

Comparing the Probability-Based AmeriSpeak Panel and the In-Person 2016 General Social Survey: Mode, Device, Item Wording Experiments

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73rd Annual AAPOR Conference
Denver, Colorado
May 18, 2018

- **During 2016 GSS field period**, NORC also fielded the GSS National Priority items using probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel
 - Examine the impact of varying questionnaire design choices on responses among mode, device, and platform
 - Compare responses to National Priority Items with the face-to-face GSS among different modes and devices/platforms
- **AmeriSpeak Panel Study**
 - Invited Sample: 5,000 (Gen Pop)
 - Completion Rate: 40.2% (n= 2,010 interviews)
 - Mode of Completion: Phone (15%) and Web (85%)

Experimental Design (2x2x2)

AmeriSpeak Panelists were randomly assigned into 8 experiment groups

- **Long vs short** description of items
 - Replication of the GSS experiments - Wordiness of the spending items
- The use of **small grids vs non-grid** (single question) forms
 - Visual complexity and grouping
 - Grid version grouped items via a grid matrix on one screen
- **Implicit vs explicit** use of “don’t know” and “decline to answer” (DK/REF) response options
 - Implicit DK/REF response options provided skipping instructions at the beginning: *“Some topics may be sensitive for you, and you can decline to answer any question. You will be able to skip any of the questions to indicate 'Don't know' or 'Decline to answer'.”*

