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Instructions for “Give me a break”

Explanation of the purpose of the study. This experiment is intended to find out how fast you can decide whether a word you hear appears or does not appear in a sentence you are reading.

Expected duration of your participation. We expect that it will take one hour or less for you to finish the study.

Foreseeable risks or discomforts. None.

Benefits. Although participating in this research will not benefit you directly, it is of general social benefit because it will increase our understanding of how people use and understand language.

Confidentiality. We assure you that your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Data collected from this experiment may be made available to other researchers, but all data will be preserved or distributed in a completely anonymous format – with no personal identification marks.

Participation is voluntary. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. You are free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice.

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Instructions. In each trial of the experiment, you will read two phrases and then answer a comprehension question about the phrases. You will hear and react to a word presented to you over the headphones after each phrase. There are two parts to this experiment. Detailed instructions for the experiment are provided below:

- You will read 100 phrase pairs.
- The phrase pairs will be presented on the computer screen one phrase at a time.
- Once you have read and understood the first phrase, press 3 on the response box. When you press 3, you will hear a word over headphones.
- In the **FIRST** session of the experiment, please say whether the word you just heard was the **FIRST** word in the phrase you just read on the computer screen. Please respond *yes* or *no* to the sound file **AS FAST AS YOU CAN**.
- In the **SECOND** session of the experiment, please say whether the word you just heard was the **LAST** word in the phrase you just read on the computer screen. Please respond *yes* or *no* to the sound file **AS FAST AS YOU CAN**.
- Now read and understand the second phrase, and press 3 on the response box. When you press 3, you will hear a word over headphones again.
- Again: In the **FIRST** session of the experiment, please say whether the word you just heard was the **FIRST** word in the phrase you just read on the computer screen. Please respond *yes* or *no* to the sound file **AS FAST AS YOU CAN**.

- Again: In the SECOND session of the experiment, please say whether the word you just heard was the LAST word in the phrase you just read on the computer screen. Please respond *yes* or *no* to the sound file AS FAST AS YOU CAN.
- Before each session you will be told which word in the sentence to pay attention to.
- When you press 3 at the end of a phrase pair, you will see a screen displaying “Ready for the question? Then press 3”. Pressing 3 gets you to a comprehension question and three answer choices. Press 2, 3 or 4 depending on your answer choice. The choices and button numbers will be displayed on the monitor along with the question.
- Upon answering a question, you will see a screen displaying “Ready for the sentence? Then press 3”. If you are not ready for the next sentence, feel free to take a break at this time before continuing.

How to respond to sound files:

- Press 2 if the word you heard is the first (first session) or last (second session) word in the phrase; press 4 if it is NOT the first (first session) or last (second session) word in the phrase. These answer choices will NOT be displayed on the screen, so in order to be as fast as possible, you should try to remember that 2 means “yes, the word is in the phrase” and that 4 means “no, the word is not in the phrase”.
- The buttons on the response box are labeled with “yes” and “no” in case you forget which button records which answer. Please look at these labels only if it is really necessary: your responses will be timed and you will lose time if you need to verify which button means “yes” and which button means “no” before answering.
- After responding to the sound presentation, press 3 to either continue reading the phrases or move on to the comprehension question.

Before the main experiment, you have the opportunity to practice the task and to ask any question you may have about the experiment.