

Gesticulation reflects speaker's cognitive processes during retelling



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Introduction

Co-speech gestures include different types of movements, although they often are called **illustrators**.

When formal features of gestures recur in different contexts, these gestures are called **pragmatic**.

Using a resource named "Russian pear chats and stories" (www.multidiscourse.ru) we studied these gestures and their pragmatic meanings and compared them to German recurrent gestures and their functions (Bressem, Müller 2014)

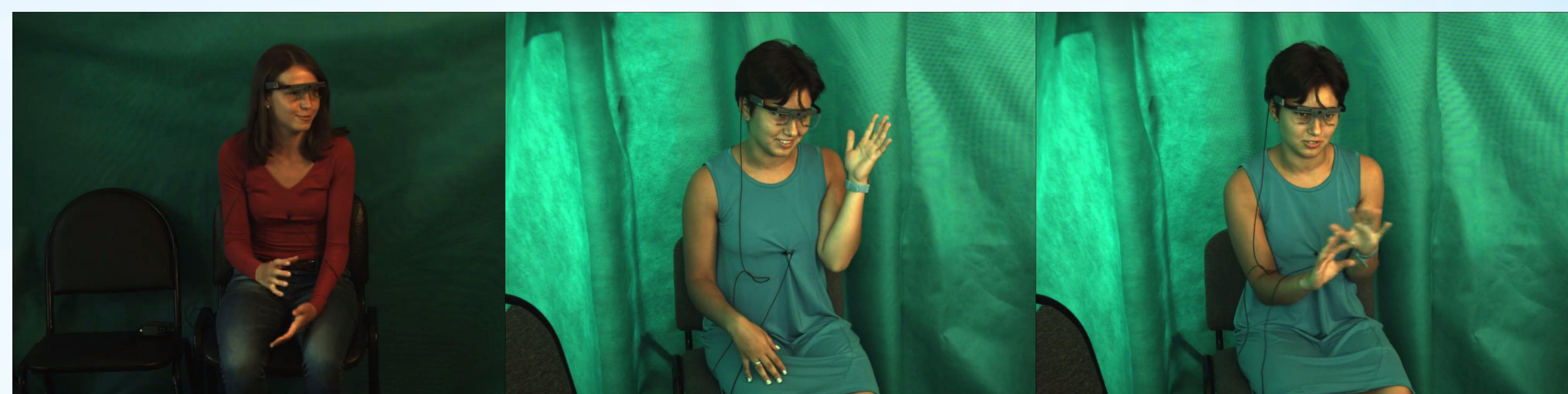


Illustrators:

- Have no standard of form or settled vocabulary, unlike **emblems**
- Are created spontaneously while speaking
- Are free to express varied meanings, including spatio-visual features such as speed, trajectory, relative position of several objects etc.
- With prosody constitute analogue code while language form a digital code
- Reveal cognitive processes of the speaker

Pragmatic gestures:

- Do not show the story line, but are related to the speech production, story creating, grounding the events in the context, interlocutors' interaction etc.
- Reveal relevant information (verbal and pragmatic context, speaker's judgments about the story, connections to other parts of the story etc.) even if there are no standard linguistic means for conveying such information
- Are called pragmatic (Kendon, 2004), interactive (Bavelas et al., 1992), recurrent (Müller et al., 2013), performative or discursive (Alamillo et al., 2013); they are told about as gesture families, aiming their similar but not identical form in different situations and different speakers (Bressem, Müller, 2014). (McNeill 1992) cites these gestures discussing metaphors



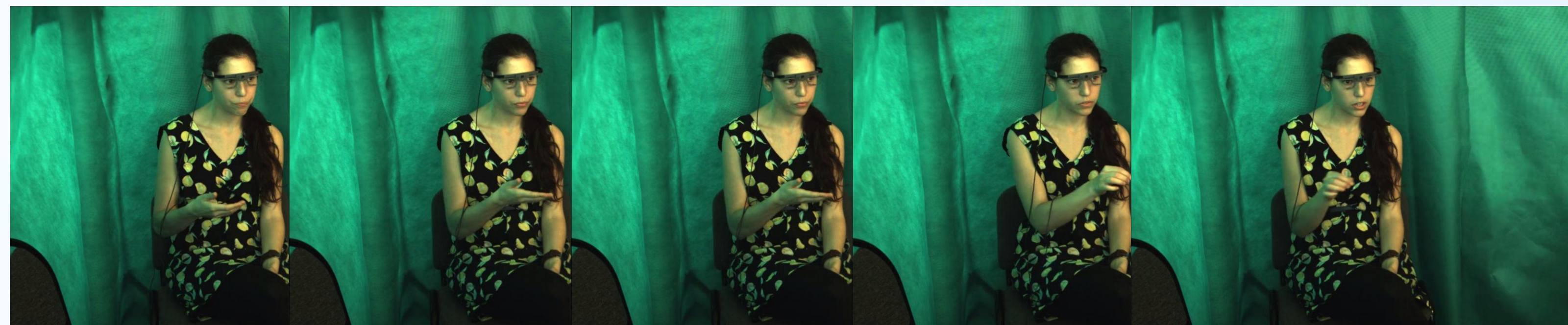
"a kind of"
approximation

"somewhere heard"
cognitive process

"It's not relevant"
wiping off

Combination of descriptive and pragmatic gestures

Pic. 1. Presenting (PUOH) and describing a bike in one movement



A bike with such a... well with such a high... how it's called... such a stick

Pic. 2. Presenting a character (PUOH) and tracing trajectory



When the man finally comes down the ladder

Conclusion

- Pragmatic gestures in narration greatly diverge in form, especially often cited PUOH (palm up open hand) or sway (gestures of uncertainty), and these are usually narrow and quick.
- Often combine several functions in one movement subsequently (Pic. 1) or simultaneously (Pic. 2)
- Some gestures include non-manual components as a key feature (PUOH + shrug shoulders = uncertainty, hands up to head + shake head = doubt)
- Can appear in sequence: 1) character's position in space, 2) his/her trajectory
- Often are coordinated with more than one clause
- There are substantial interlingual differences

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German and Russian pragmatic gestures



(Bressem, Müller, 2014) 16 recurrent gestures

- Cycle gesture. Continuity, process, duration.
(1) *I started at a time at which you **can take this step***
(2) *I realized **how tough I was***
- Swaying. Marks events, states and ideas as uncertain and indeterminate
(1) *well a **half standardized** guideline*
(2) *because **this is not easy constructionally***
- Brushing away. Excluding, negative assessment
(1) *Because what you say is **not a truth***
(2) *A gulf war **although** it was over quite quickly*
- PUOH with clockwise rotation. Vague, uncertain
(1) *Well, I think it **was ten years ago***
(2) *Rather like **popular classic***