STUDENTS

Dariya   Ilya
Kamila   Ular

"Talking Dirty": Exploring Comfort Levels of L1 Russian - L2 English Students when Swearing in Russian and English.

Research Team

- Ilya - idea, stimuli, abstract;

- Kamila - stimuli, experiment design, coding;

- Ular - metadata organization, analyzing raw data, presentation;

- Dariya - stimuli, analyzing raw data, presentation

Interest in the Topic and its Relevance

- Ilya's capstone project examined the use of Russian and English swear words

- Prior Research showed that bilinguals might feel more comfortable swearing in their second languages

- Observing NU students, we noticed that they frequently swore in Russian and English, each with unique preferences
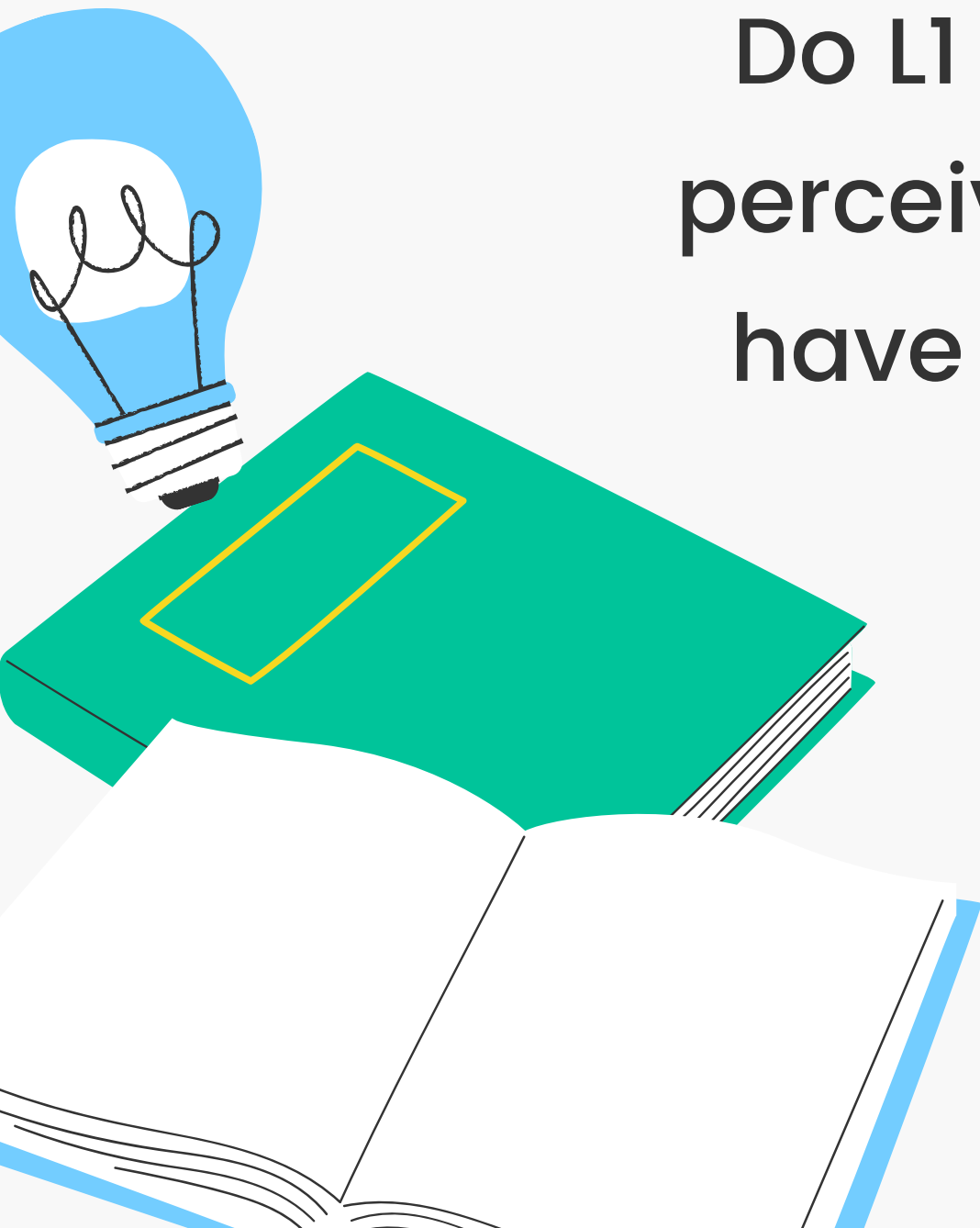
Previous Studies

