

Task Characteristics and Individual Differences in Judgments of Relative Direction

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Abstract

Judgments of relative direction (JRD) have been frequently used to understand peoples mental representation of outdoor and indoor spaces. In JRD experiments, experimenters need to identify a signal within the trial-by-trial and participant-by-participant variability. However, it is not well understood how characteristics of the task and differences between individuals contributes to performance variability. In this paper, I investigated task characteristics (i.e., reference frames used in instructions, orienting and target headings, and distances between headings) and individual differences (i.e., gender, sense-of-direction, familiarity, and strategy use) to provide insights into the factors that influence JRD accuracy and variability. Using the findings of this study, I make recommendations for best-practices in JRD methods and analyses.