

Without doubt, interaction and cooperation is an outstanding advantage of humans. Yet, how exactly do we manage to coordinate and understand others' states and intentions, and how do we signal our own feelings? These phenomena, such as the meaning of emotional expression and its influence on social interactions and behavior, have been examined extensively in the Emotion and Social areas of Psychology. This research project proposition joins these fields of interest together to delineate how facial muscular reactions to the most important social stimulus, i.e. the human face, depend on social context. We plan to explore emotional mimicry, e.g. facial reactions to others emotional facial expressions, in order to better understand human implicit nonverbal communication and its coordination.

It is said that emotional mimicry has two functions. The first is to join people, as we know that people who synchronize their emotional displays will like each other more. A second function is recognition of others' emotions. The basic assumption is that observers mimic emotion expressions, and these imitated expressions entrain a feedback process that in turn elicits a corresponding emotional state in the observer. Thus, such a similar emotional state provides an input that facilitates the emotion recognition and evaluation process.

Given above mentioned second function we want to check whether emotional states, evoked from mimicry changes evaluations and behavior tendencies towards the displayer. In other words, do stronger manifestation of mimicry for positive emotions result in more positive social judgments and behaviors? Moreover, up to now published researches underline that people only mimic emotional signals that are interpreted to promote affiliation goals. As a further consequence, they are less likely to mimic strangers and do not mimic people they do not like nor emotions that signal antagonism. However, it is still an unresolved question whether the observer would mimic negative emotions more in case where they could be interpreted as affiliative, e.g. when not directed at the observer. For instance, when anger or sadness is a response to harm done by a third person? The aim of current project is to address above mentioned questions in the series of experimental researches.