

Deictic gestures for discourse cohesion: Mechanisms for production and comprehension

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I will discuss how people produce and comprehend “abstract deictic gestures” (McNeill, 1992) that people produce during spoken discourse. These gestures indicate seemingly empty locations in the gesture space. They assign a certain concept to a location and they can refer back to the same location when the same concept is mentioned again in the spoken discourse. In this sense, they create cohesion in discourse. I will talk about experimental studies that investigated how people produce and comprehend such abstract deictic gestures. I will discuss implications of these findings on theories of multi-modal language processing.