There *is* such a thing as a stupid question:

Question disclosure in strategic communication

Julia A. Minson

University of Pennsylvania

Nicole E. Ruedy

University of Washington

Maurice E. Schweitzer

University of Pennsylvania

Word count: 3,978
Citation count: 40

Correspondence:
Julia A. Minson
The Wharton School
University of Pennsylvania
3730 Walnut St.
553 Jon M. Huntsman Hall
jminson@wharton.upenn.edu

Abstract

In addition to soliciting information, questions *disclose* information. We introduce the Question Disclosure Model (QDM), a framework for understanding how questions influence responses, and report results from an experiment that tests its predictions. We compare *Negative Assumption* questions that presuppose a problem, *Positive Assumption* questions that presuppose the absence of a problem, and *General* questions that do not reference a problem. Compared to General questions, Positive Assumption and Negative Assumption questions reveal a greater level of knowledge on the part of the asker. Compared to General and Positive Assumption questions, Negative Assumption questions reveal a greater level of assertiveness. Consistent with the Question Disclosure Model, participants were most honest in response to a Negative Assumption question and least honest in response to a General question. The knowledge and assertiveness revealed by these questions mediated the relationship between the type of question asked and the content and valence of the response. (150 words)

There *is* such a thing as a stupid question:

Question disclosure in strategic communication

Imagine finding your dream apartment. Before signing the lease you ask the landlord: "The neighbors are ok, right?" "Oh, they're great!" comes the reply. You soon learn that "great," includes wild parties, undisciplined children, and a barking dog. As you listen to the loud music blaring from your neighbors' apartment, you wonder what you did wrong. After all, you *did ask* about the neighbors.

Individuals require information from others to guide decisions. Situations ranging from job interviews, to home purchases, to international negotiations are characterized by information dependence (see Adair & Brett, 2005; Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin & White, 2008; Gino & Moore, 2008). For example, in evaluating job candidates employers are dependent, at least in part, on the interviewee providing accurate information about their experience. In these settings, individuals seek information from counterparts who often have incentives to conceal unfavorable facts. We term interactions characterized by asymmetric information and motivated disclosure *strategic information exchanges*.

In strategic information exchanges, such as negotiations, scholars advise individuals to ask questions (e.g. Malhotra and Bazerman, 2007; Nierenberg, 1986; Shell, 1999; Thompson, 2005). This advice, however, is predicated on an incomplete conceptualizations of questions. Specifically, prior work has overlooked the critical role questions play in *revealing* information. In this paper, we develop the following thesis: the questions individuals ask not only solicit information, but also disclose information. In particular, questions reveal information about (1) the questioner's knowledge and

intentions, (2) the relationship between questioner and respondent, and (3) the norms of the social situation.

We define the previously unexplored phenomenon of questions revealing information as *question disclosure*. We develop a theoretical model for organizing prior, related findings and report experimental results that demonstrate question disclosure and its consequences.

The Question Disclosure Model

We introduce the *Question Disclosure Model (QDM)* to articulate how questions affect responses (Figure 1). According to the QDM, questions affect responses in three ways. First, questions serve a structural role in conversation. Second, questions guide the respondent's attention. Third, questions *reveal* information. This third function represents a substantial advance to extant research and theory. We integrate findings across psychology and linguistics to describe these influences.

Questions structure conversation

Questions structure conversation in several ways (e.g. Clark, 1996). For example, the question: "And what happened next?" moves the narrative forward. The question: "Do you know what I mean?" pauses the narrative to ensure understanding. Similarly, "side-sequences," can signal a need for clarification or additional information (e.g. "How did you know who was calling?").

According to Paul Grice (1989), questions determine the topic and level of detail of a reply by invoking conversational norms. For example, the question "The neighbors are ok, right?" should not be followed with a lengthy description of the water-heater. Such a reply would be both off topic and overly detailed.

Broadly, work in linguistics has investigated the structural role of questions. This work describes both the grammatical role questions play and how questions contribute to coherent and comprehensible conversation.

Questions guide attention

Psychologists have demonstrated that questions also influence responses more subtly by guiding attention. For example, Tversky and Kahneman (1974) found that even irrelevant anchors, such as randomly generated numbers, influenced answers to subsequent questions. Subsequent research demonstrated that such "anchoring effects" are driven by two mechanisms. First, individuals retrieve anchor-consistent information from memory (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001; Mussweiler, Strack & Pfeiffer, 2000). Second, once attention is drawn to a salient anchor, individuals fail to adjust sufficiently from that anchor (Epley & Gilovich, 2006). According to both accounts, questions influence responses by increasing the availability of specific information.

Similarly, question wording can influence responses by activating specific constructs (Loftus, 1975; Loftus and Palmer, 1974; Loftus and Zanni, 1975; Smith and Ellsworth, 1987). For example, Loftus and Palmer (1974) found that asking participants to judge the speed of two cars that "smashed" into each other elicited higher estimates of speed than asking participants to judge the speed of cars that "bumped" into each other. Loftus (1975) also found that participants recalled objects and events that they never observed if the researcher asked a prior question that presupposed the presence of those objects and events. For example, participants were more likely to recall a stop sign in a video (where no stop sign was present) if they first answered the question: "How fast was the car going when it ran the stop sign?" The authors suggested that after answering a

question that presupposed an object or event, participants retrieved representations from memory that were consistent with that presupposition.

