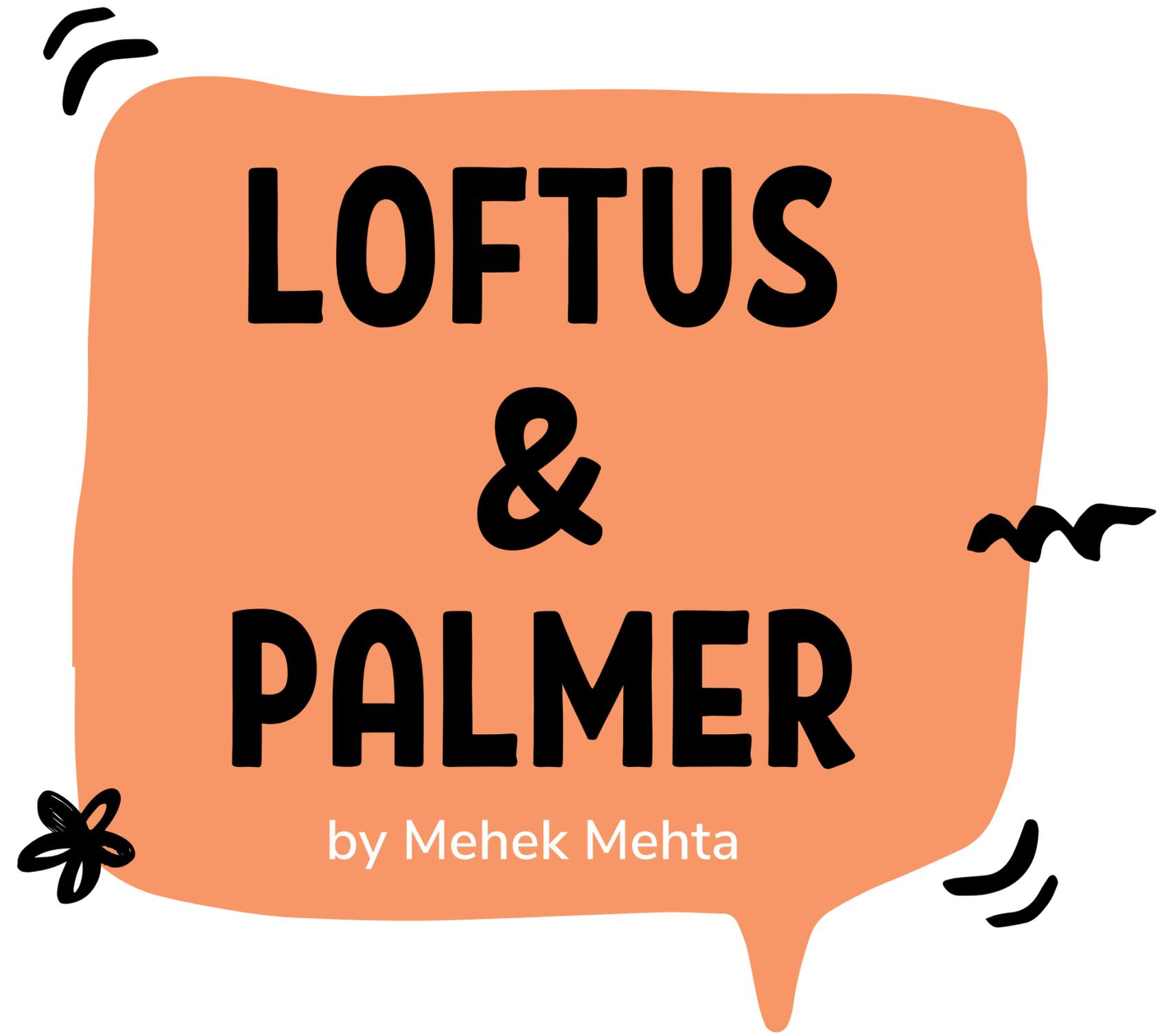


**LOFTUS
&
PALMER**

by Mehek Mehta

...

...



Did you know that people's memory can be manipulated by post-event information and wording of a question



...



THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH WAS TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THE USE OF LEADING QUESTIONS WOULD AFFECT ESTIMATION OF SPEED.

