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## UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics Approval Reference: R59912/RE002

Thank you for your interest in this study. We [Alexander Wilson and Prof. Dorothy Bishop at the University of Oxford] are investigating how people understand conversation.

Please read through these terms before deciding if you'd like to participate. You may ask any questions before taking part by contacting the researcher (details below).

The aim of this study is to investigate how we understand conversation. While vocabulary and grammar are important in understanding conversation, it is likely that other skills are required as well. For example, people need to understand how context is important in understanding why someone is saying something – for instance, if you say 'dinner is on the table', you are not so much telling people where dinner is, as inviting them to come and eat! Currently, we know very little about how people understand meaning in conversation. Also, it is likely that some individuals have difficulties with understanding conversations, as well as with language more generally. However, we don't know for sure, so we're using this project to learn more. We hope that our results will be useful in understanding the kinds of problems some people have with understanding conversation.

### **Can I take part?**

We are inviting adults aged 18 and over who have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder (this includes Asperger's) to take part. You would need to speak English as your first language and have access to a computer with a good internet connection and audio to complete the study. It is also important that participants do not have severe hearing/sight loss or a history of neurological disease or head injury.

### **What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

In this study, we would ask you to do three things. We would guide you through step-by-step over email. Firstly, we would ask you to complete some online questionnaires. In one questionnaire, we would ask about your autism diagnosis, medical history, and language. The other questionnaire would ask about your day-to-day experience of communicating with people. These questionnaires should take about 30-40 minutes to complete. After you have completed the questionnaire, we will contact you over email about the second and third parts of the study.

In the second part, we would ask you to do some online language tasks. These involve watching animations, listening to audio and reading some words/short texts. You answer questions about what you have seen and heard by clicking buttons on the screen or pressing the keyboard. For other questions, you are asked to give

short written responses. No background knowledge is required. These tasks should take about one hour to complete.

In the third part of the study, we would ask you to visit the Psychology Department at the University of Oxford. One of the researchers will do some communication activities with you. These will include some conversations about everyday topics and some more structured interview questions about your experiences in day-to-day situations. We would ask to make a video recording of these interactions. We will also ask you to do some more short language tasks on the computer. This session will last one hour.

We would compensate you for your time with a £20 voucher for Amazon, sent to your email address. We do NOT require your bank details for this. We will also reimburse your travel expenses for travelling to the Psychology Department.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you whether or not you take part. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether or not to participate. If you do agree to participate, you may withdraw yourself from the study at any time, without giving a reason, by advising the researchers of this decision. For the online parts of the study, you may withdraw before submitting your answers by closing the internet browser. If you decide to withdraw from the study after you've already taken part in one or more parts, we will delete any information we have about you. We are only able to reimburse participants who complete the study.

### **How will my data be used?**

All your answers are strictly confidential, and all questions in this study are optional. You do not need to give information if you do not want to. For the online parts of the study, your IP address will not be stored. Your answers will only be identified by a code number, and will be kept in password-protected spreadsheets on the University server at the University of Oxford.

The information you provide as part of the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you can be identified (e.g. your name, date of birth, video recording), is known as **personal data**. This includes more sensitive categories of personal data (**sensitive data**) such as information concerning your medical history or autism diagnosis. It does not include data where the identity has been removed (anonymous data).

All research data will be stored for at least 3 years after public release of the work of the research. We may retain and store your personal data for an additional period of time as necessary for the purposes of the study, and for further research.

Video recordings will also be stored on the University server. We will produce numerical scores for the communication activities in the videos, and we will also write transcriptions of our conversations. These transcriptions will be kept in password-protected word documents on the University server. In future publications, we may quote statements that you make during the conversations. This will be done respectfully and anonymously. However, you do not need to consent to this if you prefer not to have your words quoted. There will be an optional box on the consent form that you can tick if you are happy to be quoted (we will not include your name under any circumstances).

We will require your email address in order to arrange the study, and in order to send you the Amazon gift voucher. Email addresses will be stored securely in password-protected spreadsheets on the University server, and will be deleted three years after completion of the study. We will ask your permission to keep

your email address beyond this period, in order to contact you about future research. This is entirely optional.

The language tasks and questionnaires will be presented using Gorilla, an online platform for collecting data. Gorilla is fully compliant with all current data protection and security policies, including the Data Protection Act 2018.

The results of the study will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will probably be published open access, meaning that it is available to every internet user. We also aim to publish the results in scientific journals, though this may be two or three years after the study has finished.

### **Who will have access to my data?**

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/individualrights/>.

We would like your permission to use your anonymised data in future studies, and to make the data publicly available in an online data repository for other researchers to use. Any personal information that could identify you will be removed before data are made public. No personal data will be shared. Any personal information that you choose to give in this study (such as your medical history) will be stored securely on the University server, will only be accessed by researchers directly involved in this project, and will be deleted three years after completion of the research.

Responsible members of the University of Oxford, funders may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure we are complying with guidelines, or as otherwise required by law.

The principal researcher is Alexander Wilson, who is attached to the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford. This project is being supervised by Prof. Dorothy Bishop, who is at the same department.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee [R59912/RE002].

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to the researcher [Alexander Wilson. Tel: 01865 271386. Email: alexander.wilson2@psy.ox.ac.uk] or their supervisor [Prof. Dorothy Bishop. Tel: 01865 271369. Email: dorothy.bishop@psy.ox.ac.uk], who will do their best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford, who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner.

Chair, Medical Sciences Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee  
Email: ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk

Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

Thank you for reading this information. You can ask questions by contacting the researcher (Alexander Wilson. Email: [alexander.wilson2@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alexander.wilson2@psy.ox.ac.uk). Tel: 01865 271386).

If you would be interested in participating in the study, please write your email address in the box below, and we will send you a link to the study. You can then decide if you would like to take part.