In a different demonstration of the influence of question features on attention, Fischhoff, Slovic, and Lichtenstein (1978) documented the influence of "fault tree" structure. When evaluating the causes of a problem, participants overweighed salient causes or subcategories. For example, when asked why a car will not start, participants attributed greater blame to options that were specifically identified (e.g., battery trouble) than to broader or unmentioned categories. According to Fischhoff et al. (1978), "The fact that omission of major branches [of the fault tree] triggered only minimal awareness of the inadequacies of the pruned tree lent strong support to the availability hypothesis..." Similar theorizing with respect to the link between availability and likelihood judgments is incorporated into support theory (Tversky & Koehler, 1994).

Taken together, extensive research demonstrates that question characteristics can dramatically alter responses. The most common explanation for these effects has been availability; the concepts, arguments, and quantities imbedded in the question guide respondents' attention toward retrieving related information.

Questions reveal information

Our model incorporates prior findings and proposes a psychological mechanism different from availability that has not been considered by prior scholars. Rather than merely making certain information more or less available, we argue that questions *reveal* information about the asker, the relationship between the asker and the respondent, and the norms of the social situation. Respondents then use this information to advance their strategic goals.

Information about the asker: Prior research demonstrates that salient characteristics of the asker influence responses in strategic information exchanges. For example, Ayres (1991) found that car dealers quoted African Americans and women higher prices than they quoted White males. Similarly, Gneezy & List (2004) found that mechanics quoted disabled customers higher prices than they did for non-disabled customers.

In addition to attending to highly salient characteristics of the person asking the question (e.g., race, disability status), we postulate that respondents attend to more subtle characteristics revealed by questions. In particular, questions reveal information about the asker's (a) knowledge structures and (b) interaction intentions. For example, the question, "How loud is the young family in 4B?" demonstrates knowledge about a potential noise problem that the question, "How are the neighbors?" does not.

Our proposition, that questions reveal information, offers an alternative mechanism to account for some prior findings. Consider, for example, the disparate car speed estimates identified by Loftus and Palmer (1974). When the experimenter asks about cars that "smashed" into each other, participants may infer that the experimenter (who, after all, has seen the video) judged the speed of the cars to be higher than when the experimenter asks about cars that "bumped" into each other. That is, it is possible that participants' estimates were influenced by information revealed by the question about the experimenter's beliefs, rather than (or in addition to), the increased availability of high speed estimates postulated by Loftus and Palmer (1974).

Information about the relationship: Relationships influence how people communicate. For example, individuals are more likely to deceive strangers than friends

(Schweitzer & Croson, 1993) and people they envy than those they do not (Moran & Schweitzer, 2008). Similarly, Ross & Robertson (2000) found that salespeople were less likely to lie to a member of their own organization than to a member of a partner or competing organization.

We propose that questions reveal information about the relationship between the asker and the respondent. Specifically, questions convey cues regarding (a) the relative status of the asker and respondent, and (b) the closeness of their relationship. For example, the question "What's up with the neighbors?" communicates greater familiarity than the question "Would you mind please telling me a bit about the other tenants?" Because people are sensitive to cues signaling relative status (Tiedens and Fragale, 2003), we propose that respondents attend to status information embedded in questions. In many languages, in fact, formality is explicitly communicated by the use of different pronouns.

Information about social norms: Third, questions communicate information about social norms. For example, when questions have default options (e.g., "Yes, I would like to be an organ donor") individuals assume that the default is normatively appropriate (McKenzie, Liersch & Finkelstein, 2006) and frequently choose the default (e.g. Chapman, 2010; Johnson & Goldstein, 2003).

Similarly, research on the question-behavior effect (Fitzsimons & Moore, 2008) and the mere-measurement effect (Zwane, et al., 2011) has shown that simply asking individuals about their intentions increases the likelihood of a target behavior. This literature has identified accessibility and fluency as the underlying mechanisms (e.g. Fitzimmons & Williams, 2000; Williams, Fitzimmons & Block, 2004). However, it is also possible that asking about a behavior makes that behavior appear more normative.

Thus, we hypothesize that in strategic information exchanges questions reveal information about the norms of the situation. For example, the question, "How much noise do you hear from other tenants?" communicates that the asker expects to hear some noise in the building. By contrast, "You don't hear any noise from the other tenants, do you?" communicates that noise may be unacceptable.

Characteristics of the response

We characterize responses to questions with respect to (a) the attributes respondents mention and (b) the overall valence (positive/negative) of the information. For example, in replying to a question about an apartment, a landlord could describe attributes such as the neighborhood, the amenities, or the building. The valence of those features might be positive (e.g. lively restaurant scene) or negative (e.g. noisy neighbors), affecting the overall valence of the description. According to our model, questions reveal information, and these revelations influence the attributes and valence of the response.

Importantly, in strategic information exchanges responses are sometimes incomplete or inaccurate. Respondents are able to mislead or deceive askers by selectively addressing specific attributes and manipulating their valence. To the extent that questions influence the content and valence of responses they also influence the veracity of those responses.

Model summary

The Question Disclosure Model integrates prior research investigating the influence of question characteristics on responses and describes a previously unexplored link. Specifically, questions reveal information and respondents use that information to guide their answers. By influencing the content and valence of responses, questions elicit

more or less honesty. We test the predictions of the QDM in an important class of strategic information exchanges, negotiations.