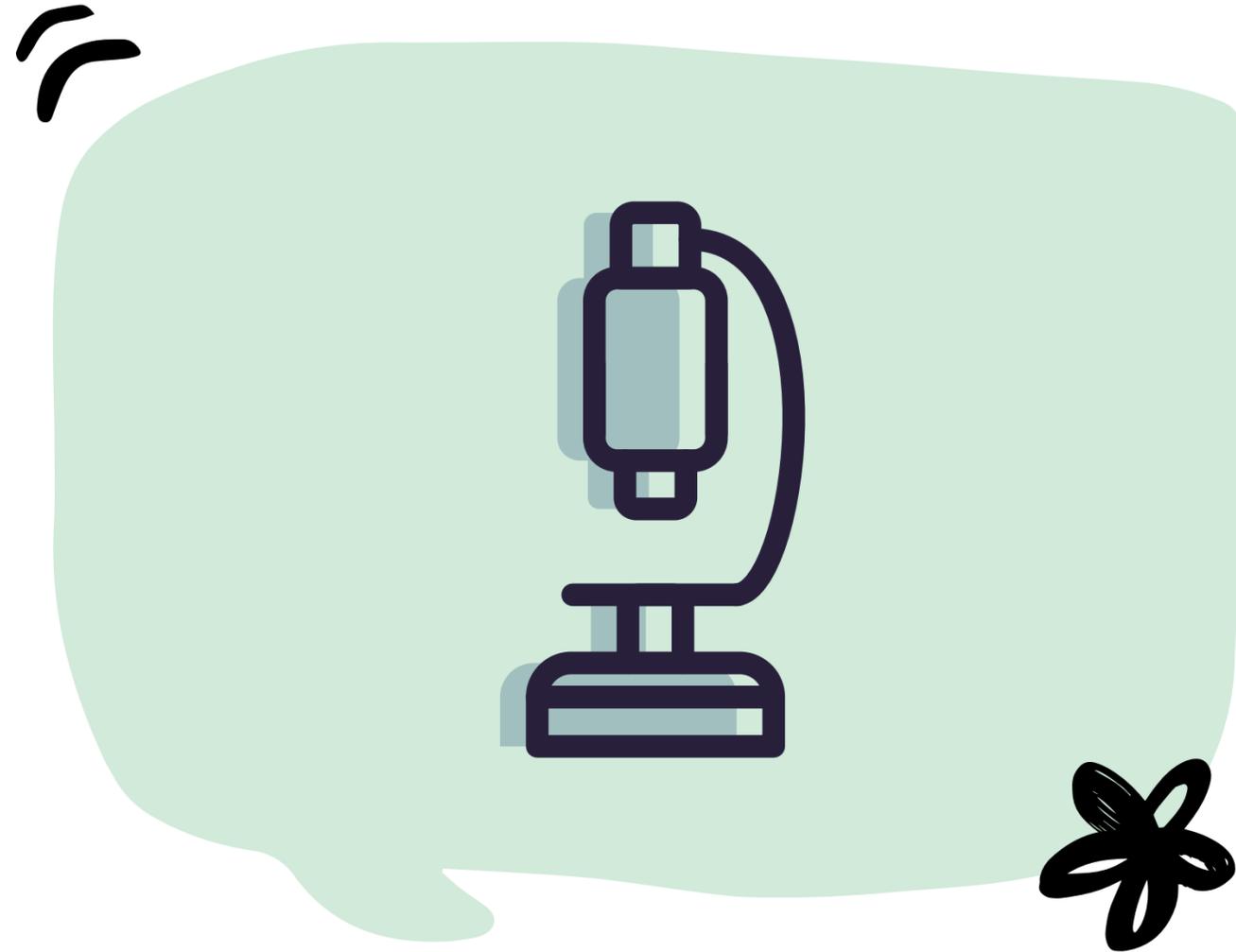


SAMPLES AND VARIABLES

The independent variable was the intensity of the verb used in the critical question and the dependent variable was the estimation of speed.

45 students participated in the experiment. They were divided into five groups of nine students. Seven films of traffic accidents were shown and the length of the films ranged from 5 to 30 seconds. These films were taken from driver's education films.