Outcome Measures from the National Priority Items

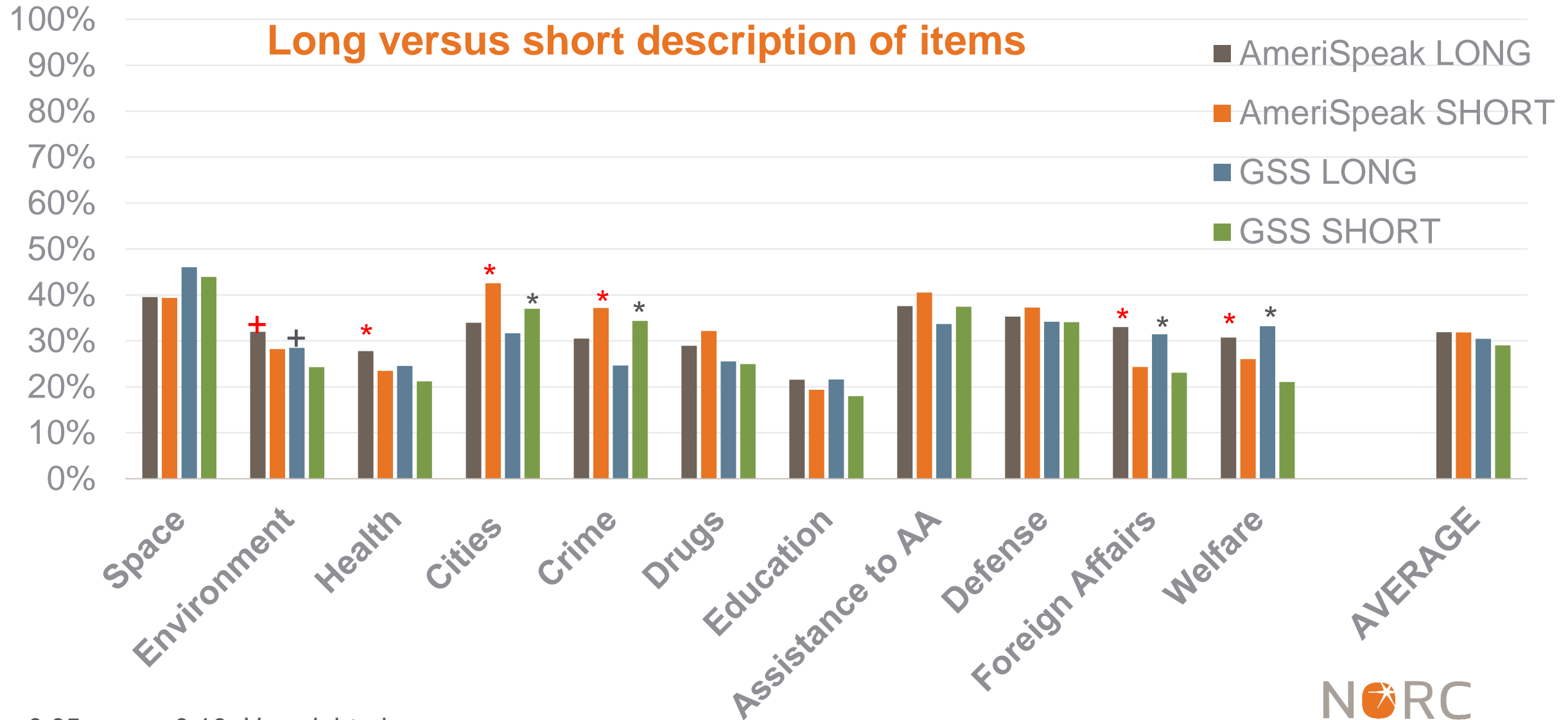
- **Acquiescence Rate**

- Percent of cases selecting the mid-category (“about right”)

- **Don't Know/No Answer %**

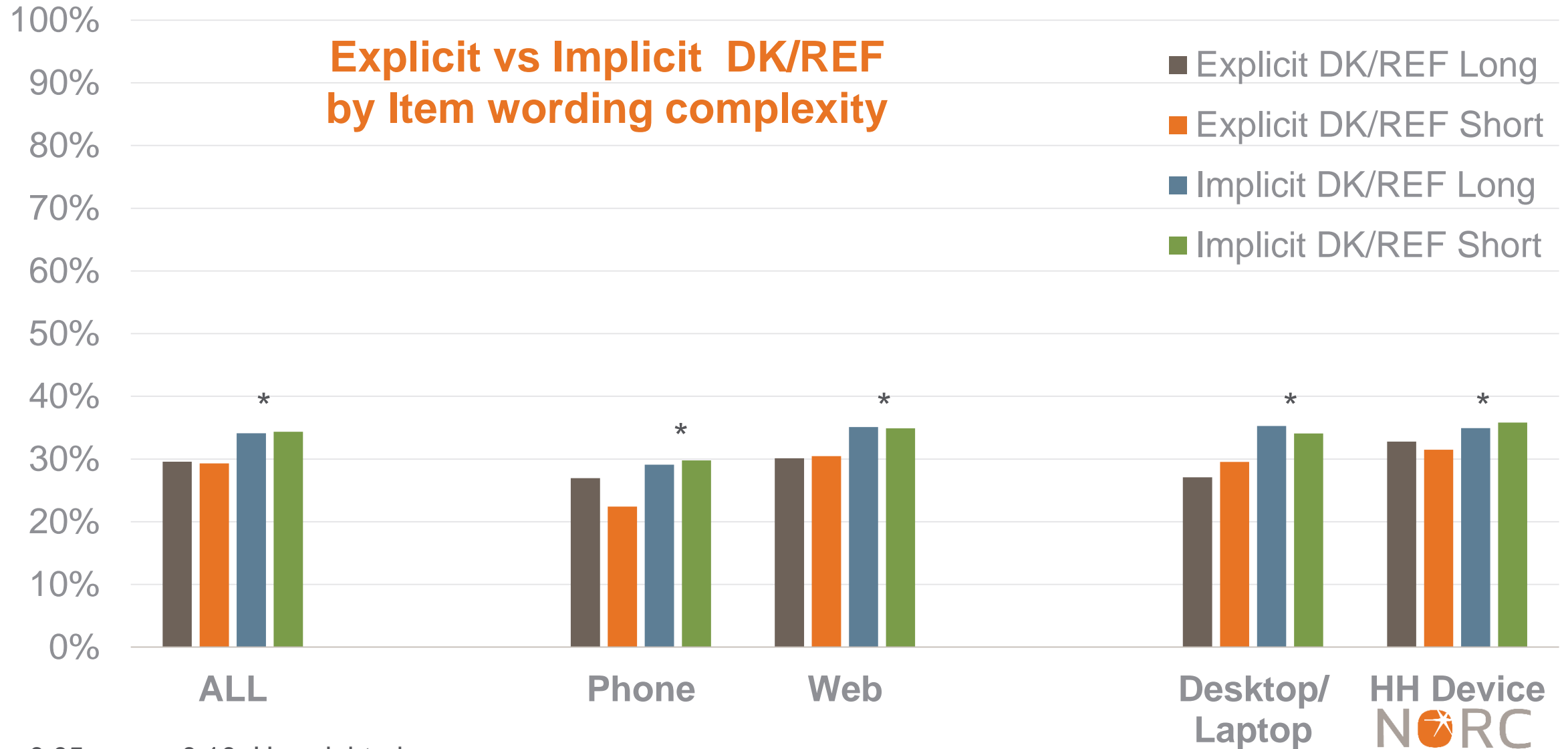
- Percent of cases selecting the don't know category or skipping the question

