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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/046546ks>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 43(43)

ISSN

1069-7977

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Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed

Interpretations of meaningful and ambiguous hand gestures from individuals with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Abstract

Previous research indicates that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is associated with altered production of co-speech gestures. However, little research has examined whether ASD impacts the processes involved in interpreting observed gestures. We collected meaningfulness ratings and one-word interpretations for 165 video-recorded gestures of varying ambiguity from individuals with and without an ASD diagnosis. The resulting dataset contains insights into gesture processing in individuals with and without ASD, including the number and variability of interpretations assigned to gestures as well as tendencies to endorse ambiguous gestures as meaningful. We also used a subset of these stimuli to identify the neural mechanisms by which gestures enhance memory in neurotypical adults. This collection of videos, as well as the interpretations and ratings from each group, will be made available through the Open Science Framework for use in future research.