
Using co-speech gestures strategically to influence quantifier interpretation

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Abstract

We investigate the influence of co-speech gestures on the interpretation of the quantifier *several* via three pre-registered experiments (gesture as between or within-subjects manipulation). Participants were asked to watch a video/videos of a speaker uttering sentences containing *several*, while either not gesturing or moving their hands outwards or inwards. The results of all three experiments show that quantifier interpretation is susceptible to gesture and that gestures can be used strategically to frame quantities as smaller or larger: participants understood *several* to mean higher quantities when seeing a speaker performing an outward gesture as opposed to no or an inward gesture.

Keywords: gesture, quantifier interpretation, strategic communication

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