This landmark study examines the role of gestures in relation to speech and thought. Leading scholars, including psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists, offer state-of-the-art analyses to demonstrate that gestures are not merely an embellishment of speech but are integral parts of language itself. Language and Gesture offers a wide range of theoretical approaches, with emphasis not simply on behavioral descriptions but also on the underlying processes. The book has strong cross-linguistic and cross-cultural components, examining gestures by speakers of Mayan, Australian, and East Asian as well as English and other European languages. The content is diverse, including chapters on gestures during aphasia and severe stuttering, the first emergence of speech–gesture combinations in children, and a section on sign language. In a rapidly growing field of study this volume opens up the agenda for research into a new approach in understanding language, thought, and society.

David McNeill is Professor of Psychology and Linguistics at the University of Chicago. He is author of Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal about Thought.
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Language and gesture
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Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen

This series looks at the role of language in human cognition – language in both its universal, psychological aspects and its variable, cultural aspects. Studies will focus on the relation between semantic and conceptual categories and processes, especially as these are illuminated by cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies, the study of language acquisition and conceptual development, and the study of the relation of speech production and comprehension to other kinds of behaviour in cultural context. Books come principally, though not exclusively, from research associated with the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, and in particular the cognitive Anthropology Research Group.

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