



Yuqiu Chen (Göttingen)

Multimodal Lies? Commitment and (Not-)At-issueness in Iconic Gestures (joint work with Mailin Antomo)

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While some traditional definitions hold that lying must be verbal (Stokke 2018), more recent accounts define lying in terms of speaker commitment and therefore allow for multimodal realizations (Marsili 2021; Viebahn 2021). Our research experimentally investigates how iconic co-speech gestures are interpreted with respect to lying and speaker commitment, depending on their at-issueness. Across three experiments on iconic gestures with and without the German demonstrative *so*, we find that false gestures are judged as lies, though less unequivocally than false verbal statements, and that speakers are perceived to be committed to their gestures, though less strongly than to speech. These findings provide empirical support for commitment-based definitions of lying, or at least for assertion-based accounts that construe assertion in terms of commitment and thus allow for visual assertions. Furthermore, iconic gestures accompanied by the German demonstrative *so* were judged markedly higher on both lying and commitment scales than those without *so*, demonstrating that (not-)at-issueness crucially influences both dimensions. These results align with the gradient scale of at-issueness proposed by Barnes and Ebert (2023). Overall, our findings refine the definition of lying, underscore the central role of commitment, and highlight the graded nature of at-issueness in multimodal communication.

Der Vortrag findet auf Deutsch statt. Alle Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen!