was ethical as the participants volunteered and in doing so consented to the research. The issue with using a volunteered sample is the lack of generalisability. Particularly because a selection of her students was used, only a small sample of the general public were used in the study thus it would be wrong to suggest that all people would show the same results as her sample did. Having said that, the sample worked out well as she used similar participants in her research. Because the participants were all of the same age and memory capability (likely due to the use of memory that is expected with student life), the research did not have to factor in that the age or memory span of the participants could edit the outcome and this improved validity. Had the participants been of mixed ages, they may well have been more generalisable, but it would be natural for people over the age of, say 70 to have less ample memory than, say a 20-year-old student. This would be a significant participant variable that would affect results. The participants also had the same experience of car driving as they were of a similar age thus would be unable to guess perfectly based on anything other than memory and perspective rather than actual knowledge, this increased validity.

The experiments were lab experiments; this ensured the level of control was adequate enough to produce reliable results. The situational variables were eradicated as the lab experiment had controlled temperature, environment and prevented disturbance of the participants. The issue with using a lab experiment was the level of control itself, it made the research against mundane realism, the controls were too rigid. Although the participants were students thus used to exam conditions, there was a lack of mundane realism thus the validity of the research may not have been high.

The research was standardised within the experiments as there were equal numbers of participants in the groups and the questions asked on the questionnaire were equal. This helps Loftus and Palmer to causally conclude that the independent variable, the changed question, controls the dependant variable, the recall/distortion effect of memory. A control group was used to compare against the manipulated IV groups. The videos used were also the same for all participants increasing the reliability of the research.

The study has been criticised for its validity, however it does support some forms of validity such as, in some way, mundane realism. Mundane realism is the exposure to an environment that one is used to. This was seen in the research as controlled setting wouldn’t have been very unusual for students due to having regular exams however, this compensates repeatability. Unless the research was repeated with students again (which has issues of representativeness) the effect of mundane realism would be void. Not only this, but the participants were psychology students so although they may not have known exactly what the research was going to be, they would at least have known that a psychological assessment or experiment of some sort was taking place thus they may have responded to this and changed the outcome of the research.

Aside from issues with the effectiveness of the research, there are some ethical implications to be regarded. The research is fairly ethical in that the participants consented to their participation in the research from the voluntary sample. Had the participants been approached or coerced into participation, there would of course have been ethical issues. The sample used were university students, thus they were adults. When children are used in research, it is their parents who consent to their participation which may be considered unethical if children do not have the right to decide whether or not they participate in research that may affect them. The issue with the research in terms of ethics include the exposure of a car accident to participants. This may have mentally damaged them in some way, particularly if they had been in a car accident or were somehow involved in one. However, the videos weren’t fatal or particularly distressing, the videos lasted only up to 30 seconds and therefore probably would not have resulted in any damage to participants and they were able to withdraw at any time, should they have felt uncomfortable with the research.