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Doing space in interaction: A comparison between Catalan and Korean

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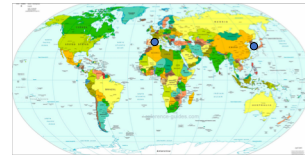[1]*URPP Language and Space Lab, UZH, [2] Korean Studies, Monash University

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Background

- Previous research has shown that people often use representational gestures (iconic and deictic or a combination of both) when communicating spatial information (e.g. Alibali, Heath, & Myers, 2001; Rauscher Krauss, & Chen, 1996)

- What has not been considered enough, however, is whether and how the social position of the interlocutor might shape both speech and gestures.

- Recent research shows evidence that social positioning (politeness-related factors) is expressed both through prosodic and gestural and other bodily cues (see Brown & Prieto, 2017 for an overview), however, systematic and detailed cross-cultural comparisons are still lacking.

Research questions

- How does social positioning shape interactions about spatial information?

- What are the differences and or similarities between Catalan and Korean speakers?

- How does social positioning shape interpersonal movement synchrony during interactions and is there a difference between the tasks?

Method

Participants

- 14 Korean participants and 14 Catalan participants
- Students at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain) and University of Konkuk (Seol, South Korea)

Procedure

- Each participant attended two data collection sessions with a different partner (order counterbalanced)

  ➤ A session with a friend who they know well (same gender, similar age)
  ➤ A session with a professor (same professor for all the conversations)

- Each session included the following task:

  1. **Conversation**: Participant and partner discussed a recent movie

  2. **Tweety**: Participant described a "Tweety Bird" cartoon to a partner

  3. **Map**: Two rounds of the map task (participant-leading then partner-leading)

  4. **Role-play**: Participant role-played giving an apology to partner

  5. **Conversation** (only Catalan data): Participant and partner each gave route directions from the university to a favorite restaurant/bar in the neighborhood

Preliminary analysis of the representation of a spatial event

Here we examine the following:

- Does social positioning influence the form of iconic gestures depicting spatial information?
- What are the differences/similarities between Catalan and Korean speakers?

- The following represents the analysis of iconic gestures produced for event 12 in the Tweety and Sylvester cartoon (Tweety drops ball down pipe).

- This gesture was produced in both conditions and corpora by 12 of the 14 speakers, and we only analyse those 24 cases here.

Gesture height:

Gesture direction:

Interaction with friend | Interaction with professor

Gesture form:

Interaction with friend | Interaction with professor

Observations

- These preliminary qualitative analyses show that in interaction with the professor there is a tendency to:

  ➤ Produce gestures which start **lower** in both the Korean and Catalan data and also end **lower** in the Korean data
  ➤ Perform the gesture mainly straight downwards yet with a tendency to produce more sideway gestures in the Korean data
  ➤ Gesture form quite variable but precision generally increased

References

Alibali, M. W., Heath, D. C., & Myers, H. J. (2001). Effects of visibility between speaker and listener on gesture production: Some gestures are meant to be seen. *Journal Of Memory And Language, 44*(2), 169-188.

Brown, L., & Prieto, P. (2017). (Im)politeness, Prosody and Gesture. In J. Culpeper, M. Haugh, & D. Kadar (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)politeness* (pp. 357-379). Palgrave Macmillan.

Rauscher, F. H., Krauss, R. M., & Chen, Y. (1996). Gesture, speech, and lexical access: The role of lexical movements in speech production. *Psychological Science, 7*(4), 226- 231.