

Disrupting the default: Does the salience of information disrupt children's preferences for teaching generic information to others?

Didar Karadağ, Amie Suthers, Marina Bazhydai
Lancaster University, Department of Psychology

Background

Children are sensitive to information generalizability and tend to share information that is generalizable to a kind ("dogs have fur"), rather than specific to an individual member of a kind ("this dog has spots").

Systematic investigations of such preference are lacking and it is unknown whether such generalisability preference is retained when information is not neutral (e.g., threatening, highly salient, health related, or self-relevant).

Aims: Across 4 studies, we aimed to **conceptually replicate** previous findings with neutral information and **extend** this line of research to investigate knowledge transfer in various **salient and health-related domains**.

Hypothesis: We expect a **disruption of generalisability preference** when sharing salient and health-related information.

General method

$N = 36$ per study, $M_{age} = 7.29$ years
(Range, 6.00-9.92 years), 52 females

Completed and Ongoing Studies

Study 1: replication of preference for transmitting generic information using neutral facts about animals. Also, comparing obvious/transparent or cognitively opaque/non-transparent properties of information.

Study 2: facts about animals that differed on the level of implicit threat with an evolutionary basis vs culturally acquired knowledge about threat.

Study 3: health-relevant facts about animals that present a medical threat to them or can help prevent medical threat (ongoing, $n = 34/36$)

Study 4: health-related facts differing in relevance to the self (ongoing, $n = 27/36$)