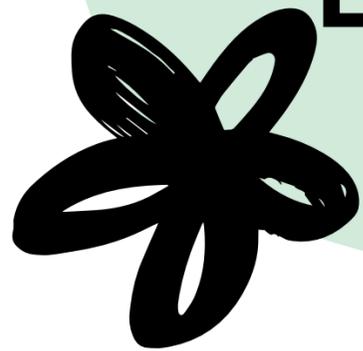
The study was an independent samples design; each participant watched all 7 films.



PROCEDURE

When the participants had watched a film they were asked to give an account of the accident they had seen and then they answered a questionnaire with different questions on the accident with one question being the critical question where they were asked to estimate the speed of the cars involved in the accident. There was one critical question which was the one asking the participant to estimate the speed of the cars involved in the accident. The participants were asked to estimate the speed of the cars

"HOW FAST WERE
THE CARS GOING
WHEN THEY
SMASHED INTO
EACH OTHER?"

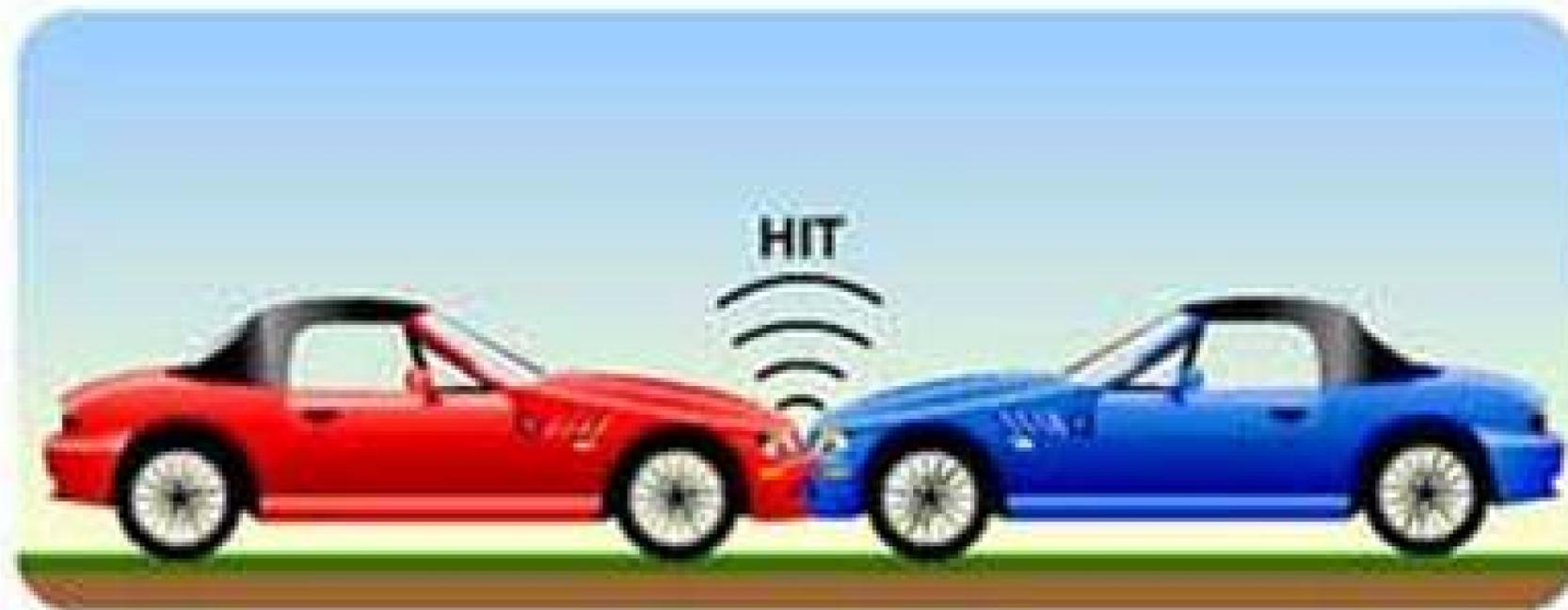


"HOW FAST WERE
THE CARS GOING
WHEN THEY HIT
EACH OTHER?"



Key words being

"smashed" and "hit"



The critical word **'hit'** was replaced by **collided, bumped or smashed or contacted** in the other conditions which each had nine participants answering the question.

