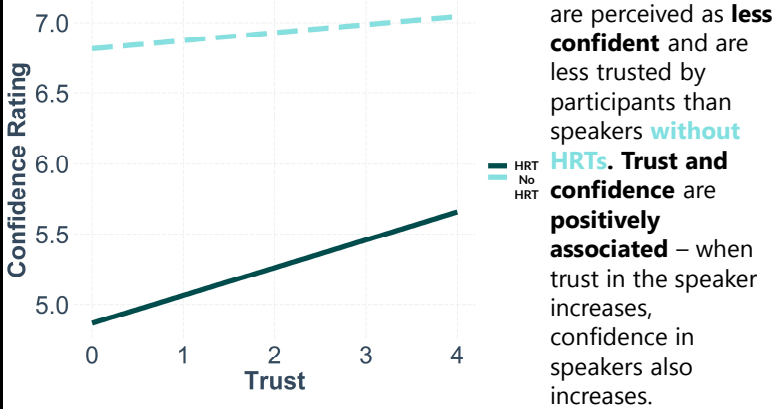
Results

Along race, **Black people** are rated as **more trustworthy**. Along gender, **women are rated as more trustworthy**. There is a **significant interaction** between **gender and race** where **black men** are trusted more than **white men**.

Question 1 (Trust)

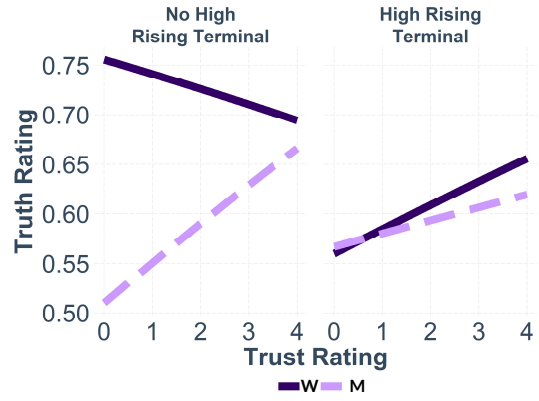


Question 2 (Confidence)



Question 2 (True/False)

Women use HRTs as a cue for the statement being **true or false**. Trust does not interact. **Men rely more** on the **trust rating** than **women** when there is **no HRT**.



Conclusions

- From the data collected, we are shown that participants rated **white people as less trustworthy than black people**, and **women more trustworthy than men**.

- We also see an **interaction between race and gender** where trust in **women doesn’t depend on race**, but trust in men does, with **black men being trusted more**.

- In addition, we see that **trustworthiness has little effect** when determining the verity of the statements, and that while trust ratings are predictive of confidence ratings, **trust is independent of HRT**.

- This data **does not** follow previous research conducted by Tomlinson and Fox that showed **high knowledge and trust ratings overruling the presence of HRT** when interpreting confidence and reliability in speakers.

Future directions. As a further exploration, incorporating the use of AI technology could be used as a way for participants to more realistically observe a character using HRT. In using AI, the participants would be able to observe HRT used in a speech or conversation setting, as opposed to stand-alone sentences.

Let’s Connect!