AmeriSpeak and GSS Comparison – Acquiescence Rate (“About right”)

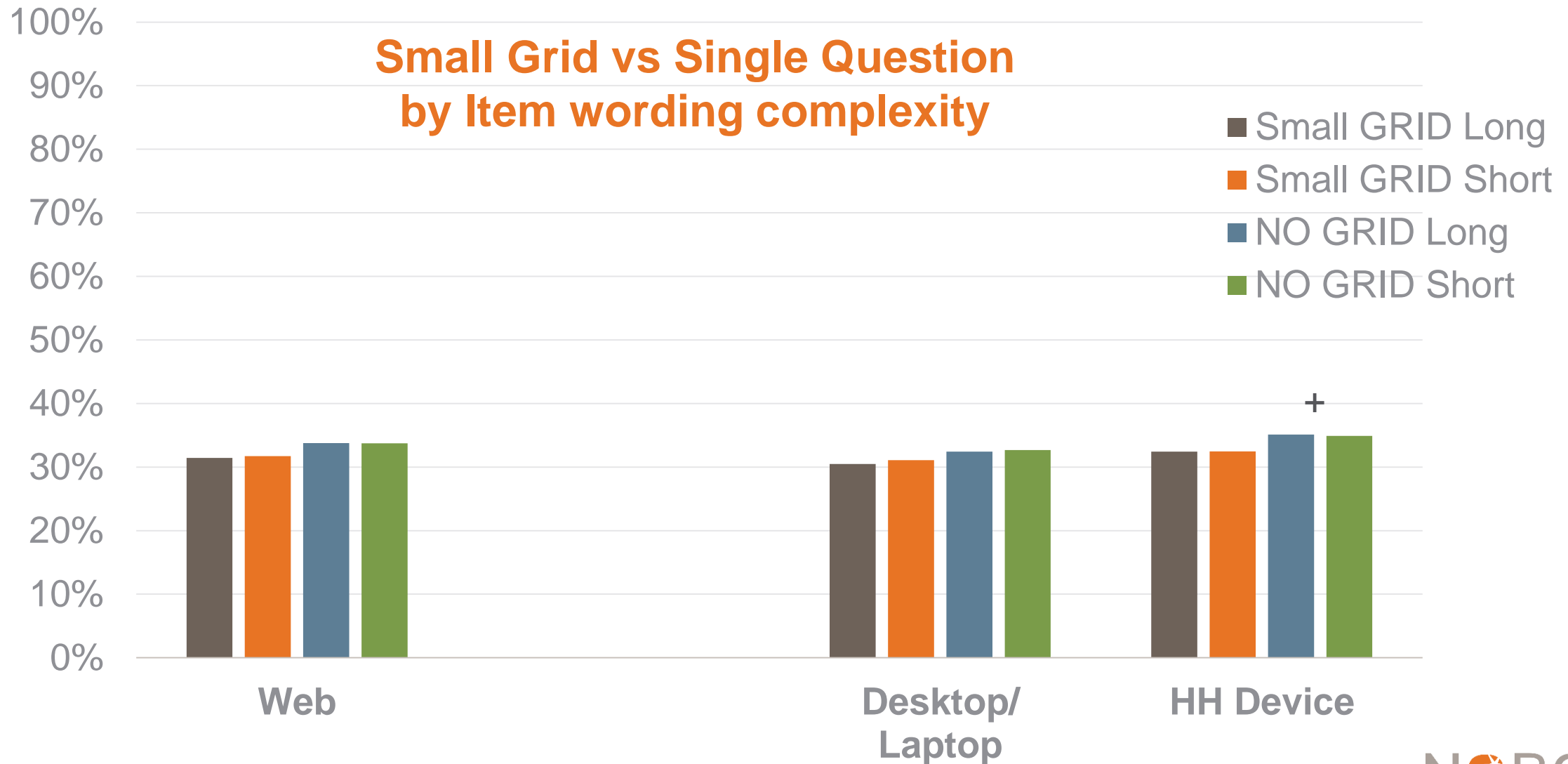


* $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.10$; Unweighted

