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Authors

Spencer, John
Stuart, Stacey

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Does implicit mentalising involve the representation of others' mental state content? Examining domain-specificity with an adapted Joint Simon task: A registered report

Malcolm Ka Yu Wong

Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

Marina Bazhydai

Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

Calum Hartley

Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

Jessica Wang

Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

Abstract

Implicit mentalising involves the automatic awareness others' perspectives. The Joint Simon task demonstrates this as a Joint Simon Effect (JSE): A spatial compatibility effect is elicited more strongly in a Joint Simon versus an Individual go/no-go task. The JSE may stem from spontaneous action co-representation of a social partner's frame-of-reference, which creates a spatial overlap between stimulus-response location in the Joint (but not Individual) task. However, JSE's domain-specificity is debated. We investigated the potential content of co-representation during task-sharing—typical geometric stimuli were replaced with two coloured sets of animal silhouettes. Each set was assigned to either the participant themselves or their partner. Critically, a surprise image recognition task followed, aiming to identify any partner-driven effects in incidental memory exclusive to the Joint task-sharing condition, versus the Individual condition. Bayesian statistics indicated a robust absence of the key JSE, limiting interpretations of incidental memory findings, with implications regarding JSE's replicability.