Introduction

Spoken language and co-speech iconic gestures underlie the same cognitive representations [1] and are systematically organized in relation to one another, but do not necessarily expressing identical aspects [2]. Thus, both modalities together convey the full meaning of the speaker’s cognitive representations [1]. Holler and Beattie [3] argue, however, that speech and gesture are more flexibly integrated, depending on the communicative intention of the speaker. Here, we pose the following questions:

- How are semantic features distributed in children’s speech and gesture?
- How does the distribution vary with different communicational demands?
- How are children’s cognitive skills related to the use of semantic features in speech and gesture?

Procedure

Preschool children (n = 40) from Germany at the age of 4 participated in our study. During the first session children completed three different communicative tasks. At the second session they completed the non-verbal Intelligence Test SON-R 2.5 - 7.

Semantic features (SF) in iconic gesture and speech

Entity – Manner – Property - Relative position
Action – Direction – Shape – Amount – Others

(2006)

Communicative Tasks

- Retelling
- Explanation
- Report

Cognitive skills and SF

SF in speech and gesture

complementary vs. redundant

References