University of Reading

School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences

Whiteknights, Reading, RG6 6AL

Study: Re-examining the role of eye-contact within online disinhibition on the behavioural effects of swearing

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Supervisor:	Email	Phone:
Prof. Philip Beaman	c.p.beaman@reading.ac.uk	0118 378 7637
Experimenter:		
Christopher Dobson	c.g.dobson@pgr.reading.ac.uk	

We would be grateful if you could assist us by participating in our study *'Re-examining the role of eye-contact within online disinhibition on the behavioural effects of swearing'*. Online disinhibition is the psychological phenomenon whereby increased anonymity in online interactions reduces the level of accountability felt. It is suggested that this phenomenon may explain why behavioural effects of swearing (e.g., an increase in pain tolerance and physical strength) do not always replicate using online testing methodologies. We are, therefore, interested in understanding how methodological changes may alter levels of online disinhibition, altering any subsequent behavioural effect of vocalising a swearword.

What will I be asked to do?

The study comprises **three** testing sessions, each taking approximately **10 - 15 minutes.** Each session is online and uses the same procedure – the only difference is that in one session you'll be asked to make eye-contact with a video showing the whole researcher, in another, a video showing just his eyes, and in another, just a static image of his eyes, whilst completing a vocalisation task.

Procedurally, you will be asked to repeat either a swearword (Fuck) or a non-swearword (Flat) out loud, at your normal speaking volume and rate, for 20 seconds. After this, you will undertake a computerised 'balloon inflation' task where you score as many points as possible by pumping up an onscreen balloon without it bursting. Upon completion of the balloon inflation task, you will complete a lexical decision task, responding to whether a displayed word rhymes with the word you vocalised. You will then provide ratings of how offensive the vocalised word is to you and how humorous you found repeating it. Next you will complete a self-report emotional questionnaire. After this, you will be given a short break in which you can solve a wordsearch puzzle. You will then repeat all the tasks except the wordsearch, vocalising the other word for 20 seconds before the balloon inflation task. We are also collecting basic demographic information to monitor the diversity and inclusivity of those who take part.

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 can earn 0.75 credits upon completion of the study.

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Are there any risks or disadvantages to taking part?

This study is investigating how repeating a swearword may affect someone's subsequent behaviour. As a result, the procedure does involve repeating the swearword 'Fuck' for 20 seconds in each testing session. the word search tasks (outlined earlier) include the use of written swear words. The swear word has been chosen to ensure it can illicit any required effect without being overly offensive. No other swearword is used or displayed as part of this study.

Due to the need to repeat the word 'Fuck' out loud during all testing sessions, we would advise that you complete before sessions alone, in a quiet, private space. Also, if you are uncomfortable with repeating the word 'Fuck' out loud, would advise you not to take part.

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 mean number of pumps on exploded balloons and demographic information of each participant. No 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:

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- 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

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 application has been reviewed by the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Research Ethics Committee and given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct (2023-154-PB; expiry date: 29/09/2024).

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 and Christopher Dobson

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STUDY CONSENT FORM

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Experimenter:		
Christopher Dobson	c.g.dobson@pgr.reading.ac.uk	

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 the role of eye-contact within online disinhibition on the behavioural effects of swearing'* and understand the experimental procedure – especially that it involves repeating out loud the swearword 'Fuck' for 20 seconds.

☐ 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.

☐ Please tick the preceding box if you are happy to be contacted about future studies (optional)

☐ I understand that by clicking '**Continue**' 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 (2023-154-PB; expiry date: 29/09/2024).

Thank you for taking part in our study.

Prof. Philip Beaman and Christopher Dobson