

## **Representational gesture when it's not expected: Can referent characteristics predict gesture?**

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Speakers gesture at varied rates, influenced by the discourse situation, the speaker's expectations and memory limitations, and observations of their interlocutor. However, when speakers are talking to the same person, in the same kind of discourse situation, with the same goal, they still produce varied amounts of representational co-speech gesture. I propose that gesture production in otherwise identical situations is a factor of the referent's (i) familiarity, (ii) imageability, (iii) codability, and (iv) motor experience. In this talk, I will discuss experimental evidence for these four factors contributing to varied representational gesture production.

I will first present a general overview of the Gesture as Simulated Action (GSA) gesture production process (Hostetter & Alibali, 2008, 2010). I will then discuss the experimental design and results. I will conclude the talk by discussing a proposed addendum to the GSA theory. In to the theory, representational gesture is an expression of embodied action and is realized when mental activation of the gestural form surpasses a speaker's gesture threshold level. My proposal is a competition model where a person's natural preference for the speech stream can be overcome when speech production is hindered. The proposal expands the GSA theory to situations where referents have exceptionally low familiarity, low codability, or when speakers have otherwise incomplete information about a referent. In my proposal, sensory information (haptic, visual, acoustic, olfactory, etc.) feeds a mental model integrated into a conceptualization of the referent. If they are in a situation where speech is delayed, they still have an elaborate conceptualization, and its characteristics may result in gesture.