Research Overview

In negotiations, individuals gather and reveal information as they pursue strategic objectives. In many cases, negotiators can gain an advantage by deceiving their counterpart (Murnighan, et al. 1999; O'Connor & Carnevale, 1997; Steinel & De Dreu, 2004; Triandis, Carnevale & Gelfand, 2001). To curtail the risk of being deceived, researchers and practitioners encourage individuals to ask questions (Nierenberg, 1986; Shell, 1999; Malhotra & Bazerman, 2007; Thompson, 2005). Surprisingly, this literature has not offered any specific advice with respect to what types of questions to ask or what types of questions to avoid.

In our experiment, we test the predictions of the QDM by introducing three types of questions that reveal different information about the asker's knowledge structures and intentions. We expect these different types of questions to influence the veracity of the responses. We term these questions types: *General* questions, *Positive Assumption* questions, and *Negative Assumption* questions.

General questions pose a broad inquiry about a situation, a good or a service (e.g. "How is the project going?"). General questions lack a specific line of investigation and convey the impression that the asker is not knowledgeable about the topic of discussion or has no specific concerns. General questions afford the responder broad latitude in providing an answer, and enable respondents to reply in a self-serving way.

Positive Assumption questions ask about a specific issue, but communicate the assumption that no problems exist (e.g. "The project is not likely to run over budget, is

it?"). These questions reveal an awareness of a possible issue, but either a lack of concern or interpersonal discomfort with pursuing an assertive line of questioning. In contrast to General questions, Positive Assumption questions afford responders little latitude to ignore a specific topic, but also suggest that the respondent can end this line of inquiry by simply affirming the questioner's positive assumption.

Negative Assumption questions ask about a specific issue, and communicate an implicit assumption that a problem exists (e.g. "How much over budget is this project likely to run?"). Negative Assumption questions communicate knowledge of potential problems and comfort with pursuing an assertive line of questioning.

We expect the lack of knowledge and assertiveness communicated by General questions to give participants the greatest latitude to omit unfavorable information and offer positively-valenced responses. As a result, when respondents are motivated to deceive, they will be most likely to do so in response to a General question. Conversely, we expect participants asked Negative Assumption questions to be most likely to reveal unfavorable information and be least likely to deceive others.

Method

Participants

We recruited 223 individuals from a paid research pool at a large East Coast university (52.0% Female) to participate in the study. We paid participants $10 for an hour-long session that included this experiment among other, unrelated studies. Prior to conducting analyses, we dropped data from four suspicious participants.

Design

Participants negotiated with a confederate regarding the sale of a used iPod. We assigned every participant to the role of "Seller" and randomized them into one of three conditions. Across conditions, the confederate asked a General, a Positive Assumption, or a Negative Assumption question.

Procedure

Participants sat in individual cubicles and read that the study would involve a computer-mediated negotiation with another participant regarding the sale of a used iPod. We then assigned every participant to the role of "Seller" and had them interact with a scripted confederate playing the role of "Buyer." Participants learned that in addition to the $10 payment for the hour-long session, they would receive a bonus of 5% of the final selling price of the iPod.

Prior to negotiating, participants read information about the iPod for sale (see supplementary materials). The iPod was in good physical condition and had been kept in a protective case, but there were two incidents when the iPod had "frozen" inexplicably. The current owner of the iPod was able to restore lost music from their computer, but the cause of the freezes (or the possibility of future freezes) remained unknown.

After reading the scenario, participants received a message from the fictitious buyer that began: *"ok, I guess I'm supposed to go frist. So you've had the iPod for 2 years..."*[sic]. The end of the message consisted of a question about the condition of the iPod that varied across conditions.

The General question read: *"What can you tell me about it?"* The Positive Assumption question read: *"It doesn't have any problems, does it?"* The Negative Assumption question read: *"What problems does it have?"*

Participants typed their response and "sent" it to the buyer. After a brief wait, participants learned that the discussion period was over. In order to maintain the realism of the scenario, participants then selected an offer price for the "Buyer" to consider.

While waiting for the buyer to respond to their offer, participants answered seven questions regarding their impressions of the buyer using 5-point Likert scales. Specifically, the participants rated the extent to which the buyer was aware that the used iPod may have a problem, recognized that used iPods in general sometimes have problems, suspected that the iPod had something wrong with it, and was knowledgeable about the purchase. These items were averaged into a scale reflecting buyer *knowledge* (*alpha* = .78).

Participants also rated the extent to which the buyer was willing to ask tough questions about the iPod, was determined to learn information about the iPod, and was comfortable requesting information about the iPod. These items were averaged to create a scale of buyer *assertiveness* (*alpha* = .76).

After completing the scales, participants received a message stating that the buyer accepted their offer. Participants then answered demographic questions and a suspicion probe.

Raters

We hired three coders who were blind to the experimental condition to rate the extent to which the participants' responses presented the iPod in a positive light (-2: "Extremely Negative," +2: "Extremely Positive," *alpha* = .66).

The coders also counted the number of times each of the following features of the iPod were mentioned by respondents: color, crashes, capacity/memory, preloaded songs,

protective case, appearance, age, charger, and reason for selling. We summed the number of times each feature was mentioned across coders and divided by the total number of features to calculate the relative frequency with which each feature was mentioned by condition.

