

Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance by Adam Kendon.
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Since its inception in the early 90s, gesture studies as an academic discipline in its own right has attracted a lot of attention on the part of human communication scholars. Research in this area has focused on various aspects of gesture, including the ways in which gestures signify, the role they play in communication, the relationship between gesture and cognition, gesture and language, gesture and speech, and so on. With respect to the relationship between gesture and speech, until recently, a large amount of research has been based on data derived from experimental settings rather than from naturally occurring interactions. Numerous articles on the role of gesture in the production of meaning in ordinary conversation have been published over the past decade, but no comprehensive, book-length study on the topic has been available until Adam Kendon's *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*. The book presents an invaluable and very welcome resource for students of gesture.

The text contains seventeen chapters. The first two chapters present a discussion of gesture as visible human action. Here, by providing detailed definitions of gesture, utterance, and the role gesture plays in the construction of utterances, the author sets the analytical framework for the rest of the book. In Chapters 3 through 5, readers are provided a historical overview of approaches to the study of gesture, tracing the development of academic attention to the subject from Quintillian's works on oratory and rhetoric written in the 1st century AD to the rise of interest in sign language and the links between gesture and culture, gesture and language, and gesture and thought in the latter half of the 20th century. Not only is this excursion into history a fascinating and pleasurable read, but it is also a solid introduction to the theoretical development of gesture studies as a field of scientific inquiry. Kendon concludes the historical portion of the book in Chapter 6 by surveying various gesture classification systems proposed over the centuries.

In Chapters 7 through 10, the author discusses the organization of gesture in relation to speech. By using data from video-recorded naturally occurring conversations, Kendon presents evidence of the interplay between speech and gesture in the construction of utterances and the creation of meaning. In particular, he demonstrates that in the course of ordinary talk, gestures and speech are deployed in concert to convey the intended meaning, and that they adapt to and elaborate on each other in the process. Chapters 11 through 13 are devoted to the analysis of the semantics of three specific groups of gestures: pointing, precision grip, and open hand. In Chapters 14 and 15, Kendon turns his attention to the relationship

between gesture and sign. He first describes and analyzes various gestural codes and sign languages existing within professional and cultural communities and then discusses commonalities and distinctions between signs used in primary sign languages and gestures during speech. Chapter 16 is devoted to the discussion of gesture as a cultural rather than universal phenomenon. Chapter 17 summarizes the author's discussion throughout the book and advocates further investigation of gesture as human action and a component of language-in-use.

Both students of human communication and lay readers interested in gesture will find this book extremely informative and engaging. A particular benefit of the study is that its data come from natural speech events rather than laboratory studies, allowing for the examination of gesture in interactive contexts determined by participants' immediate communicative needs and not constrained by experimental conditions. Another asset is the detailed illustrations accompanying each transcript in the analysis. One of the challenges in transcribing locally relevant nonspoken elements in interaction is representing participants' movement with respect to each other and to the material environment. Kendon solves this problem as much as it can be solved in a print medium, which is limited in its ability to convey fine aspects of movement, by using drawings of the speakers created from the original video images. The drawings contribute significantly to the readers' understanding of the author's description and analysis of specific gestures. Finally, drawing the data from two languages – English and Italian – allows for theoretical generalizations about propositional and pragmatic meanings of gestures across cultures.

Readers looking for the analysis of gesture as an action jointly and continuously constructed by two or more participants in interaction, however, will not find it here. Although Kendon discusses the use of hands and body in natural interaction, he, nevertheless, presents each gesture as a product of a single individual rather than something that is brought into existence in the flow of conversation by participants striving to achieve intersubjectivity through talk and body movement. All the same, those seeking to gain a thorough understanding of gesture as a visible component of action accomplished through talk will find Kendon's book an excellent resource for their inquiry.