The Effect of the Visual Gender of an Embodied Agent: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Yanghee Kim¹, Annika Silvervarg², Magnus Haake³, Agneta Gulz³

¹ Instructional Technology and learning Sciences, Utah State University, UT.
² Dept. of Computer and Information Science, Linköping university, Sweden.
³ Div. of Cognitive Science (LUCS), Lund University, Sweden.


ABSTRACT

This study explored if the visual gender representations (androgynous, male, or female) of an embodied agent would influence students’ perceptions of their agent and their attitudes toward the agent as their conversational partner. The study also explored if students’ gender and cultural background would interact with the agent’s visual gender to influence their perceptions and attitudes. Participants were 208 early-teen students sampled from US and South Korea. The results revealed that student gender was a significant factor for influencing students’ perceptions and attitudes and that the students showed positive attitudes toward an androgynous agent more than toward a gendered agent (either male or female).