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Embodied cognition and emotion: A new explorative tool

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Abstract: We present an experimental tool that tests the effect of emotionality (psychological valence, arousal and dominance) of a word meaning or a picture content on the approach-avoidance motivational systems. A participant is presented with a slider with a schematic human figure in the middle and a word/picture at the top or bottom of the slider. The instruction is to use the computer mouse to move the figure as close to or as far from the stimulus as the person wishes: the distance of the figure from the stimulus, the duration and the number of mouse clicks serve as behavioral indices of the bodily state. By manipulating the figure (child or adult of the same/opposite sex, animal, shape), and emotionality of the word/picture, we were able to replicate both the effects of valence and arousal on approach-avoidance, as well as uncover gender and individual differences in perception of emotion.