

Strategic use of quantifiers in reporting statistics in reporting statistics

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Research Question

How do English speakers strategically modulate their usage of quantifiers in light of the pragmatic demand to make a situation appear (un)favourable without lying?

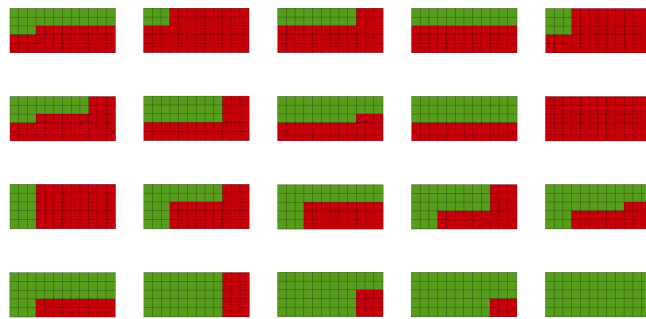
Methods

Example stimulus

Describe these results of **Green Valley** so as to make it appear as if there is a **high** success rate without lying.

Johann	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Theresa	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Alex	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Thomas	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Julian	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

All items



Participants

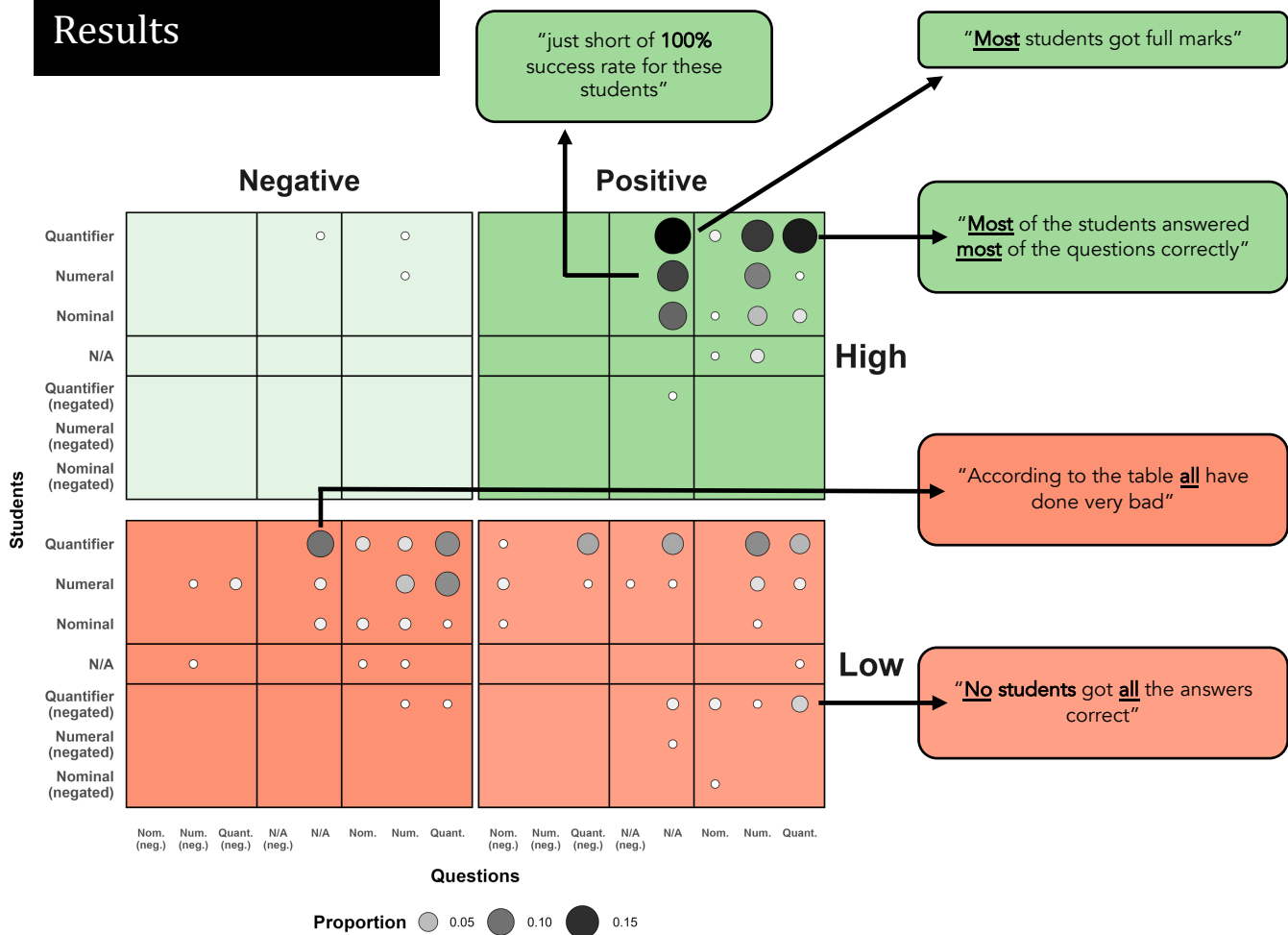
- 30 participants (UK)
- Crowdsourcing via Prolific
- 12 random items = 360 text responses

Annotation

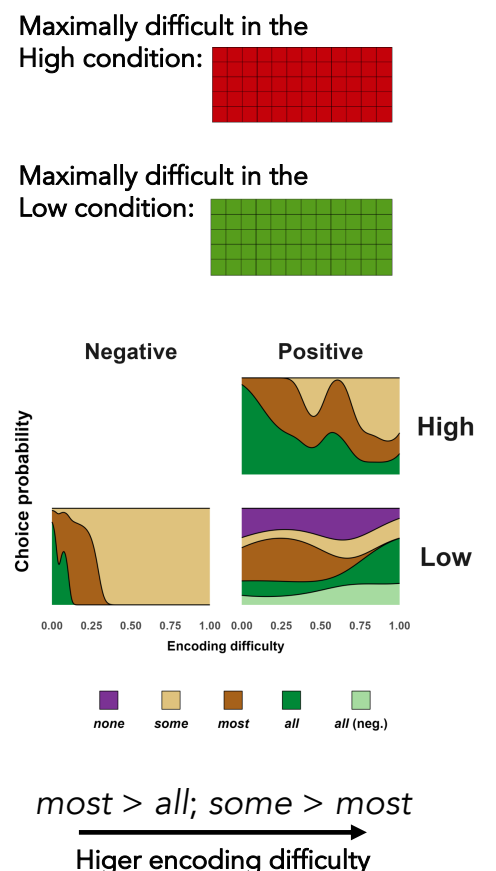
- Expression type_{students}
 - Expression type_{questions}
 - Negation_{students}
 - Negation_{questions}
 - Predicate polarity
- 77% of responses contains at least one quantity expression
 - 21 % of data contains multiple references to students and/ or questions (excluded)

"All pupils received a mark, some achieving up to 75%"

Results



Encoding difficulty



Conclusion

- Bias for encoding subjectively favorable outcomes counteracts bias for encoding objectively positive outcomes
- Informationally weaker quantifiers are more likely to be used the more difficult it is to encode an outcome truthfully