AmeriSpeak – MEAN (Acquiescence Rate) by mode and device



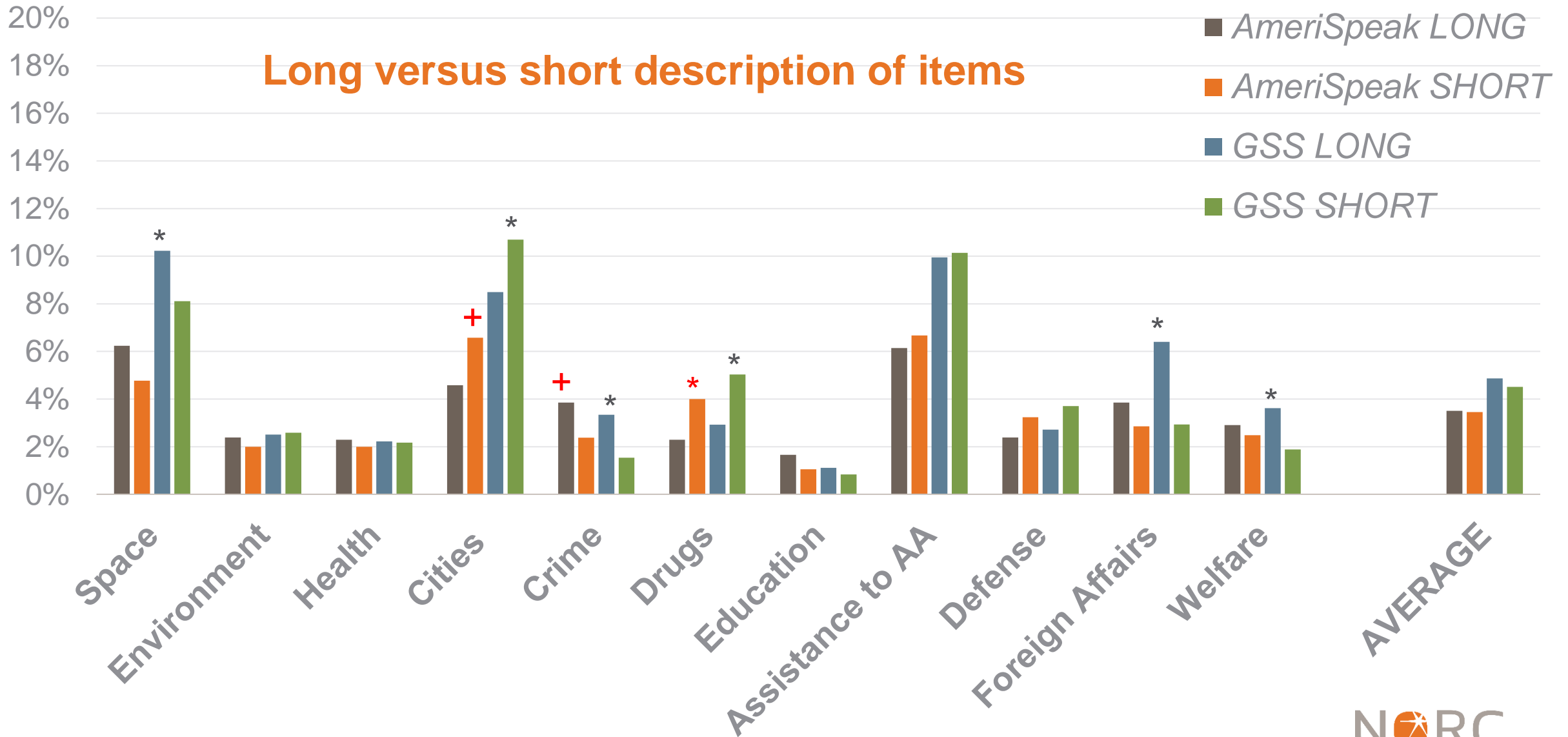
AmeriSpeak – MEAN (Acquiescence Rate) by mode and device