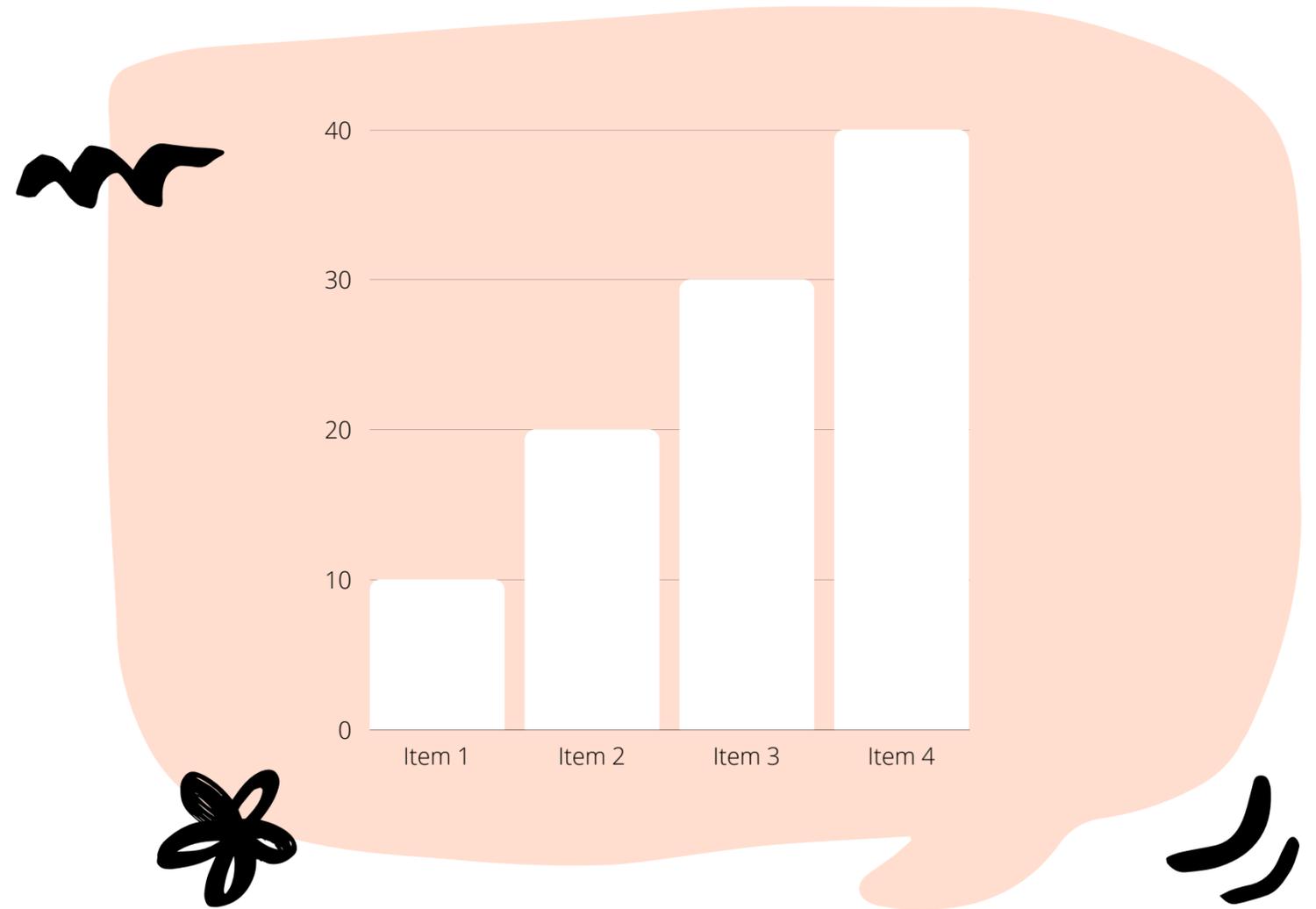
Table 1 Speed estimates for the Verbs used in Experiment 1

Verb	Mean speed estimate (mph)
Smashed	40.8
Collided	39.3
Bumped	38.1
Hit	34.0
Contacted	31.8

Results



The researchers argued that it may be that the different speed estimates is the result of response-bias, i.e. the participant is uncertain about the exact speed and therefore a verb like "smashed" biases his or her response towards a higher estimate

