

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Witness Memory: The Effects of Accent and Threat Content on Visual and Auditory Memory for a Perpetrator

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Based on the multiple resource model, a more difficult auditory task should use more attentional resources and leave fewer resources to attend to visual information. Research suggests that trying to listen to and understand a speaker with an accent is difficult. In addition, stimuli that are considered threatening can raise stress levels and reduce the amount of attentional resources available. In the present study, participants watched one of four videos that portrayed a bank robber delivering a statement with either a Midwestern or Serbian accent and with either high or low level of threat. For the perpetrator's appearance, participants provided significantly more correct and fewer incorrect details if they heard the Midwestern accent or the low threat statement. These results support the multiple resource model and suggest that further research is needed with the model in eyewitness memory.