The coders also judged whether the seller had admitted that there had been technical problems with the iPod. Out of the 219 responses, the three raters offered the same judgment in 211 cases (*alpha* = .98). We resolved disagreement in the remaining cases using majority rule.

Finally, the coders also rated the honesty of the participants' responses in light of all of the information they possessed regarding the iPod (1 – "Completely Deceptive" and 5 – "Completely Honest"), *alpha* = .86.

Results

Question disclosure

An analysis of variance showed that perceptions of buyer knowledge differed across conditions, $F(2, 216) = 73.3$, $p < .001$. A planned contrast revealed that participants who received either a Positive Assumption ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .82$) or Negative Assumption question ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.57$) perceived the buyer to be more knowledgeable than participants who received a General question ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.76$), $F(1, 216) = 126.2$, $p < .001$.

Perceptions of buyer assertiveness also varied across conditions, $F(2, 16) = 27.8$, $p < .001$. A planned contrast revealed that participants rated the buyers who asked a Negative Assumption question to be more assertive ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.65$) than Buyers who asked either a Positive Assumption ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.83$) or a General question ($M =$

2.83, *SD* = 0.83), $F(2, 16) = 38.9$, $p < .001$. Consistent with the QDM, different questions disclosed different levels of knowledge and different intentions on the part of the asker.

Valence and content of responses

The valence and content of participants' responses varied between conditions. An analysis of variance revealed that questions significantly affected the positivity of responses, $F(2, 213) = 25.83$, $p < .001$. Participants described the iPod in more positive terms when they were asked a General question ($M = 1.11$, $SD = 0.59$) than a Positive Assumption question ($M = 0.67$, $SD = 0.66$), $t(142) = 4.26$, $p < .001$. Participants responses were even less positive in response to the Negative Assumption question ($M = 0.37$, $SD = 0.62$) than to the Positive Assumption question, $t(141) = 2.76$, $p < .01$.

In Figure 2, we depict the relative frequencies of the iPod features participants mentioned by condition. Participants were much more likely to inform the buyer that the iPod had a history of crashing when they were asked a Negative Assumption question (89.0%) than when they were asked a Positive Assumption question (61.1%), *chi squared*(1) = 15.2, $p < .001$, or a General question (8.1%), *chi squared*(1) = 95.2, $p < .001$, (comparing Positive Assumption and General question conditions, *chi squared*(1) = 45.5, $p < .001$). Supporting the QDM, participants changed both the content and valence of the response as a function of questions they received.

Because responses to different questions varied in both content and valence, we also found very different levels of overall response honesty across conditions, $F(2, 212) = 34.4$, $p < .001$. Participants were more honest in response to a Negative Assumption question ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.88$) than to a Positive Assumption question ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(142) = 3.80$, $p < .001$; and participants were more honest in response to a Positive

Assumption question than to a General question, (M = 2.20, SD = 0.52, $t(143) = 3.8$, $p <$ .001).

Mediating role of Question Disclosure

The QDM predicts that questions influence responses by revealing information. To test this, we consider the mediating role of revealed information in the relationship between condition and characteristics of the response (Baron & Kenny, 1986). We created two dummy variables to reflect the two key characteristics of the questions we studied. One dummy variable represented the *specificity* of the question. The General question did not mention a problem with the iPod (specificity = 0), whereas the Positive and Negative Assumption questions did (specificity = 1). The second dummy variable represented the *directness* of the question. The Negative Assumption question is direct (directness = 1) in a way that the Positive Assumption and the General questions (directness = 0) are not.

We tested four mediation models and present the details of these analyses in Figures 3 & 4. Supporting the QDM, perceptions of buyer knowledge mediated the effect of specificity on both response valence and honesty. Similarly, perceptions of buyer assertiveness mediated the effect of directness on both response valence and honesty.

Discussion

Questions not only solicit information, but they also reveal information. In this work, we develop a new theoretical framework, the Question Disclosure Model. Our model incorporates prior research, and proposes a previously unexplored mechanism linking responses with the information revealed by questions.

We focus our investigation on strategic information exchanges, a broad class of interactions characterized by asymmetric information and motivated disclosure. Prior

work has advised individuals in contexts such as negotiations, interviews, and consumer transactions to "ask questions," but offered surprisingly little guidance with respect to the types of questions individuals should ask.

Supporting the QDM, our results demonstrate that questions predictably reveal information about the asker and influence the content and valence of responses. Participants who received a Positive or Negative Assumption question rated the buyer as more knowledgeable than participants who received a General question. Participants who received a Negative Assumption question rated the buyer as more assertive than participants who received a General or Positive Assumption question. The information that different questions revealed mediated the differences in the content and valence of responses that participants offered.

Importantly, participants responded most deceptively when they were asked questions that conveyed that the asker was not particularly knowledgeable or assertive. In our experiment, participants were much less likely to reveal the iPod's history of technical problems when they were asked a General question than when they were asked a Negative Assumption question.

Theoretical contributions and future directions

In this work, we link questions with information disclosure. Future work should investigate the influence of question types on other outcomes, such as relational outcomes. For example, in exchanges among friends, a Negative Assumption question may communicate aggression or suspicion. In addition, individual and cultural differences (Imai & Gelfand, 2009; Triandis, et al., 2001) impact negotiator behavior and may moderate the relationship between features of questions and responses.

