



School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6AL

**Study: Re-examining taboo, emotionally valenced,
and emotionally neutral word norms**

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Supervisors:

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Phone:

0118 378 7637

Experimenter:

Christopher Dobson

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We would be grateful if you could assist us by participating in our study '*Re-examining taboo, emotionally valenced, and emotionally neutral word norms*'.

What will I be asked to do?

The study comprises a single, online testing session that takes approximately **50 minutes** to complete. Procedurally, you will be asked to rate 120 different words on 6 separate rating scales by providing a score for each scale from 1 to 9 by clicking on the appropriate response number based on your opinion. You will also be required to select what category you feel the word you are rating best fits into. The words will be presented in four blocks of 30 words, and you will be allowed a break between each block should you wish. **Please note, that within the 120 words you must rate, 83 are 'swearwords' by which we mean they may be considered taboo/offensive.** After you have rated all 120 words, you will be required to complete three questionnaires: one measuring verbal aggressiveness, one measuring trait anger, and one measuring different personality traits before completing a short demographics questionnaire that also includes two items: one asking how religious you consider yourself and the other how out of control you feel when saying a swearword out loud in response to pain/frustration. Once you've provided these responses you have completed the experimental procedure and will be debriefed to the study's aims. We are collecting basic demographic information to monitor the diversity and inclusivity of those who take part in this study as one aim of this study is to increase the generalisability of our knowledge about how people perceive different types of words.

Who can participate in this study and are there any benefits to taking part?

You can participate in this study if you are over 18 years old and a native English speaker. This is defined as someone born in, or having moved to before the age of 2 years old, a country where English is the first language. **If you do not meet either of these requirements, please withdraw from the study before starting.**

If you are a University of Reading psychology student, recruited through the SONA recruitment system, you will earn 1 credit upon completion of the study. However, if you were not recruited through the SONA system you will be entered into a draw (made once all data collection has finished) to win one of three, £75 Amazon gift vouchers.

Are there any risks or disadvantages to taking part?

This study is investigating how people perceive different swearwords across several different scales and how this may be influenced by our individual differences. As a result, the procedure does involve reading and thinking about 83 words that can be considered swearwords. This list of 83 swearwords, however, does not include any ethnic or racial slurs.



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Due to the need to display each word on screen while you make your ratings, we would advise that you complete the study alone, in a quiet, private space. Furthermore, if you are uncomfortable with swearing or swearwords in general, we would advise you do not take part in the study.

What will happen to my data/how will it be protected?

Your data will be kept anonymous, confidential, and securely stored, with only a random ID identifying it. The final dataset collected from this study will be preserved and made available in anonymised form, so that data can be re-used by others. This dataset will contain the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for each word across the six rating scales, as well as the total individual difference questionnaire scores and demographic information of each participant. No personally identifiable information will be contained within this dataset.

Who can I contact about data privacy and storage?

The organisation responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: University of Reading, Information Management & Policy Services, Whiteknights House, Pepper Lane, Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6UR.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares, and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

As part of consenting to take part in this study, you will be asked if you are happy to be contacted about future research. This is entirely optional; you can still take part in the study even if you do not wish to be contacted in the future about other studies. Additionally, if you agree to be contacted but later change your mind, you can be removed from the list by emailing the study supervisor – Prof. Philip Beaman (c.p.beaman@reading.ac.uk).

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

- Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register
- Access your personal data or ask for a copy
- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
- Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
- Restrict uses of your data
- Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study



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Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes. You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk>. You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Research Ethics Committee and given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct (2024-014-PB; expiry date: 31/12/2025).

Where can I get more information/who I can contact about this study?

Before taking part in this study, please make sure that you have asked any questions you may have and that you have received a satisfactory answer. If you do have questions and/or concerns about this study, please contact Christopher Dobson (c.g.dobson@pgr.reading.ac.uk) before continuing.

Thank you for taking part in our study.

Prof. Philip Beaman, Dr Rich Harrison, and Christopher Dobson



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Please read the following, and tick the box preceding it, to confirm you have read and agree to it.

- ☐ I understand participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without detriment, by simply closing my browser window.
- ☐ I have read the information sheet regarding the project: *'Re-examining taboo, emotionally valenced, and emotionally neutral word norms'* and understand the experimental procedure – especially that it involves rating 120 words of which 83 are considered 'swearwords'.
- ☐ I confirm that I have contacted the researchers prior to this study to ask any questions that I may have about the study, and these have been answered to my satisfaction
- ☐ I understand what information is collected about me, how it will be used in relation to the study, how it will be kept safe, and my rights in relation to my data.
- ☐ I understand that the data collected as part of this study will be preserved and made openly available in an anonymized form, so that they can be consulted and re-used by others.
- ☐ I understand that I can download the 'Study Information Sheet' and this 'Consent Form' by clicking the link at the bottom of this form, or by requesting copies by emailing the experimenter listed above.
- ☐ I confirm that I am over the age of 18.
- ☐ I confirm that I am a native English speaker (as defined on the *'Study Information Sheet'*).
- ☐ Please tick the preceding box if you are happy to be contacted about future studies (optional)
- ☐ I understand that by clicking '**Consent & Start**' that I am providing **informed consent** to take part in this study.

Name:

Email Address:

This study has been reviewed by the School Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct (2024-014-PB; expiry date: 31/12/2025).

Thank you for taking part in our study.

Prof. Philip Beaman, Dr Rich Harrison, and Christopher Dobson