Factors in EWT accuracy: Misleading Information

Two main factors

- **Leading questions (Loftus and Palmer)**

- Post-event discussion (Gabbert et al., 2003)

Loftus and Palmer (1974) Leading Questions

Aims of the studies

- **Study 1: to investigate whether leading questions would influence the estimates of the speed of a vehicle recalled by eyewitnesses**

- Study 2: to investigate whether leading questions would influence whether pts reported seeing broken glass from a vehicle crash
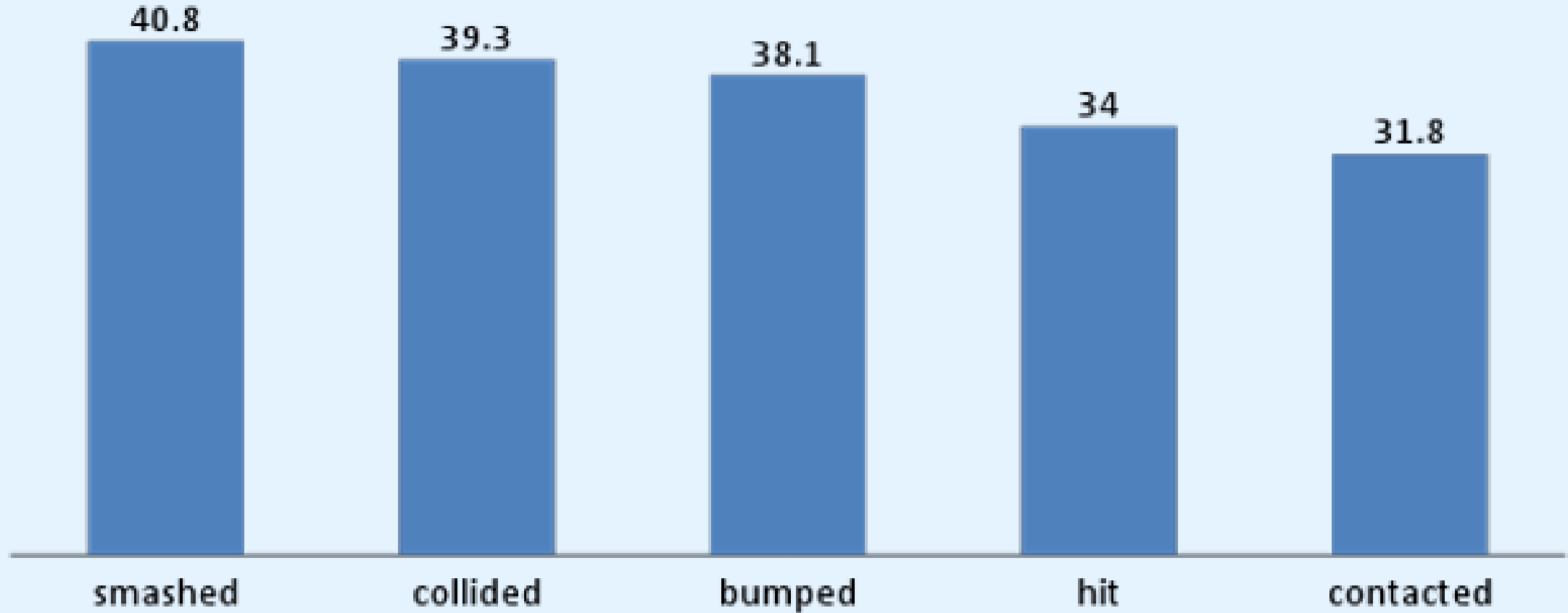
WHAT LOFTUS AND PALMER FOUND

SMASHED
COLLIDED
BUMPED
HIT
CONTACTED

SMASHED – 40.8
COLLIDED – 39.3
BUMPED – 38

Loftus and Palmer (1974): Exp 1 Findings

Loftus and Palmer (1974): Exp. 2 Findings

	Verb condition		
	Smashed	Hit	Control
Yes	**16 (32%)**	**7**	**6 (12%)**
No	**34 (68%)**	**43**	**44 (88%)**
Total	50	50	50

In all three conditions most participants correctly answered there was no glass

Why does this happen?

- **Response bias – the words don't impact the memory, it influences how you answer (*smashed* encourages *higher speed estimates)***
- Substitution – the wording of leading questions does alter memory of an incident

Post-event discussion What happens when EW talk to each other?