Prescriptively, individuals seeking to uncover information should think carefully about the way they phrase their questions. Queries should be phrased in a way that communicates knowledge and command of the situation, rather than uncertainty and inexperience. Negotiators, interviewers, and lenders can all benefit from this insight.

Prior research has demonstrated that individuals are highly sensitive to even subtle situationally-relevant information (e.g. Cialdini, 1984; Liberman, Samuels & Ross, 2004). We show that individuals are similarly sensitive to information contained in questions. Until now, however, scholars in psychology and communication have overlooked this critical function of questions. As individuals formulate questions, they should be mindful not only of the information they seek, but also of the information they reveal.

References

Adair, W. & Brett, J. M. (2005). The negotiation dance: Time, culture and behavioral sequences in negotiation. *Organizational Science, 16,* 33-51.

Ayres, I. (1991). Fair driving: Gender and race discrimination in retail car negotiations. *Harvard Law Review, 104,* 817-872.

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51,* 1173–1182.

Chapman, G.B., Li, M., Colby, H., & Yoon, H. (2010). Opting in vs. opting out of influenza vaccination. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 304,* 43–44.

Chialdini, R. B. (1984). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion.* New York: Quill, William Morrow.

Clark, H. H. (1996). *Using language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Epley, N. & Gilovich, T. (2006). The anchoring-and-adjustment heuristic: Why the adjustments are insufficient. *Psychological Science, 17,* 311-318.

Fischhoff, B., Slovic, P., & Lichtenstein, S. (1978). Fault trees: Sensitivity of estimated failure probabilities to problem representation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 4,* 330-344.

Fitzsimons, G. J. & Moore, S. G. (2008). Should we ask our children about sex, drugs and rock & roll? Potentially harmful effects of asking questions about risky behaviors. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 18,* 82–95.

Fitzsimons, G. J., & Williams, P. (2000). Asking question can change choice behavior: Does it do so automatically or effortfully? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 6,* 195−206.

Galinsky, A. D., Maddux, W. W., Gilin, D., & White, J. B. (2008). Why it pays to get inside the head of your opponent: The differential effects of perspective-taking and empathy in strategic interactions. *Psychological Science, 19,* 378-384.

Galinsky, A. D. & Mussweiler, T. (2001). First offers as anchors: The role of perspective-taking and negotiator focus. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 657-669.

Gelfand, M. J., & Brett, J. (Eds.) (2004). *The handbook of negotiation and culture*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gino, F., & Moore, D. A. (2008). Why negotiators should reveal their deadlines: Disclosing weaknesses can make you stronger. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research, 1,* 77-96.

Gneezy, U. & List, J. A. (2004). Are the Disabled Discriminated Against in Product Markets? Evidence from Field Experiments. *Working paper.*

Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Imai, L., & Gelfand, M. J. (2009). Culture and negotiation: Interdisciplinary perspectives. In R.S. Bhagat & R.M. Steers (Eds.), *Handbook of culture, organizations, and work*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, E. J. & Goldstein, D. (2003). Do defaults save lives? *Science, 302,* 1338-1339.

Liberman, V., Samuels, S., & Ross, L. (2004). The name of the game: Predictive power

of reputations versus situational labels in determining Prisoner's Dilemma game moves. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 1175-1185.

Loftus, E. F. (1975). Leading questions and the eyewitness report. *Cognitive Psychology, 7,* 560-572.

Loftus, E. F. & Palmer, J. C. (1974). Reconstruction of automobile destruction: An example of the interaction between language and memory. *Journal of Verbal Memory and Verbal Behavior, 13,* 585-589.

Loftus, E. F., & Zanni, G. (1975). Eyewitness testimony: The influence of the wording of a question. *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society, 5,* 86–88.

Malhotra, D., & Bazerman, M. (2007). *Negotiation genius*. New York: Bantam Books.

McKenzie, C. R. M., Liersch, M. J., & Finkelstein, S. R. (2006). Recommendations implicit in policy defaults. *Psychological Science, 17,* 414-420.

Moran, S. & Schweitzer, M. E. (2008). When better is worse: Envy and the use of deception in negotiations. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research, 1,* 3-29.

Murnighan, J. K., Babcock, L., Thompson, L., & Pillutla, M. (1999). The information dilemma in negotiations: Effects of experience, incentives, and integrative potential. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 10,* 313 – 339.

Mussweiler, T., Strack, F. & Pfeiffer, T. (2000). Overcoming the inevitable anchoring effect: Considering the opposite compensates for selective accessibility. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26,* 1142-1150.

Nierenberg, G. I. (1986). *The complete negotiator.* New York: Nierenberg & Zeif.

O'Connor, K. M., & Carnevale, P. J. (1997). A nasty but effective negotiation strategy: Misrepresentation of a common-value issue. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23,* 504–515.

Ross W. T., Jr. & Robertson, D. C. (2000). Lying: The impact of decision context. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *10,* 409 - 40.

Schweitzer, M. E., & Croson, R. (1993). Curtailing deception: The impact of direct questions on lies and omissions. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 10,* 225–248.

Shell, G. R. (1999). *Bargaining for advantage: Negotiation strategies for reasonable people*. New York: Viking Press.

Smith, C. A., & Ellsworth, P. C. (1987). The social psychology of eyewitness accuracy: Misleading questions and communicator expertise. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 74,* 294-300.