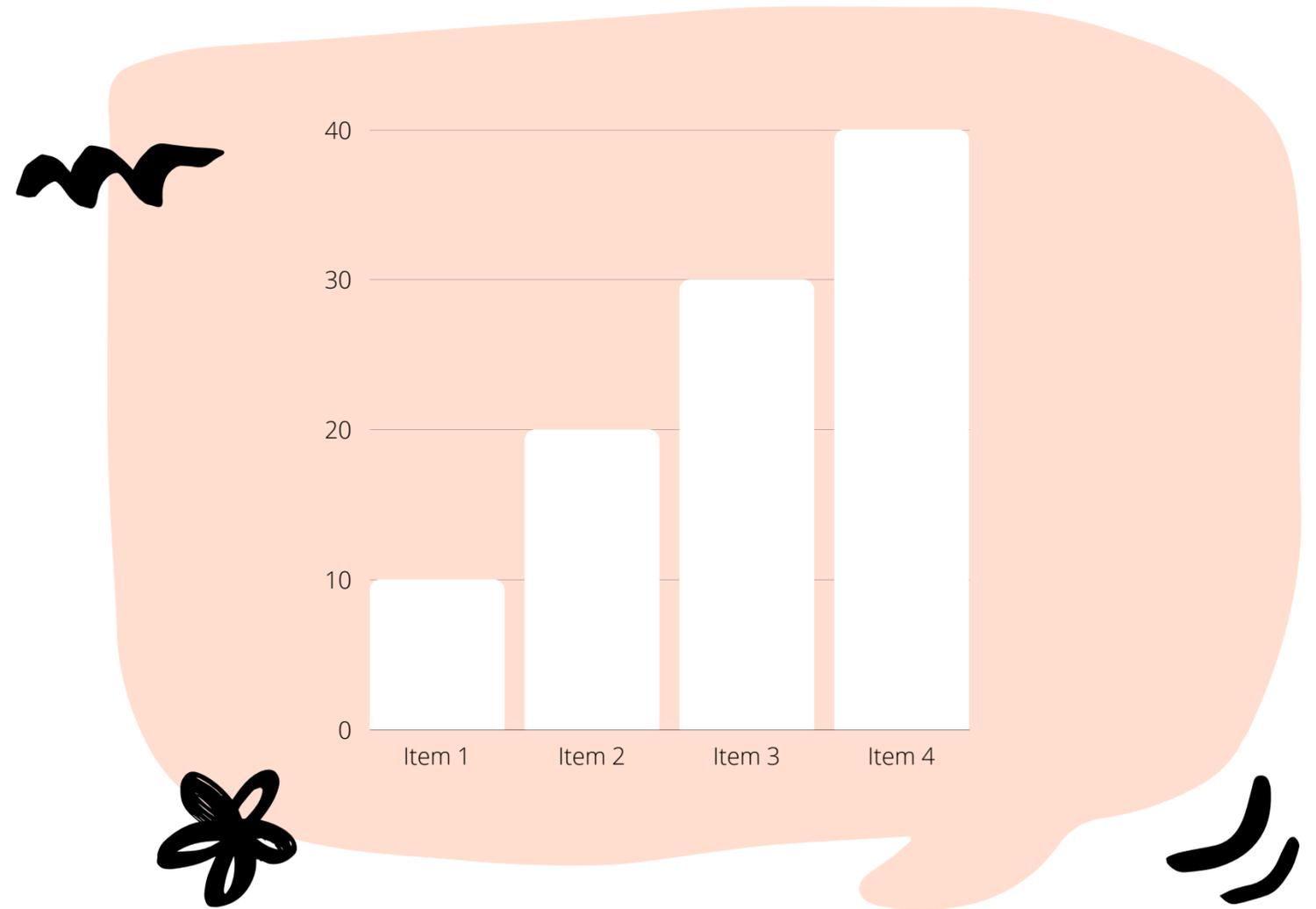


**Activates a cognitive
schema of a severe
accident that may change
the participant's memory
of the accident**

Results



This distortion of memory is based on reconstruction so that it is not the actual details of the accident that are remembered but rather what is in line with a cognitive schema of a severe accident. This interpretation is in line with Bartlett's suggestion of reconstructive memory due to schema processing.



Reliability of Memory



Thank you