

NATURAL MEDIA Guest Lecture, Thursday, August 12, 16.00 h, HumTec, Room 303

Gesture holds in relation to speech: Comprehension and context maintenance during disfluencies, interruptions, and turn transitions

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Most previous work examining co-speech gestures has emphasized the importance of their most salient or energetically expressive moments, known as gesture 'strokes' (Kendon 1980). In contrast, here I explore the potential functions of intervals of gestural *stasis*, or gesture 'holds', in which the hands or body maintain particular configurations across variable spans of time, interwoven with the stream of speech. Through the embodiment of a constant form within continuously evolving face-to-face interactions, holds allow for the maintenance of ideas and contexts across time. In this talk I focus on three main sets of examples. In the first, I show that certain disfluent utterances, in which a pause or hiatus occurs shortly after the start of speech (cf. Clark and Wasow 1998 on 'preliminary commitments'), are often interpretable during the hiatus due to being accompanied by a gesture hold. This is made possible by clear semantic association of the gesture's content with the preliminary speech fragment as well as with subsequent, resumptive speech. In the second area, I illustrate strategies by which speakers maintain personal conversational goals with the aid of gesture holds, during periods of competitive interference from interlocutors, as well as collaborative digressions. In the third area, I explore the interaction of gesture holds with listener-directed gaze, in which speakers intend to bring about a turn transition while also enforcing a context for the next speaker's turn.

References:

- Clark, Herbert H. and Thomas Wasow. 1998. Repeating words in spontaneous speech. *Cognitive Psychology* 37: 201-242.
- Kendon, Adam. 1980. Gesticulation and speech: Two aspects of the process of utterance. In *The Relationship of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication*, edited by Mary Ritchie Key. The Hague: Mouton, pp. 207-227.

Mischa Park-Doob recently completed his doctoral degree at UC Berkeley, where he was a member of the Berkeley Gesture Group and worked closely with advisors Eve Sweetser and Bill Hanks. He previously served as an undergraduate research assistant in David McNeill's lab (the Center for Gesture and Speech Research) at the University of Chicago. His interests lie primarily in the area of multimodal face-to-face interaction, especially with regard to moment-to-moment interactions of gesture and other nonverbal cues with speech, during dynamically unfolding processes of utterance comprehension and production.