* $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.10$; Unweighted

AmeriSpeak and GSS Comparison – Don't Know / No Answer %

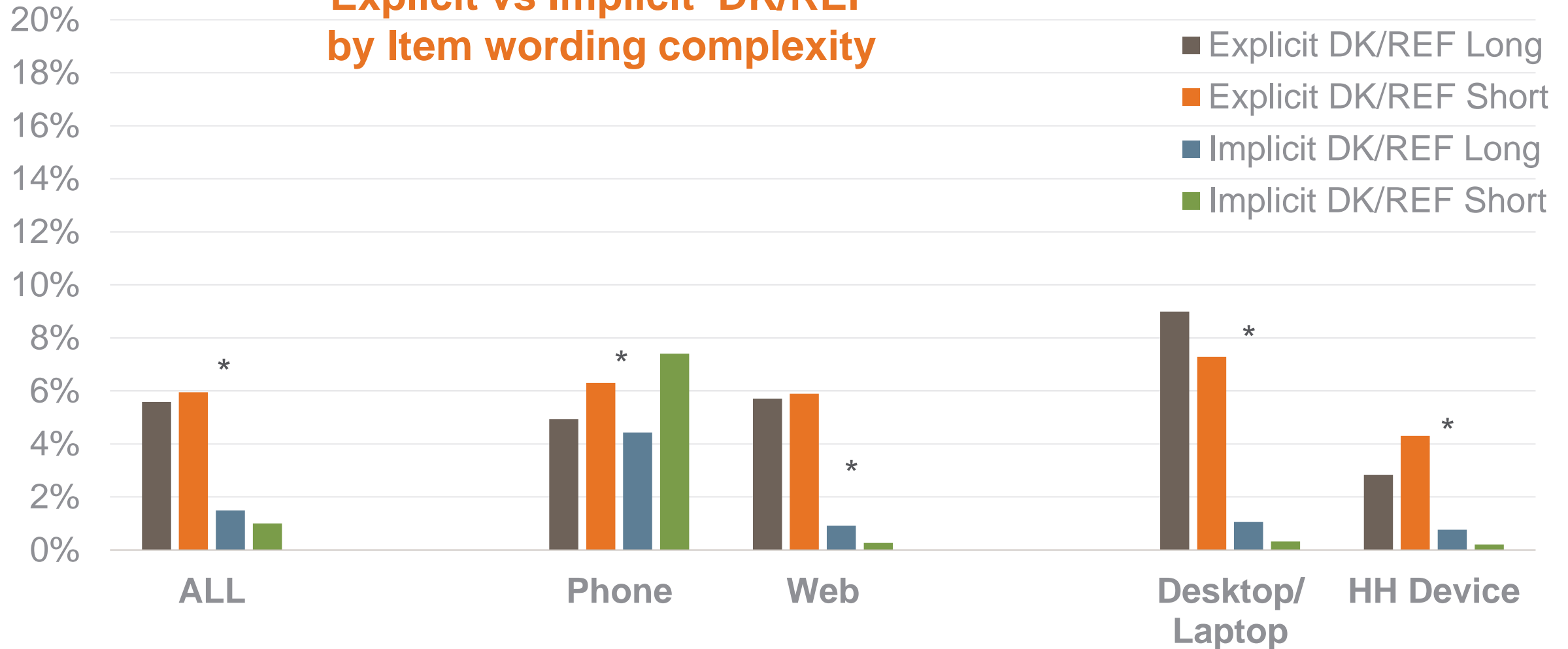
Long versus short description of items



* $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.10$; Unweighted

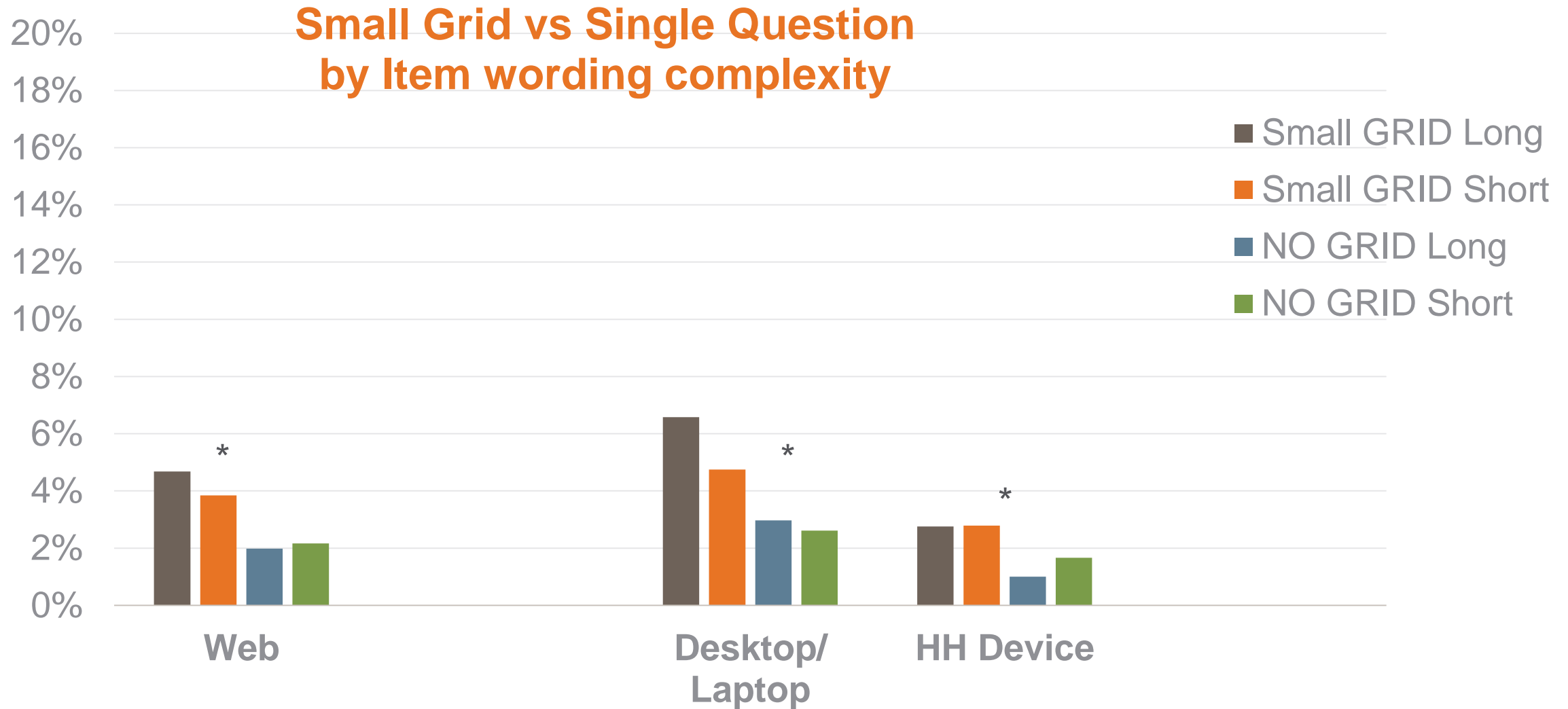
AmeriSpeak – MEAN (Don't Know / No Answer %) by mode and device

Explicit vs Implicit DK/REF by Item wording complexity



* $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.10$; Unweighted

AmeriSpeak – MEAN (Don't Know / No Answer %) by mode and device



* $p_0 < 0.05$; + $p < 0.10$; Unweighted

Conclusion and Discussion

- Question wording effects are consistent in direction across studies
 - Acquiescence and DK/NA rates are generally higher for more complex worded items
- Different question design choices show dissimilar rates of acquiescence across modes and devices
 - When DK/REF are explicit, respondents use them;
 - When DK/REF are not explicitly provided, respondents tend to choose middle category more often (regardless of mode and device)
 - Higher rates of DK/NA when items are presented via small grids
 - Handheld device users tend to choose middle category more often when items are presented in a no-grid format (marginal significance).

Questions?

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Thank You!