- Some scholars suggest that bilingual individuals find swearing in their second languages more comfortable than in their first languages (Dewaele, 2004).

- In Dewaele's study, swear words in L2 were reported by the pariticants as "feeling not as bad" and "not having the weight."

- Dewaele's research tested various language pairs, such as Romanian-German, English-Italian, and Spanish-English.

Research Gap

- Limited data exists on the use of English swear words by individuals whose first language is Russian and second language is English.
- Previous studies have not specifically targeted students as the subjects of research on swearing in different languages.
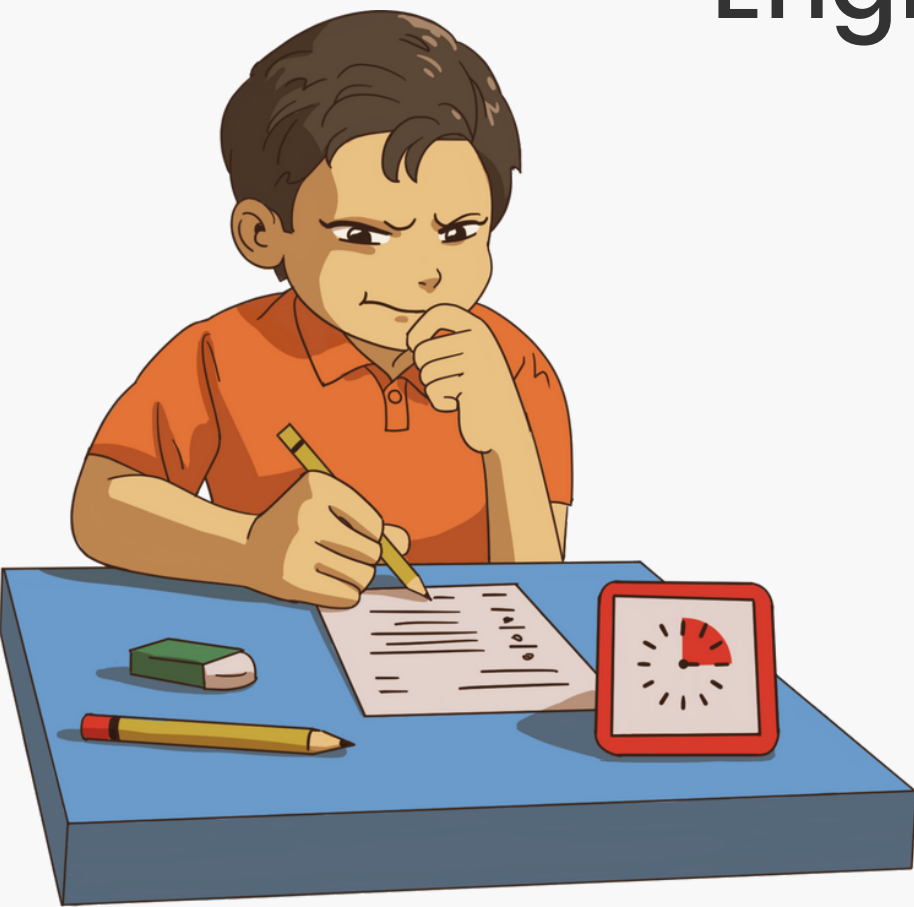
Research Question

Do L1 Russian - L2 English bilingual students perceive swear words in the two languages to have different comfort levels when they use them?

Hypothesis

L1 Russian - L2 English bilingual students will experience less discomfort when having to use English swear words rather than Russian swear words.