Steinel, W. & De Dreu C. K. W. (2004). Social Motives and Strategic Misrepresentation in Social Decision Making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86,* 419–434.

Strack, F., & Mussweiler, T. (1997). Explaining the enigmatic anchoring effect: Mechanisms of selective accessibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73,* 437-446.

Tiedens, L. Z. & Fragale, A. R. (2003). Power moves: Complementarity in submissive and dominant nonverbal behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84,* 558-568.

Thompson, L. L. (2005). *The mind and heart of the negotiator*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Triandis, H .C., Carnevale, P., Gelfand, M. J., et al. (2001). Culture and deception in business negotiations: A multilevel analysis. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 1, 73-90.

Tversky, A., and Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science, 185,* 1124-1131.

Tversky, A., & Koehler, D. J. (1994). Support theory: A nonextensional representation of subjective probability. *Psychological Review, 101*, 547-567.

Williams, P., Fitzsimons, G. J. & Block, L. G. (2004). When consumers do not recognize 'benign' intention questions as persuasion attempts. *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*, 540–50.

Zwane, A.P., Zinman, J., Van Dusen, E., Pariente, W., Null, C. & Miguel, E. *et al.* Being surveyed can change later behavior and related parameter estimates. *Proceeds of the National Academy of Science*, *108,* 1821–1826.

Figure 1: The Question Disclosure Model

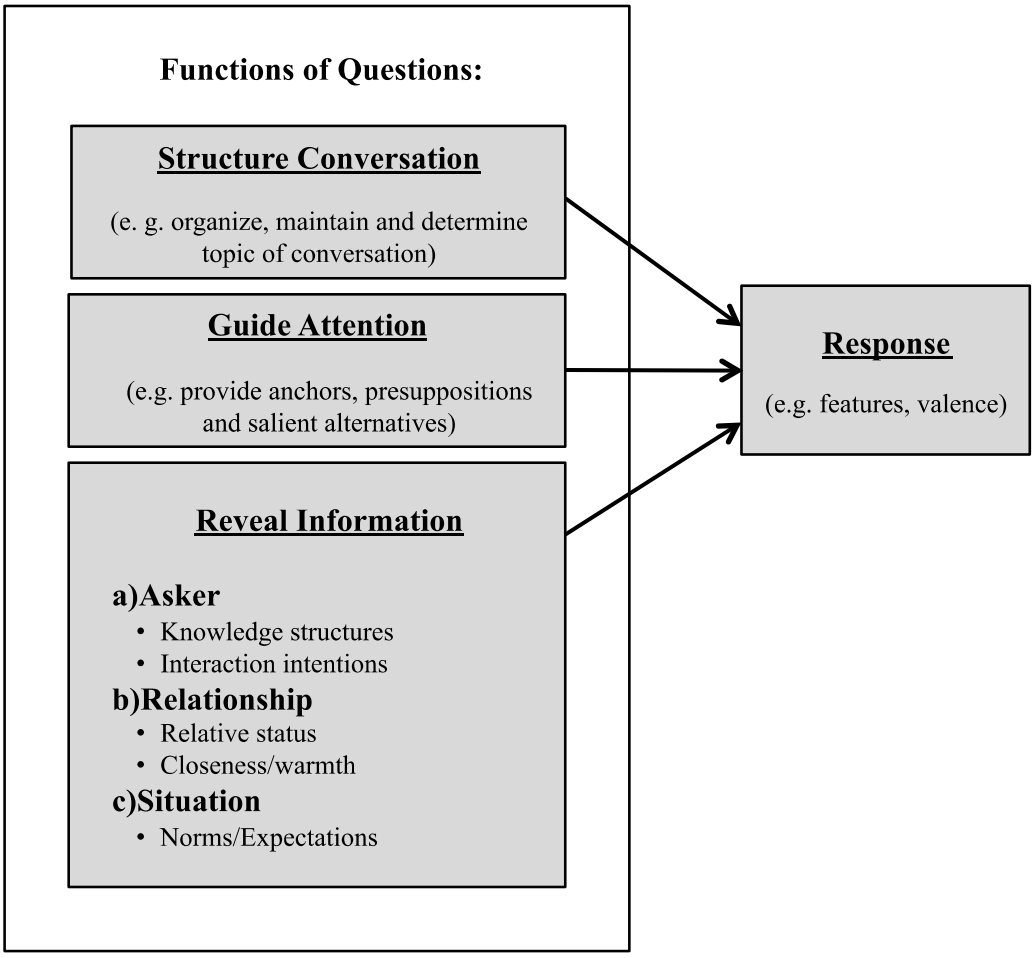


Figure 2: Relative frequency of iPod features mentioned in responses by condition.

