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Multimodal Person Evaluation: First Impressions from Faces, Voices, and First Names

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Abstract

We cannot help but form a first impression every time we meet someone unfamiliar to us. While the existing literature has almost exclusively focused on facial impressions, we know from our everyday experiences that other aspects of a person can also inform the judgements we make. Here, I use a data-driven approach to reveal the underlying structure of first impressions attributed to human voices, first names and those based on multimodal information (face, voice and name). Approximately 40,000 spontaneous descriptors were used to establish the most common first impression traits and Exploratory Factor Analyses revealed a number of fundamental dimensions, capturing judgements of approachability, confidence, and intelligence. Surprisingly, multimodal first impressions were primarily driven by voice cues and this was observed even when the presentation order of the three cues (faces, voices, names) was systematically manipulated, providing evidence for the remarkable role of voices in the formation of first impressions.