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Investigating the Influence of Disfluencies and Gestures in Assessing Others' Knowledge: A Feelings of Another's Knowing (FOAK) Study

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Abstract

People rely on communicative cues when assessing others' knowledge levels about a topic. Speech fluency has been shown to inform these assessments (Brennan & Williams, 1995), however little is known whether co-speech gestures also impact how we judge others' level of expertise. To address this, we showed 42 participants ($M_{age}=21.05$) short videos of speakers in four conditions (fluent or disfluent speech with gestures, fluent or disfluent speech without gestures). Participants then provided FOAK (feelings of another's knowing) judgements of the speaker. A mixed effects regression analysis, with conditions as fixed and trial and subjects as random effects, revealed that fluent speech elicited higher FOAK ratings than disfluent speech, $p<.01$. Surprisingly gestures did not affect FOAK ratings. This is a first study to suggest, fluency can be a more prominent cue than gestures when assessing others' knowledge levels.