Gabbert et al. (2003)

Gabert et al. (2003) – Post-event discussion

Pts put into pairs → Each pt watches video of same but filmed from different viewpoint → Pairs then discussed what they had seen → All pts individually completed recall test

Experimental Group

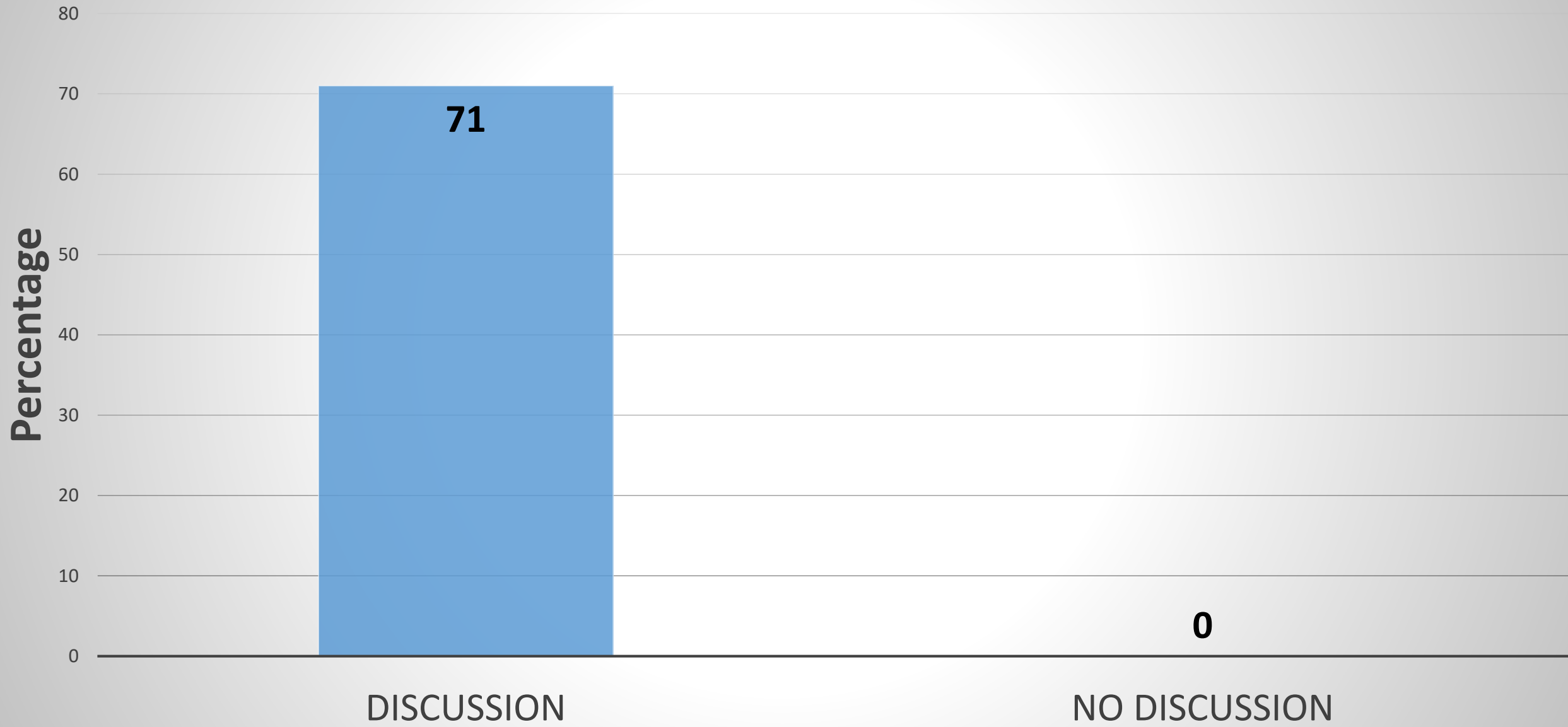# Gabert et al. (2003) – Post-event discussion

Pts put into pairs → Each pt watches video of same but filmed from different viewpoint → All pts individually completed recall test

Control Group

Why does this happen?

- **Contamination – combining information from other witnesses with own memory. The memory changes.**
- Conformity – go along with other witnesses for approval (NSI) or because they think they are right (ISI). The memory doesn't change.

Strengths and weaknesses (digital book)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Useful real-life applications	Research issues – Foster et al. (1994) Real world EWT matters more than lab memories → Real EW are more motivated to be accurate
	Evidence against substitution
	Evidence against memory conformity
	eXtra – demand characteristics