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The effects of prediction in conversational alignment.

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Abstract

In this experiment we set out to investigate how predictive processing may modulate alignment between interlocutors in a dyadic setting (Pickering & Garrod, 2013). The experiment presents a novel interactional task where participants are involved in a partially controlled association game where speaker A names a picture and speaker B responds with a semantically related word. Importantly, the predictability for the upcoming object is manipulated. Data has been collected from 20 dyads, and the results show a prediction effect with a mean difference of 400 ms between predictable and non-predictable conditions. Crucially, this prediction effect was not only present in speaker A who had to name the predictable or unpredictable object, but also for the interlocutor. To our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate speaker-listener prediction effects in a dyadic interaction. This will be further tested in a dual-EEG setting to explore this question at the neural level.