

Repetition increases the perceived truth of highly implausible statements

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Introduction

A single exposure to statements is typically enough to increase their perceived truth :

- This effect is called “**Truth-by-Repetition (TBR)**” or “**Illusory Truth**” (for a meta-analysis, see Dechêne, Stahl, Hansen, & Wänke, 2010).
- It has long been assumed to occur only with statements whose truth value is unknown to participants (**truth ambiguity assumption**).

BUT recent research has found TBR effect with statements contradicting participants' prior knowledge. As for now, however, finding a TBR effect for **highly implausible statements** have failed.

➡ Here, we reasoned that highly implausible statements may show repetition effect through a **more sensitive truth measure** and **more repetition**.

Method

Participants

- Sample size determined in a **preregistration**.
- 232 participants recruited on Prolific.
- **English speakers**, declared to live in the **United States**, had an approval rate of at least 95%, and had already completed at least 100 previous submissions.

Procedure



Exposition to **8 implausible statements presented 5 times** in **random** order. They will be asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 6 how interesting they find these statements.

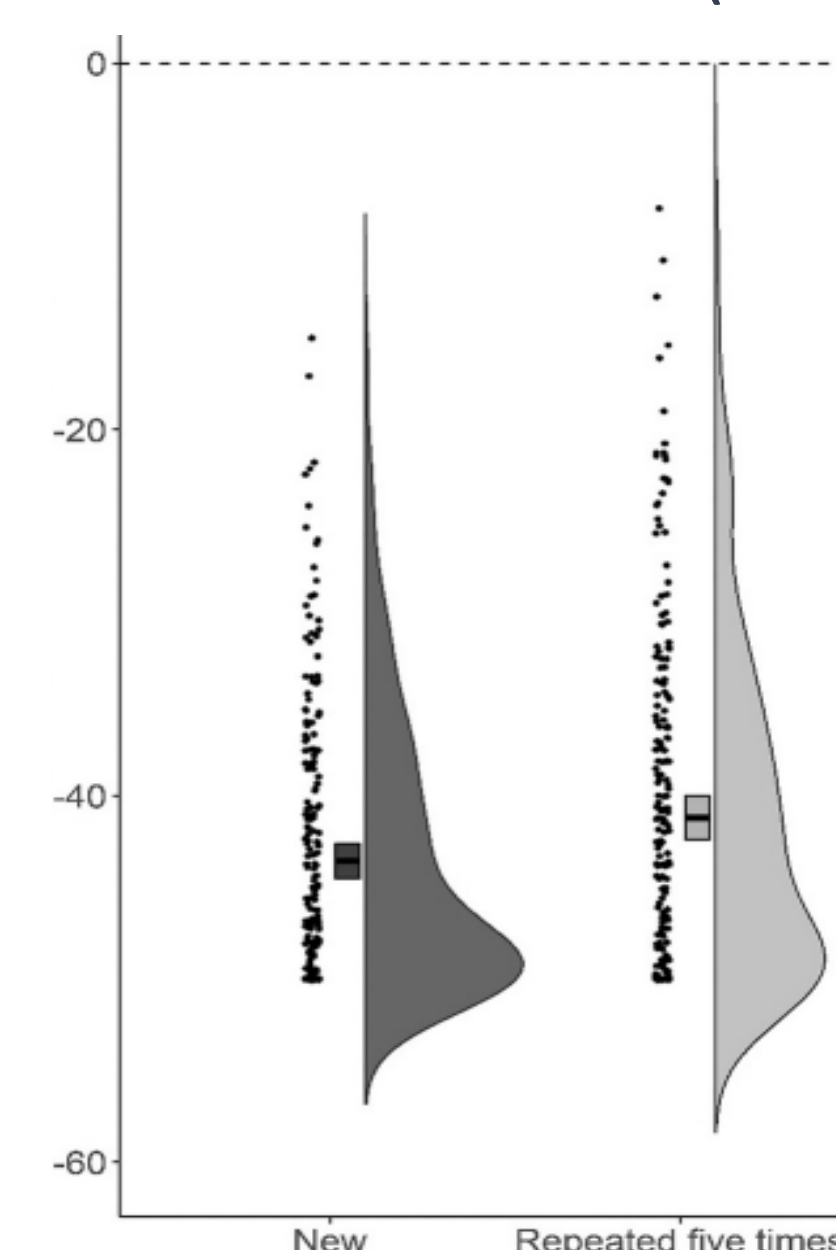


Judgment of **how true** they think **16 statements** are (the 8 they were presented with during the encoding and 8 new statements). **Scale ranging from -50 (Definitely false) to 50 (Definitely true)**.

