

Spatio-materiality and tactile co-presence in (un)focused classroom peer interaction

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Tactile co-presence – being in space while bodies touch – is a fundamental form of human sociality. Yet, touch as a form of tacit, embodied communication has remained largely understudied within EMCA. In particular, the distinction between focused and unfocused (Goffman, 1963) interactions, which forms the basis for most EMCA research, has primarily been established based on visual, aural, and verbal modes of communication.

Drawing on multimodal CA and the body of research on touch and intercorporeality (e.g., Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Katila, 2018; Meyer et al., 2017) and spatial affordances (e.g., Bateman, 2011), this data session focuses on participants' embodied actions, paying special attention to how the space creates affordances for tactile co-presence.

The data consists of video-recorded classroom interactions between 8–12-year-old children in open and flexible learning spaces, that is, schools without traditional classrooms and designated desks. The large and adaptable working space, along with movable furniture, enables the use of space beyond conventional ways (e.g., working on the floor).

In the data session, we will show excerpt(s) from our classroom data corpus, collected from Finnish schools. While we wish to discuss the following questions during our data session, we also welcome all comments regarding the data.

1. In what ways do the participants utilize flexible learning spaces?
2. How can the space afford tactile co-presence in focused and unfocused encounters?
3. How does interpersonal touch emerge in interaction?
4. How do the participants' tactile-corporeal actions relate to Goffman's concepts of (un)focused co-presence?

We encourage empirical, methodological and theoretical discussions about studying embodiment and its presentation in publications and transcripts.

References

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