Methods

Method

Online self-paced survey with a 5-point Likert scale for comfort.

Location

NU, Astana, Kazakhstan

Collected Sample

102 online surveys completed via Qualtrics

Recruitment Method

Online recruitment via NU Telegram groups

Not comfortable at all	Not very comfortable	More or less comfortable	Very comfortable	Totally comfortable
○	○	○	○	○

Experimental Design

- Participants received 1 of 2 stimuli sets - 16 sentences each (8 - Russian swear words, 8 - English) and 16 filler sentences.

- The set was preceded by the question, "For the sentences below, answer the question: "How comfortable would you be saying these sentences in an everyday conversation?""

- Finally, metadata was collected.

Experimental Design (cont'd)

- Fixed variables:

1. Main: language of swear words (Russian vs English)

2. Secondary: gender, year of study, religious inclination

- Dependent variable - level of comfort when saying swear words

Sample Stimuli

1a. **Фак**, я пасту уронил на белые брюки.

1b. **Пизд*ц**, я пасту уронил на белые брюки.

9a. Я **профакапился** с этим документом.

9b. Я **проеб*лся** с этим документом.
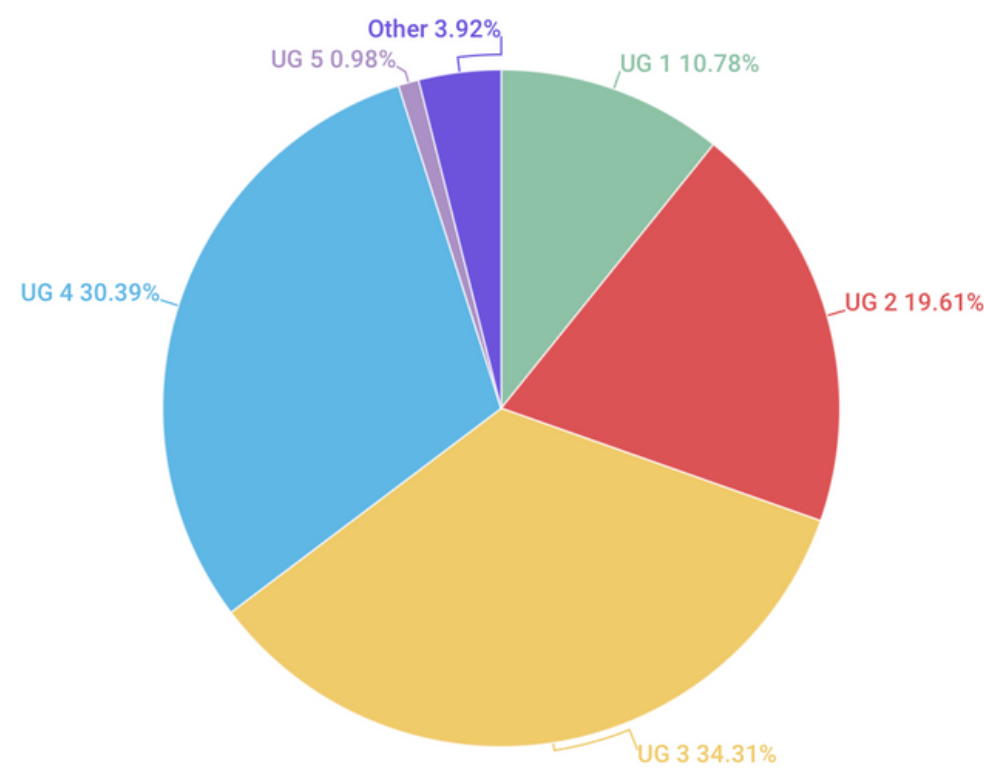
Filler Stimuli:

Омагад, и давно они встречаются?

