

Fighting for the floor: Gestural expressions in a shared competitive space

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Keywords: gesture, lexical retrieval, interpersonal space, interaction regulation

What kinds of gestural expressions do people perform while simultaneously word-searching and claiming a disputed floor? Research examining gestures used during word searches has suggested that the influence of context on gesture form is dependent on gesture type (Holler et al., 2013). Additionally, gestures performed in interpersonal space have interaction regulating functions such as floor-claiming (Wehling, 2017; Sweetser & Sizemore, 2008). In this study, we analyzed and compared gestures performed in personal and interpersonal space related to floor-claiming and lexical retrieval during a card game where players competitively engage in a lexical retrieval task based off of categorical cues. To explore the influence of a shared competitive social space, we also tested participants ($N=30$) in a similar non-competitive lexical retrieval task. Our analyses suggest that people incorporate the gesture space around them as meaningful symbolic components in the context of a competitive cognitive task and point toward their potential metaphoric and embodied motivations.

References

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