Results

Truth judgment :

From -50 (Definitely false) to 50 (Definitely true)



Repeated statements are judged to be more true than New statements

➤ Mean repeated = -41.21

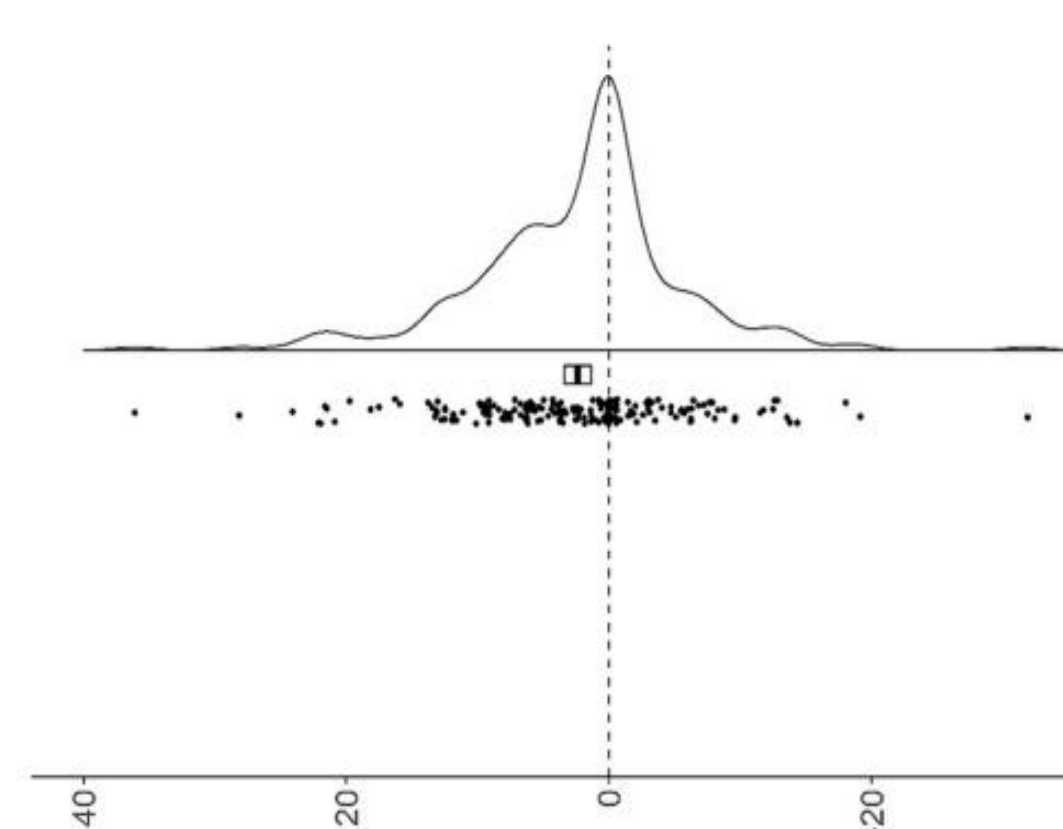
➤ Mean new = -43.75

$p < .001$ (Paired samples t-test)

Cohen's $d = 0.278$

Truth-by-repetition (TBR) effect score :

Difference between truth judgment scores on repeated and new statements



➤ 52.58% positive TBR effect score

➤ 19,4 % null TBR effect score

➤ 28.02% negative TBR effect score

Conclusion

- Repetition can increase perceived truth even for highly implausible statements, although not equally so for all participants and not to the point of making the statements look true.
- Our results questioned the truth ambiguity assumption.
- Future research could assess when, whom, and why one may develop a sense of truth for implausible statements following their repetition.