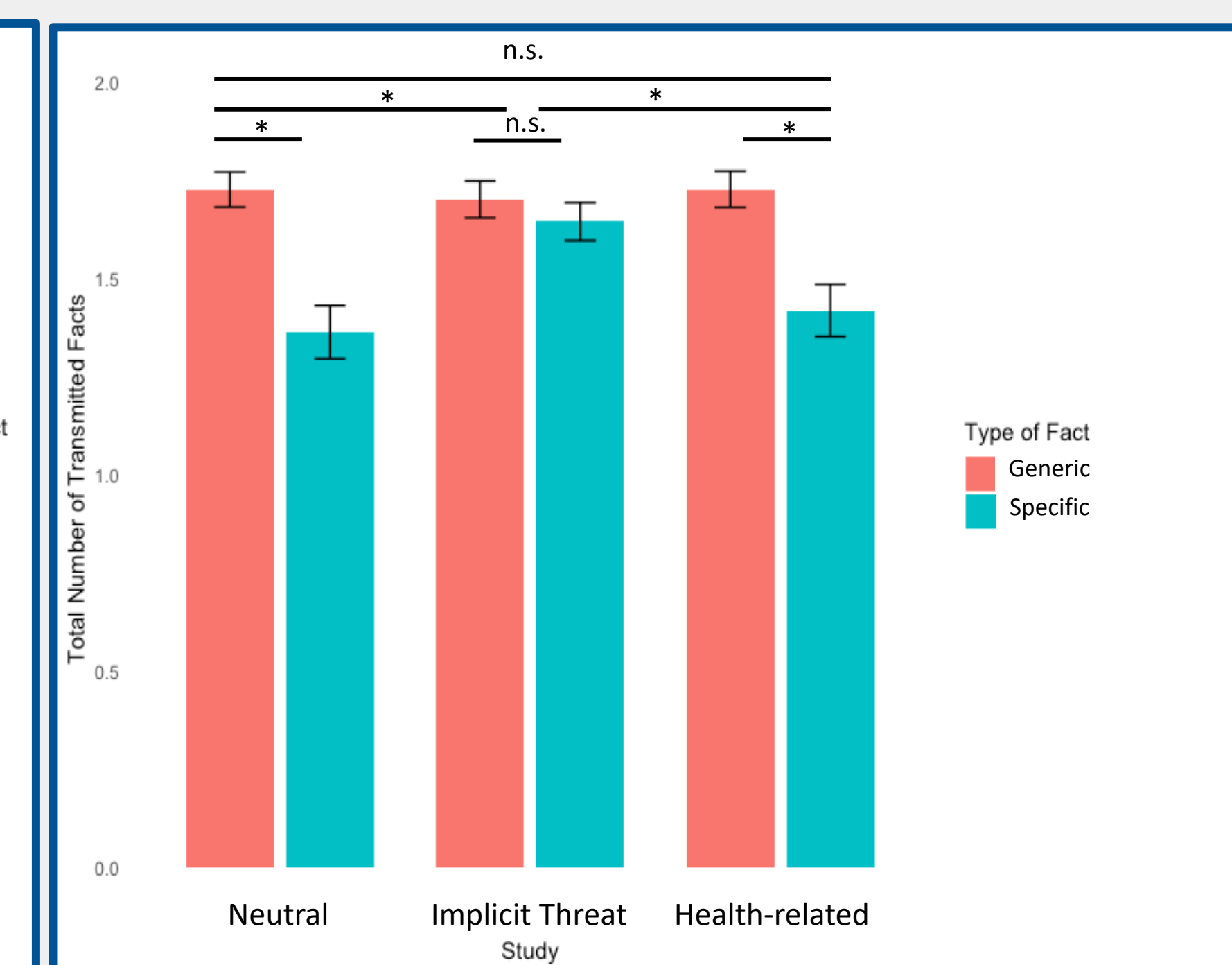
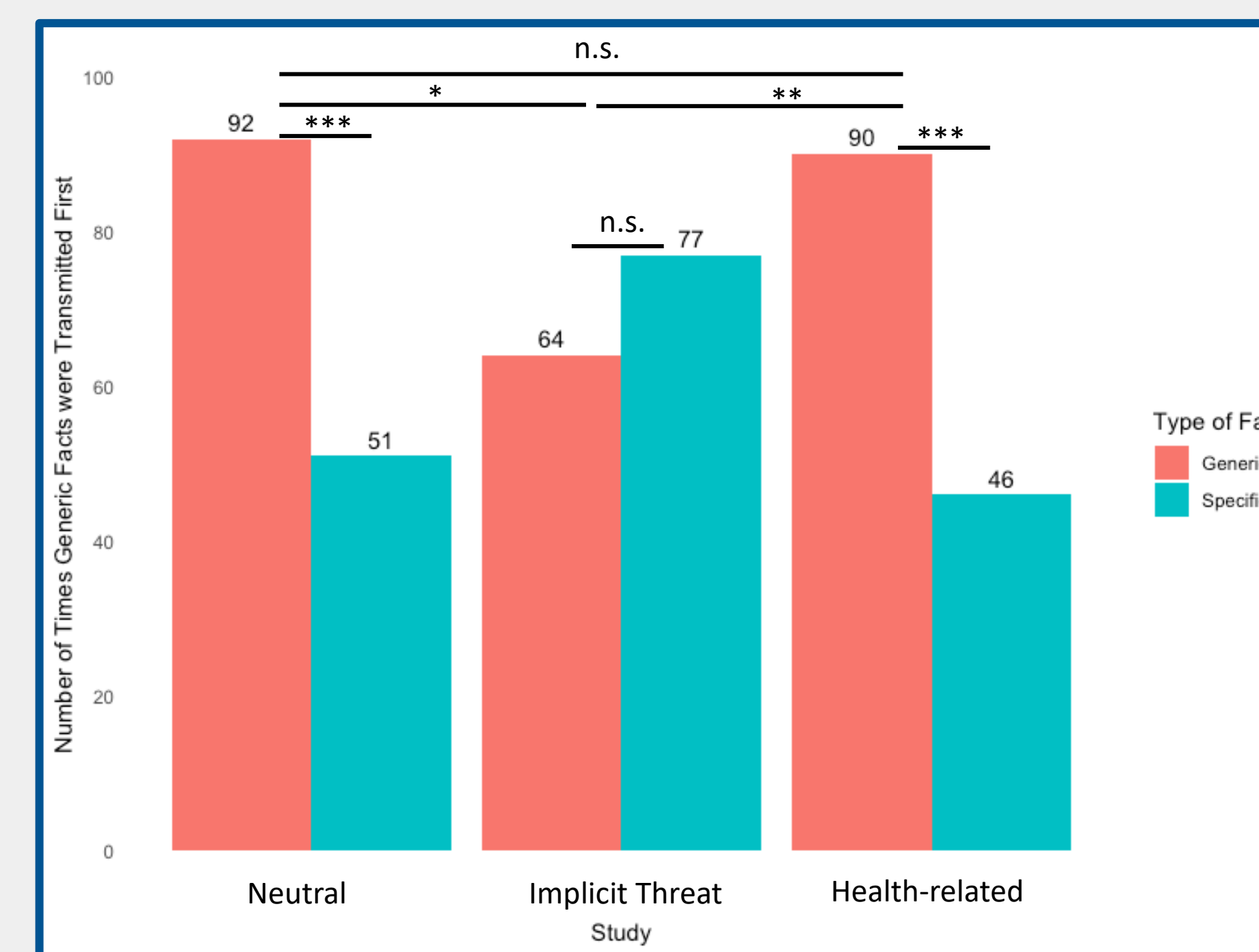
6- to 9-year-olds preferentially teach generalizable information to a naïve social partner when information is neutral and health-related but not when it implicitly signals threat



Method: Online Interactive Paradigm



Results: Studies 1-3



GLMM, overall model = $\chi^2(2) = 10.9, p = .004$
Neutral vs. Implicit Threat, $z = 2.729, p_{bonferroni} = .019$
Implicit Threat vs. Health-related, $z = -2.953, p_{bonferroni} = .009$
Neutral vs. Health-related, $z = -0.282, p_{bonferroni} = 1.00$

$F(2, 421) = 4.77, p = .009$
Neutral vs. Implicit Threat, $t(421) = 2.894, p_{tukey} = .011$
Implicit Threat vs. Health-related, $t(421) = -2.365, p_{tukey} = .048$
Neutral vs. Health-related, $t(421) = 0.488, p_{tukey} = .877$

