

The MultiDimensional annotation of co-speech gesture: The why and how of applying M3D

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Manual gesture annotation is a predominant method employed in the gesture research community to obtain data for analysis. However, the community has not broadly come together in support of a single annotation system, which has caused different research groups to create their own annotation systems, often with very specific aims to address their own research objectives. This poses a challenge, as it becomes difficult to make direct comparisons across studies and thus hinders the progression of the field. The MultiModal MultiDimensional (M3D) annotation system (Rohrer et al., 2023) addresses this issue by offering an annotation system that reconciles several views into a more widely agreed gesture classification system and that is openly accessible, explicitly described, and offers material to facilitate the learning and its application to novel data. Specifically, M3D builds on currently available systems by explicitly proposing a tripartite dimensional system to assess gestural characteristics of form (i.e., configuration and motion trajectory), gestural prosody (i.e., timing of movement), and meaning (both referential and pragmatic) in a largely independent and non-mutually exclusive manner. Furthermore, it integrates more comprehensive assessment of the pragmatic contributions of gesture, and is the first labeling system to offer an interactive online training program for its application to a range of databases.

Through interaction and discussion, this workshop aims to describe the M3D system and demonstrate how such a multidimensional approach to gesture annotation is beneficial and advances the field. Specifically the workshop will show how the M3D system is flexible and does not force researchers to adopt a completely new theoretical framework, but rather can be adapted according to individual research objectives and theoretical approaches. The workshop will also explore some of the resources available for interested researchers to learn and apply M3D, and will offer the possibility for participants to practice applying the system to real-world data.

Rohrer, P. L., Vilà-Giménez, I., Florit-Pons, J., Gurrado, G., Esteve-Gibert, N., Ren-Mitchell, A., Shattuck-Hufnagel, S. & Prieto, P. (2023). The MultiModal MultiDimensional (M3D) labeling system. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/ANKDX>