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An on-line study about recognition of improvisation theatre using audio-visual information

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Abstract

Multimodal social signals are used when a third person perceives the relationship between multiple people. In this study, in order to determine whether people can detect improvisation played by skilled actors from audio-visual information, improvised and scripted play stimuli were presented online and participants were asked to identify which was the improvised play. Participants (n=216) were randomly divided into three conditions (Audiovisual, Visual only, and Auditory only) and asked about their confidence level. Results showed significantly higher rate of correct response in Audiovisual and Auditory-only conditions than in Visual-only condition. In addition, examination of the free-text responses revealed that those who answered correctly in the audiovisual condition relied primarily on pauses in conversation to identify. These results suggest that in the performances of skilled actors, an improvisation is manifested in auditory signals as social information, which can be detected from the third person.