Predictions

Sentences containing English swear words will be rated by participants as more comfortable to say than ones with Russian swear words
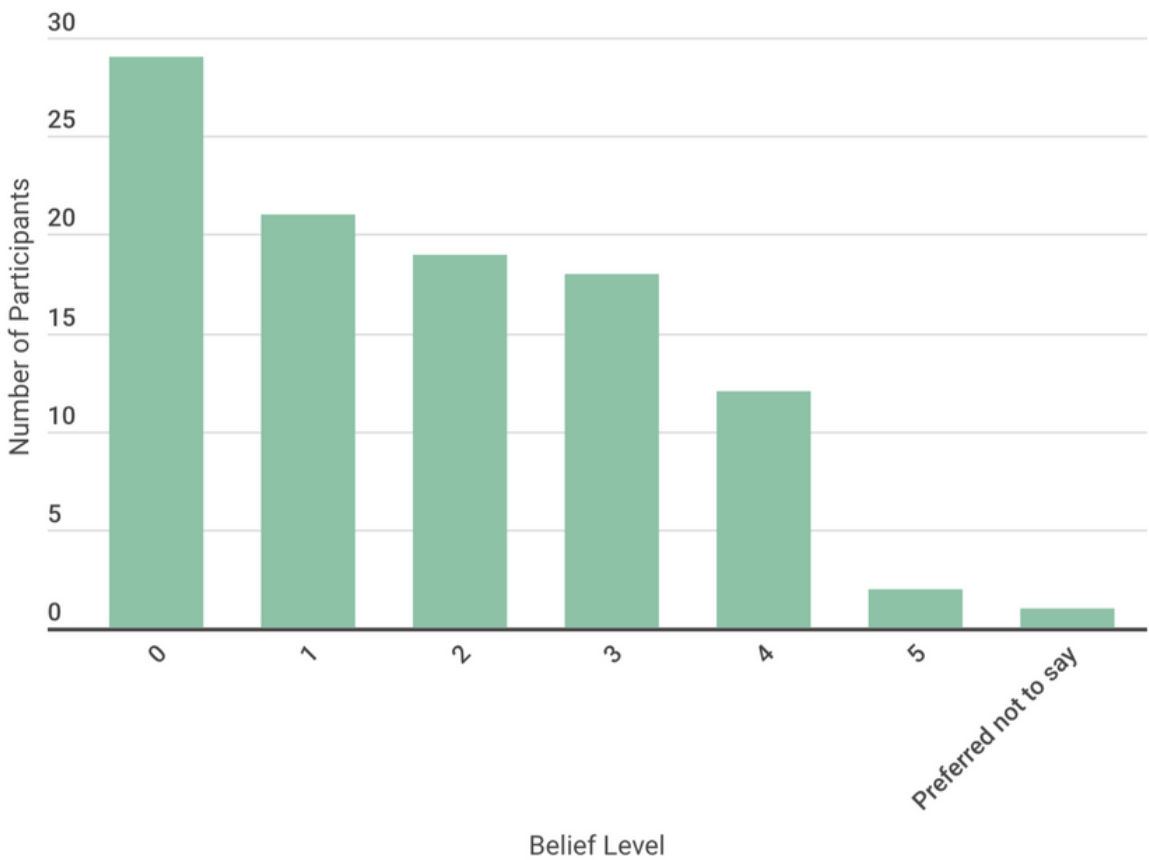
Our Participants

