

Creativity of gestures, by gestures, for gestures

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This course covers the interplay between gestures and creativity, from two perspectives. The first is creativity within the gestural channel itself, i.e., what makes a gesture creative? The second is the interaction between the gestural channel and creativity elsewhere, i.e., how does gesture production influence performance in various creative tasks, and vice versa?

We will start with a brief general introduction to gesture studies (no background knowledge required). We will then discuss extant proposals for the classification of gestures as creative or non-creative, along with their limitations with regard to the “standard definition” of creativity, and with regard to the semiotics of representational gestures. Next, we will survey recent studies on the interaction between gestures and different measures of creative thinking, and on the role of gestures in linguistic creativity, specifically in communicatively challenging contexts. Finally, we will consider the potential ramifications of these studies for linguistic creativity and gesture production more broadly.