

# GESTURAL CYBERTEXTUAL CONTEXTS AS BACKGROUND OF SPEECH INTENTIONS ON DIGITAL MEDIA

**R. Kunjana Rahardi, Wahyudi Rahmat**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Sanata Dharma

<sup>2</sup>Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat

<sup>1</sup>Jl. Affandi, Mrican, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta

<sup>2</sup>Jl. Gn. Pangilun, Kec. Padang Utara, Kota Padang, Sumatera Barat

kunjana@usd.ac.id

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore gestural multimodality, which includes hand signals, facial expressions, and body postures, within the context of cybertext. It examines how multimodal, gestural-based communication alters meaning in social media environments. This research is qualitative in nature and utilizes a content analysis approach. The data is sourced from social media text, which is classified and analyzed contextually. The research instruments include data collection through observation and text analysis of multimodal elements. Data analysis is conducted using a multimodal pragmatics approach to evaluate the role of gestural context in online communication. The results of this study identify five roles of gestural context in cybertext: (1) the utilization of gestural context as a basis for individual meaning-making, (2) the implementation of gestural context as a foundation for collective assumptions, (3) the incorporation of gestural context to highlight significance, (4) the integration of gestural context for verification purposes, and (5) the inclusion of gestural context to serve as a means of validation in digital communication.

**Keywords:** cybertext context, gestural aspects, virtual landscape linguistics, cyber pragmatics

During the 1950s and 1960s, Michael Halliday developed the Systemic Linguistics theory, which seeks to examine the relationship between language and the social context in which it is used. The theory conceptualizes language as a tool for conveying meaning within a particular communicative environment. According to Halliday's Systemic Linguistics, the core elements of language are semantics, syntax, and function, as referenced by Sakrikar (2019), Trinh et al., (2017), and Yu (2016). Semantics deals with the interpretation of language, focusing on the meaning of words,

phrases, and sentences. Syntax concerns the arrangement of words to form sentences and the ways in which these structures communicate meaning. The functional aspect refers to how language serves a role within society, such as communicating information, expressing emotions, or influencing others. This theory emphasizes the analysis of speech acts within their social context. The study of a speech act involves examining three key components: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the subject matter or content of the speech, tenor describes the relationship between the speaker and the

audience, and mode relates to the method of communication, whether spoken or written. Halliday's Systemic Linguistics has been applied in various areas such as education, discourse analysis, and translation, offering a robust framework for analyzing language in diverse social contexts, as Halliday (1978) and Meyer et al., (2006) have pointed out.

In contrast, Kress and Leeuwen's linguistic theory focuses on the visual or multimodal analysis that connects language with images. Developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in the 1990s and still evolving today (Leeuwen, 2005), this theory treats language as a combination of spoken or written words along with pictures, colors, layouts, and other visual components to convey meaning (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kress, 2009, 2015). In their view, images and language work together in a multimodal manner, delivering messages through different yet interrelated modes. Kress and Leeuwen's theory identifies three dimensions for analyzing how language and images interact: the Representational Dimension, the Interaction Dimension, and the Composition Dimension. The Representational Dimension focuses on the content or meaning represented in both images and text, including metaphors, symbols, and visual representations (Kress, 2015; Leeuwen, 2005). The Interaction Dimension explores the relationship between images and text in shaping meaning, including aspects like layout, color, and visual structures. The Composition Dimension concerns the organization of visual elements within a text or image, such as space, scale, and perspective, to communicate specific meanings. Kress and Leeuwen's theory has been applied in various disciplines, including education, media, and graphic design (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Jewitt et al., 2016). It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language and images work together to influence how messages are understood and interpreted.

