

# Research article review

Psychology



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Research Article Review Ackil, J. K., & Zaragoza, M. S. (2011). Forced fabrication versus interviewer suggestions: Differences in false memory depend on how memory is assessed. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 25(6), 933-942. The goal of the current research was to compare incidence of false memories resulting from suggestive interviews involving forced fabrication with those involving exposure to misleading suggestions by the interviewer. Type of fictitious post-event information was manipulated within Pp (FF vs MS) and then the effects were compared relative to controls across several different retrieval and test conditions in two experiments. For the first experiment Ackil and Zaragoza found their participants in a general psychology class at a small liberal arts institution in rural Southern Minnesota who received extra credit for their participation. The total number of participants was 268. There was random assignment in this first experiment 136 Pp one week retention condition; 80 warned, 56 were not and 132 Pp two week retention condition; 76 warned, 56 were not. The method was: All Pp watched the same " eyewitness event, " a 9 minute excerpt from the film " Looking for Miracles. " All participants were all exposed to the same set of true and false event questions. For some false event questions Pp forced to generate the response which is considered a force fabrication condition. For other false event questions Pp read response aloud which is considered a misleading suggestion condition. Between experiments hypothesis was: there will be differences in false memory reports depending on the type of test, source recognition vs. narrative recall. Dependent variable: Extent to which Pp misattributed forcibly fabricated and suggested items to the witnessed event by answering affirmatively to questions on source recognition test. Measure of false memory was source

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recognition test, which encourages Pp to retrieve source specific info and tends to decrease false memory errors. Independent variables: Retention interval (one week or two weeks) and warning (warned that interviewer had asked false questions or not). The hypothesis: forced fabrication and suggested items will produce false memories for participants across variables (warned vs. not warned, 1 week vs. 2 week interval). The results did not show differences in false memory rates for subgroups. Warning alone nor verbal resistance alone became correlated with false memory rates. Memory for actual source of post event items was better for fabricated items than suggested ones. Although the experiment assessed time intervals and warnings, researchers found an unplanned factor of verbal resistance that needed further examination. For experiment two the method was the same as experiment one except for a few exceptions. Every Pp forced to fabricate 3 items and read aloud 6 suggested answers to 6 false event questions. All Pp received a free recall test and all Pp were tested after a 2 week retention interval and all received a pre-test warning. There was only 69 students this time but taken from the same participants in experiment one but randomly. The dependent variable: The incidence of forcibly fabricated and suggested item that Pp gave to the witnessed event. The independent variable: False item type (Fabricated, suggested, and control) and resistance (Pp resisted or did not). Hypothesis: Forced fabrication will lead to greater false memory recall than misleading suggestions. The results for experiment two were the mean proportion of post-event items falsely recalled as a function of post-event item type (items fabricated with verbal resistance, items fabricated without verbal resistance, and suggested items). Items fabricated without verbal resistance were typically accompanied by more passive forms of

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resistance. Pp (when given warnings and verbal resisting) was more likely to freely recall their forced fabrication than those items that had been suggested (led to greater false memory). I found this article to be very interesting. I learned that the evidence from this study indicates that predictions about suggestive interview techniques resulting in false memory should look at the context or conditions under which the memory is assessed. I also learned that misinformation in interviews leads witnesses to false memory.