

Gesture, metaphor, and spatial language

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I will discuss how co-speech (i.e., speech-accompanying) gestures relate to language and conceptualisation underlying language. I will focus on “representational gestures”, which can depict motion, action, and shape or can indicate locations (i.e., “iconic” and “deictic” gestures in McNeill’s 1992 classification). I will provide evidence for the following two points. Various aspects of language shape co-speech gestures. Conversely, the way we produce co-speech gestures can shape language. I will discuss these issues in relation to manner and path in motion event descriptions, clause-linkage types in complex event descriptions, and metaphor. I will conclude that gesture and language are parts of a “conceptualisation engine”, which takes advantage of unique strengths of spatio-motoric representation and linguistic representation.