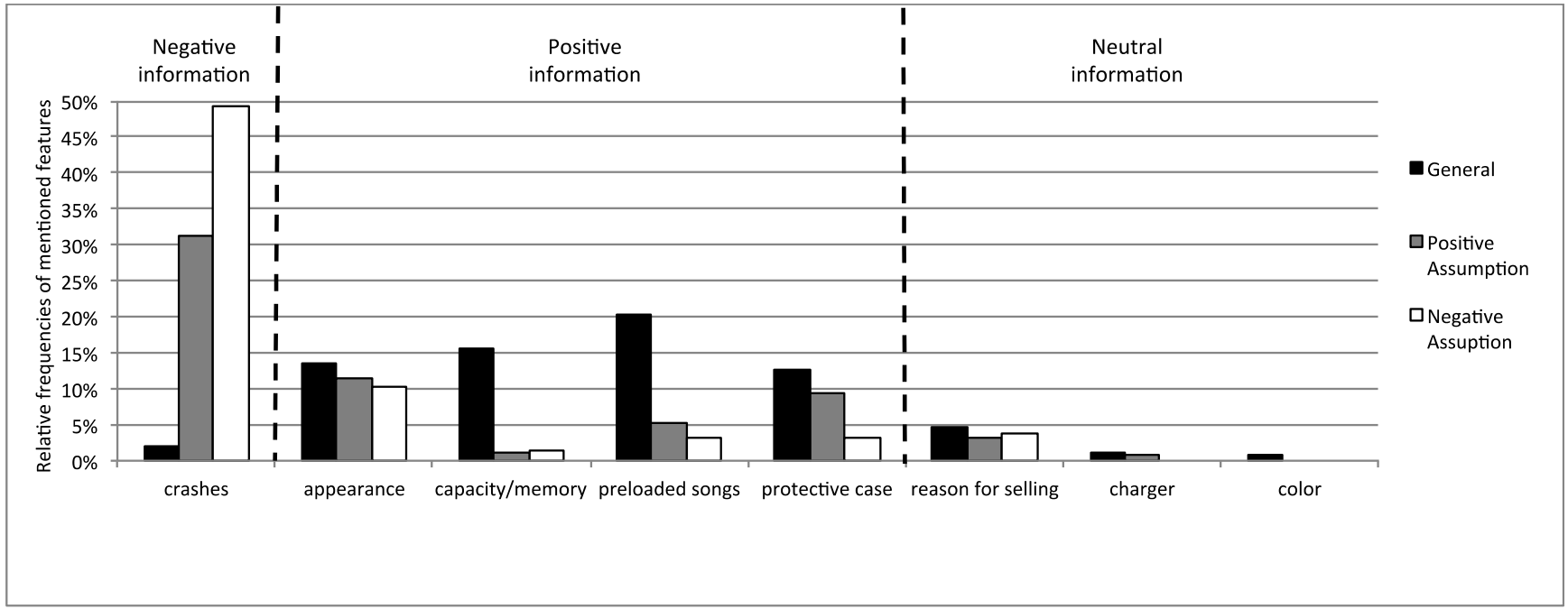
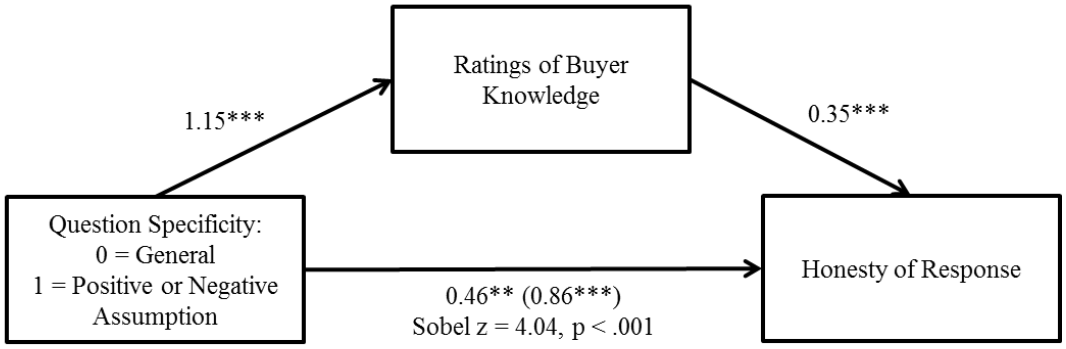
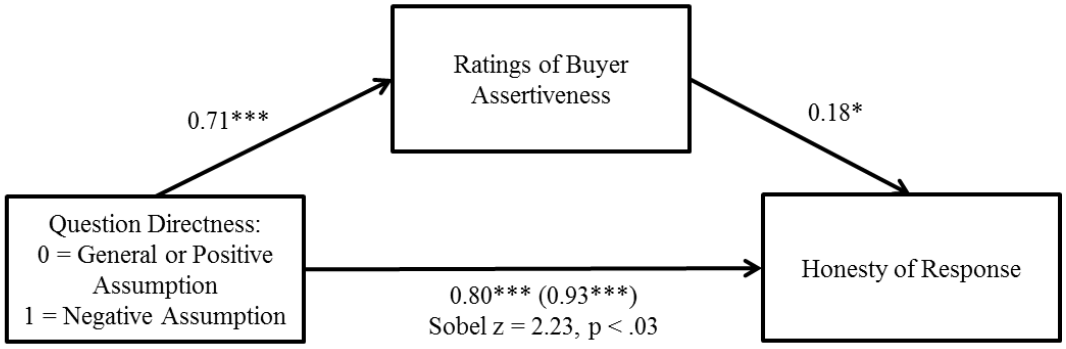


Figure 3: The effect of condition on honesty, mediated by disclosed information. Panel A: The difference in response honesty for questions that ask and do not ask about problems mediated by perceptions of buyer knowledge. Panel B: The difference in response honesty for direct and indirect questions mediated by perceptions of buyer assertiveness.

A.

