

TALK

MIMICRY IN MATING: AN ANALYSIS OF POSTURAL MIRRORING IN MATING AND NON-MATING CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

We conducted an observational study on the occurrence of postural mirroring in mating-relevant and non-mating-relevant contexts, focusing on its implications for flirting behaviour. Postural mirroring, defined as the mimicry of another individual's nonverbal behaviours, has been shown to signal engagement, openness to interpersonal connection, likability, persuasiveness, and similarity. We hypothesise that postural mirroring would be more prevalent in mating-relevant contexts, such as bars, compared to non-mating-relevant contexts, such as libraries. The mating-relevant context was a popular urban bar known for facilitating mingling among young adults, while the non-mate-relevant context was a university library. We created an ethogram and examined 10 behavioural units. Observations revealed a significantly higher frequency of postural mirroring in mating-relevant contexts compared to non-mating-relevant contexts, supporting our hypothesis. These findings have significant implications for understanding non-verbal communication in flirting scenarios and largely replicate past work. By shedding light on the prevalence of postural mirroring in mate-relevant contexts, this research contributes to the academic discourse on human ethology and provides valuable insights for interpersonal communication research. We will also discuss challenges to performing such research in public locations.