Student Distribution by Year

Other 3.92%
UG 5 0.98%
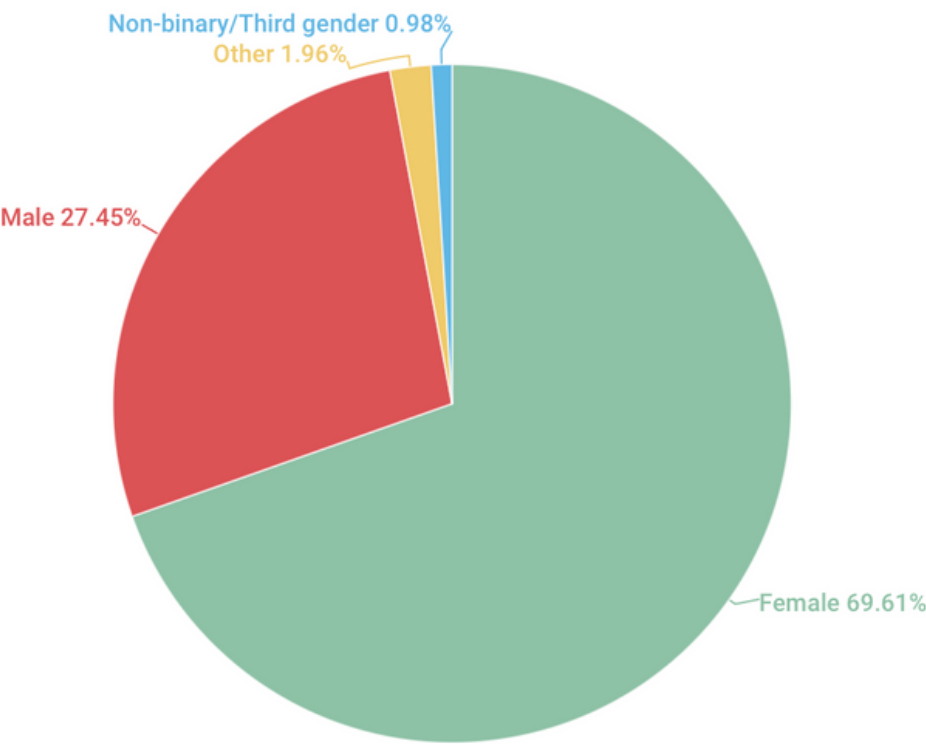UG 1 10.78%
UG 4 30.39%
UG 2 19.61%
UG 3 34.31%

Distribution of students by year of study, showing undergraduates from UG 1 to UG 5 and other categories including MA students.

Religious Beliefs

Belief Level

Distribution of religious beliefs among participants, ranging from 0 to 5, with a few choosing not to disclose their views.

Gender Distribution

Non-binary/Third gender 0.98%
Other 1.96%
Male 27.45%
Female 69.61%

A pie chart showing the distribution of gender among participants with 71% female, 28% male, 2% other, and 1% non-binary/third gender.

Results: Raw Data

Mean comfort level of an **English** swear word = **2.80** ("not very comfortable" - "more or less comfortable")

Mean comfort level of a **Russian** swear word = **3.71** ("more or less comfortable" - "very comfortable")

Results: Raw Data (cont'd)

People's favourites (Ru/Eng):

1b. **Пизд*ц**, я пасту уронил на белые брюки. (4.11)

2a. **Ватафак**, как они смогли за минуту забрать все места? (3.64)

Results: Raw Data (cont'd)

People's unfavourites (Ru/Eng):

14b. Осторожно, не **на*бнись** на льду. (2.88)

6a. Так что придется все это терпеть, **мазафака**. (1.80)

Statistical Analysis

Ran 19 statistical mixed effect models

	df	AIC
model_Mensw	6	4616.120
model_Mgend	6	4812.135
model_Mhearfreq	6	4799.579
model_Mlangofswear	6	4810.494
model_Mlangofswear_ensw	7	4616.349
model_Mlangofswear_rusw	7	4616.349
model_Mrel	6	4745.897
model_Mrel_ensw	7	4549.767
model_Mrel_rusw	7	4549.767
model_Mrelgen	7	4747.525
model_MrelHearfreq	7	4734.900
model_Mrusw	6	4616.120
model_Msayfreq	6	4785.660
model_Msayhearfreq	7	4786.109
model_Mtongue	6	4812.220
model_MtongueEnsw	7	4617.970
model_MtongueHearfreq	7	4801.486
model_MtongueRusw	7	4617.970
model_Myear	6	4810.138

RStudio®

Package: Ordinal

CL**M**M

Cumulative Link
Mixed Models

Hypothesis: Disproved

People generally rated sentences with English swearwords as less comfortable than ones with Russian swearwords

Compare:

```
            Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
en_swear1   -1.34534    0.09865   -13.64   <2e-16 ***
```

```
            Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
ru_swear     1.34533    0.09865    13.64   <2e-16 ***
```

Hypothesis: Disproved

People generally rated sentences with English swearwords as less comfortable than ones with Russian swearwords

Recall:

9a. Я профакапился с этим документом.

