

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: Judging a Book by Its Cover: Investigating the Influence of Test Takers'

Physical Attractiveness in Synchronous Oral Communication Assessments

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Invitation to be part of the study

You are invited to participate in a research study. This form has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate—please review it carefully. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary, and you can stop at any time.

Please ask the principal investigator any questions you have about the study or about this form before deciding to participate.

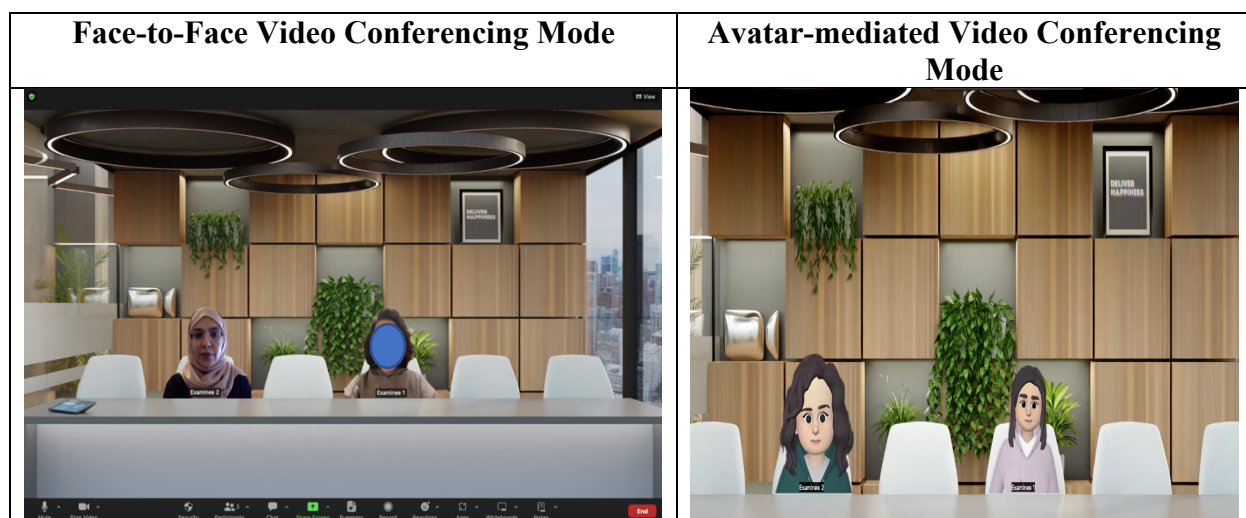
Aim and Purpose of the Study

This proposed study will look into whether the physical attractiveness is or is not a potential source of variance in test takers' scores when performing an oral communication (OC) test. It also aims at finding whether raters' assign similar or different scores to the test takers in two modes: (1) when exposed to their physical attractiveness (Face-to-Face video conferencing mode) and (2) when physical attractiveness is not present (Avatar-mediated conferencing mode).

Description of Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an oral communication test twice once in an Avatar-Mdiated Video Conferencing (AMVC) mode and once in a Face-to-Face video conferencing mode (F2FVC)

- In the F2FVC mode, you will be invited to attend the exam in a reserved room on campus. The exam administrator will show you where to sit and will open the video conferencing program so you can start conducting the test virtually. The researcher will be at another place on campus and will meet with you virtually.
- Similarly, in the AMVC mode, you will be directed to a reserved room on campus, and the exam administrator will show you where to sit and open the video conferencing program. In this session, you will be assigned an avatar that represents you. Figure 1 below shows you the difference between the two modes.



- In each session, you will be conducting a paired discussion task with another participant.
- The Expected time for each session of the exam is about 10 minutes.
- The approximate time between the two tests (two sessions) is **three weeks** and each session will be video recorded and saved in CyBox which is a secured cloud drive.
- During the F2FVC session, the researcher, who is the examiner, **will take two photos (screenshots) of you**. These photos will be used to judge your physical attractiveness by a panel of judges using a physical attractiveness questionnaire. The photos will be highly secured and will be shared via the researcher personal laptop with the panel of judges so that they cannot download or save the photos by any mean. Thus, stay assured that your photos will be kept secured.
- The main aim behind judging your physical attractiveness is to see whether the raters will be affected by your physical attractiveness when rating your speaking performance.
- Also, the researcher is curious to know if raters will provide you similar scores when conducting the exam in the in the F2FVC mode (where they can see your physical appearance) compared to the AMVC mode (where they cannot see your physical appearance but an avatar).

Benefits to You and to Others

Your participation in this research will add a great value to the field of language assessment. With your participation, we will be able to identify whether physical attractiveness of the test takers is or is not a potential source of threat to oral communication assessment. If not, that is a good indication toward the fairness of OC exams. If physical attractiveness does affect your score, avatars might be recommended to be used in future OC exams.

Confidentiality

Be assured that your information will be kept confidential and will not be made public without your permission. People who have access to the research data are: (1) the researcher, (2) the

supervisor, (3) the raters and (4) members of the institutional review board (IRB), a committee that ensures the safety and rights of human beings involved in the study.

- Data collection will take place within a designated, private room on the campus, away from public view.
- In Avatar-mediated Video Conferencing mode, the participant will be seeing an avatar instead of the actual person's appearance.
- All collected instruments will be saved in CyBox.
- All collected instruments will be saved in files that prevent unauthorized access except for the researchers, supervisors, or IRB committee for security purposes.
- When reporting the results (e.g., in journal articles or conference presentations), IDs/pseudonyms will be used to refer to you rather than your real name.
- Photos and video recordings will not be published or shared when results are disseminated.
- After the study is complete and the related research article(s) approved, all photos and video recordings will be securely deleted.
- To protect everyone's identity, all participants will be advised to not disclose any information about the research outside the research context.

Risks or Discomforts

While participating in this study, raters who will rate your video recorded performance in the test may be able to recognize you in real life settings. This could result in some embarrassment, but raters will sign a consent form to not share any information about the participants and to maintain confidentiality of your identity.

Other than the above mentioned, no harm or risk of any kind is expected during or after your participation in this study. There is no risk of criminal liability, civil liability, or damage to your financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

Compensation

- You will be compensated for participating in this study. You will be compensated \$10 for the first session and another \$10 if you complete the second session (a total of \$20).

Withdraw from the study

- After you have agreed to take part in the study, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences and without providing any reasons for doing so.
- If you end your participation, any data already gathered will be deleted and omitted from the analysis.

Contact Information

If you have any concerns, questions, or inquiries about your participation in this project or any parts of it, feel free to contact the researchers: Fatimah Aseeri at fmaseeri@iastate.edu. You can also contact the IRB committee at (515) 294-4566 or via email IRB@iastate.edu

Future Use of the data

Information about you collected for this study may be shared with other researchers or journal editors. It may also be used for other research studies.

- Only de-identified textual or numerical data will be shared. No video or audio recordings, as well as photographs or screenshots of the study participants will be disclosed.
- The researcher will make sure that your identity cannot be linked to the information we share.
- The researcher will not ask you for additional permission to share the information

Consent

Make sure that you have read the information about this study. If any further questions or information is needed, you can contact the researchers using the contact details provided above. Before we begin the study visit, you will be asked to sign a paper copy of this document.