

Emotional arousal makes us better at swearing

May 8 2014

People swear more colourfully when they are in a emotionally aroused state. This suggests that swearing is closely related to emotion.

This is the finding of a research project, funded by the British Psychological Society's 2013 Undergraduate Research Assistantship Scheme, by Amy Zile and Dr Richard Stephens from Keele University.

The study, along with eight other winning research projects, will be presented today, Wednesday 7 May 2014, at the British Psychological Society annual conference hosted at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

Amy Zile said: "There is still uncertainty as to why people swear. Is it due to not being articulate and low IQ or it is a form of [emotional expression](#)? If it is a form of emotional expression then understanding the processes involved is an important part of understanding [human emotion](#)."

Our study found that when we raised people's emotional arousal level they became more proficient at swearing such that they were able to produce a greater number of different swear words and expressions in a one-minute period. This provides experimental support for the theory that [swearing](#) is emotional language."

Provided by British Psychological Society

Citation: Emotional arousal makes us better at swearing (2014, May 8) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-05-emotional-arousal.html>

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