Totally comfortable - 9

Very comfortable - 9

More or less comfortable - 11

Not very comfortable - 12

Not comfortable at all - 10

9b. Я пр*@*бался с этим документом.

Totally comfortable - 30

Very comfortable - 6

More or less comfortable - 9

Not very comfortable - 3

Not comfortable at all - 3

Other analyzed variables: Religion

Higher religious inclination was associated with lower comfortability ratings

```
              Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
religious -0.28556      0.08432  -3.386 0.000708 ***
```

Effect of religious inclination is consistent
regardless of the type of stimulus:

```
              Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
ru_swear    1.36091      0.09939  13.693  < 2e-16 ***
religious  -0.30791      0.09212  -3.342 0.000831 ***
```

```
               Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
en_swear1   -1.36090      0.09939 -13.693  < 2e-16 ***
religious   -0.30791      0.09213  -3.342 0.000831 ***
```

Other analyzed variables

Gender and Year: not significant

```
Coefficients:
            Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
gender_ch    0.09677    0.19630    0.493    0.622
```

```
            Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
year_ch      -0.1654     0.1102   -1.501    0.133
```

Why could it be the case?

Frequency can be an explanation: "Even in bilinguals who perceive themselves equally proficient in their first and second language, the preferred language for swearing is the first language" (Dewaele, 2010)

Based on the table, 90 out of 102 participants swear in Russian only 47 - in English

Which language do you prefer to swear in?

Russian only – 36

English and Russian – 28

Kazakh and Russian – 14

Kazakh, Russian, and English – 12

English only – 7

Do not swear – 4

English and Korean - 1

Kazakh only – 0

Why could it be the case? #2

In some cases, naturalness of the data might have influenced participants' judgement

6a. Так что придется все это терпеть, мазафака.

Totally comfortable - 3

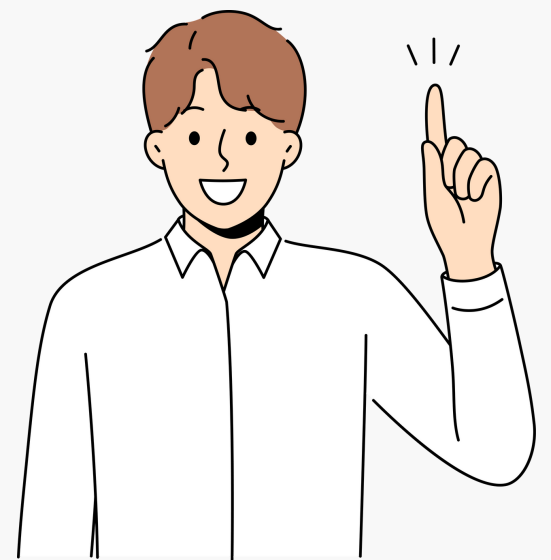Very comfortable - 1

More or less comfortable - 7

Not very comfortable - 12

Not comfortable at all - 28

Limitations and Future Research

- Textual mode of communication
  - Future study: Consider voicing examples
- Obscene synonyms and interjections were not differentiated
  - Future study: Study obscene synonyms and interjections separately
- Participants are not very diverse in regard to age groups, and they come from the same setting
  - Consider more diverse population with different age groups and from different settings

References

Dewaele, J. M. (2004). The emotional force of swearwords and taboo words in the speech of multilinguals. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 25(2-3), 204–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630408666529

Dewaele, J. M. (2010). "Christ fucking shit Merde!. Language preferences for swearing among maximally proficient multilinguals." Sociolinguistic Studies 4 (3): 595–614. https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.v4i3.595

Link to Our Repository

https://github.com/kamilakl/swears_native-borr_expsem2024

STUDENTS

Dariya   Ilya
  Kamila   Ular

Thank you for your attention!