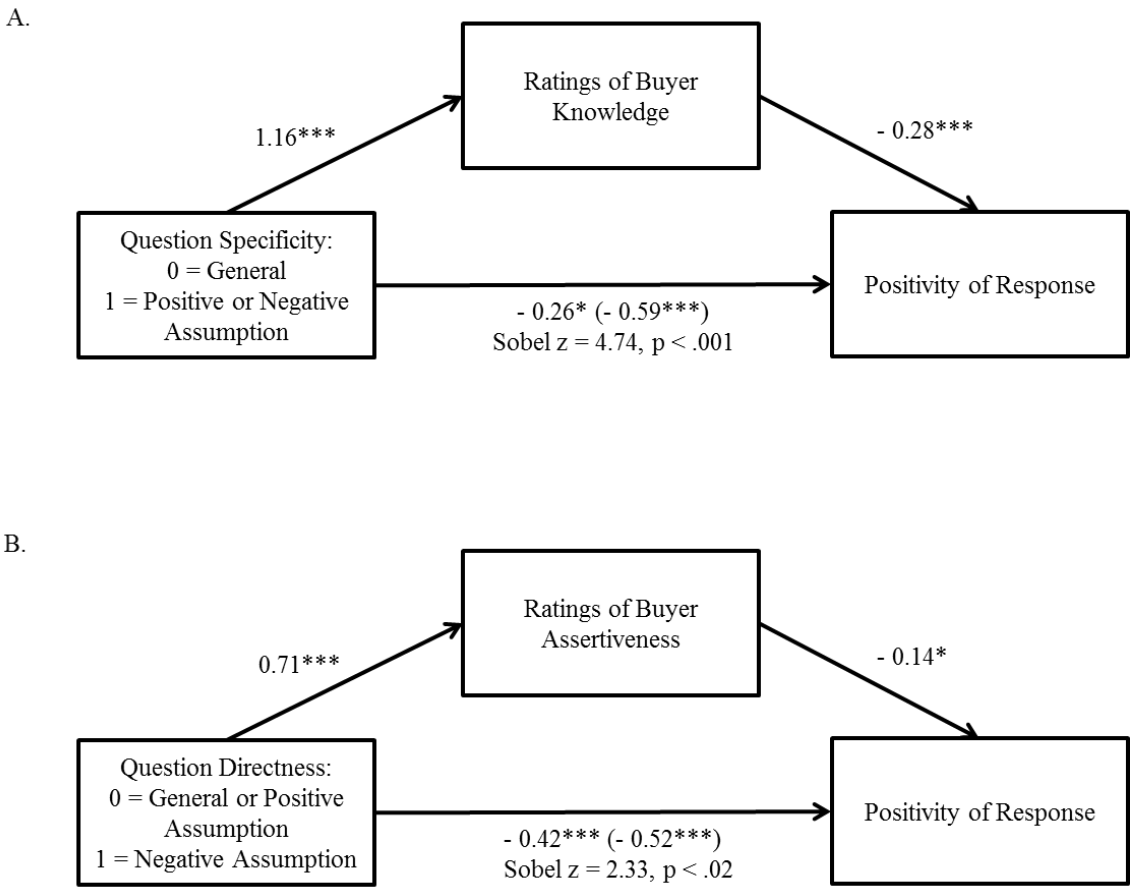


B.



All entries are raw coefficients. The association between the mediator and the DV is represented by a coefficient from a model where the IV is also a predictor of the DV. Numbers in parentheses refer to the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Figure 4: The effect of condition on valence of responses mediated by disclosed information. Panel A: The difference in response valence for questions that ask and do not ask about problems mediated by perceptions of buyer knowledge. Panel B: The difference in response valence for direct and indirect questions mediated by perceptions of buyer assertiveness.



All entries are raw coefficients. The association between the mediator and the DV is represented by a coefficient from a model where the IV is also a predictor of the DV. Numbers in parentheses refer to the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Supplementary Material -

Information that study participants and raters received about the iPod

You have been assigned the role of Seller in this negotiation. Your job in this exercise is to negotiate the sale of a used iPod. You received the iPod as a birthday gift and have enjoyed using it. However you have recently gotten a job, and given the increase in your income, have decided to buy a new iPhone. Because the iPhone has a large memory capacity and has all the features of your iPod, you realized that you don't need to own both devices. You placed an ad on Craigslist to advertise your iPod.

The iPod you are selling is a little under two years old. It has an 80G memory (enough for about 20,000 songs and much more than you have ever used) and retailed new for around $150. It is silver and you have kept it in a plastic case to protect it from being banged around or scratched. As a result, it looks new. You checked Craigslist, and saw that similar used iPods in good condition were selling for about $30-$70.

In the time you used it, you've loaded around 4 thousand songs on it by copying your CD collection and also by downloading music from the web. Your music collection is eclectic and would be appealing to a lot of young people. If you find a buyer for the iPod, you are willing to either delete your music from the device before handing it over or leave it and allow the new owner to enjoy it. You consider this to be a positive selling point.

Overall, the iPod is in great working condition. The only problem you have had with it were two instances when the iPod froze. After freezing you could not get the device restarted until you found a fix online that involved resetting the factory defaults and as a result deleting all your music. Thankfully, you had all your songs on the hard-drive of your computer, so besides wasting a couple hours, no harm was done.

On the following page you will see the ad that you placed on craigslist, and which the buyer you are about to negotiate with will also see.