Multimodality refers to using several modes or media in communication, such as words, sounds, gestures, images, etc. Multimodality denotes using multiple modes to convey information and messages more effectively and efficiently (Ledin & Machin, 2019; Pinar Sanz, 2013). In today's digital and information technology era, multimodality is increasingly important because communication often

involves multiple media and channels, such as email, text messaging, social media, video, etc. Proficiency in diverse communication modes is crucial in various settings, encompassing commerce, academia, and routine affairs. Multimodality in communication can be observed through diverse modes such as visual and verbal elements to elucidate a concept, audio-visual media to demonstrate a process, or the amalgamation of bodily gestures and vocalizations to convey emotions. Multiple modes or media are employed to strengthen and elucidate the communicated message in each of these instances. The term "gesture multimodality" refers to utilizing bodily or physical movements to communicate. The act of communication entails the utilization of both verbal and nonverbal modes of expression, which may take the form of gestures, including hand signals, facial expressions, and body postures. These nonverbal cues convey messages or reinforce the meanings of verbal communication, as noted by Isosävi & Vecsernyés (2022) and Schandorf (2013). For example, during a presentation, individuals may use manual gestures to accentuate a significant idea or precisely elucidate a concept. In public speaking, posture can communicate a sense of assurance or self-assurance, while nodding can serve as a nonverbal cue to signify agreement or comprehension.

Gestural multimodality is frequently used as a communicative tool in various social situations, such as during first meetings or job interviews. Nonverbal signals, such as handshakes or nods, can express politeness or respect towards the other person. The use of gestures can improve one's ability to communicate and reinforce the intended message. However, it is important to recognize that the interpretation of physical gestures may vary depending on different cultural or societal contexts (Gibbon, 2009; Liddell & Metzger, 1998). Visual grammar, akin to the grammar of spoken or written language, is a framework used to analyze visual or multimodal messages. It helps users comprehend how visual elements such as images, colors, layouts, and other components are organized to convey meaning in a visual message (Bateman et al., 2021; Mujiyanto & Fitriati, 2019). Visual grammar includes several key elements: shape, color, size, space, time, motion, and position. Shape refers to the form of the objects or visual

components used, while color relates to the use of color to convey meaning or emotion. Size pertains to the dimensions of visual elements, and space refers to the distance between different objects or visual components. Time in a visual context, such as in images or videos, includes aspects like movement or transitions. Motion describes the use of movement within visuals to convey meaning, and position concerns the placement of objects or visual elements (Hermawan & Rahyono, 2019; Rahardi, 2018). Visual grammar is applied in various fields, such as media, advertising, and graphic design. It enables us to understand how visual elements are arranged to create meaning and how this influences our perception of the world. For instance, gestures, which are movements of the body that convey specific messages or meanings, whether intentional or not, are an important part of this communication system.

Gestures can be classified into several categories, such as Verbal Gestures, which are used to reinforce or emphasize spoken words, like nodding in agreement or waving to say goodbye. Emotional Gestures express feelings, such as shaking one's head in disapproval or giving a thumbs up to show enthusiasm. Regulatory Gestures help manage the flow of communication, like raising a hand to signal when it's one's turn to speak. Adapter Gestures are typically unconscious movements that indicate discomfort or anxiety, such as scratching one's head when nervous. Iconic Gestures clearly depict or point to something, for example, pointing to indicate the location of an object. Tactile Gestures involve physical touch, such as a handshake or a hug, conveying warmth or intimacy. Proxemic Gestures involve the spatial relationship between people, like adjusting one's body position to show openness or signal a desired social distance (Isosävi & Vecsernyés, 2022; Liddell & Metzger, 1998; Schandorf, 2013). A better understanding of these different types of gestures helps us grasp how the human body acts as a medium for communication, allowing us to convey meaning effectively to others. In linguistics, the pragmatic context refers to the social environment or circumstances that influence how language is used and understood during communication, as noted by Blum-Kulka et al., (2011) and Korta & Perry (2010). Multiple factors, such as communication goals, social identity, status,

shared knowledge, and the environment, all play a role in how language is applied in particular situations.

From a pragmatic perspective, language is not solely regarded as a structured system comprising lexical and grammatical components but also as a means for individuals to convey information with a particular intention within a given context. The significance of sentences or utterances can be influenced by pragmatic context, irrespective of the denotative meaning of the employed vocabulary. An instance can be observed in using language within formal contexts, such as corporate dialogues or public addresses, where precision, diplomacy, and ethical considerations in language are imperative. According to several studies (Giles et al., 1991; Smetana et al., 2006; Streeck, 1984), language in informal settings, such as conversations among friends or family members, tends to be less formal and more casual. This observation highlights the significance of the pragmatic context in the comprehension and utilization of language in day-to-day situations. The notion of pragmatics is closely associated with a pragmatic context, which pertains to examining language usage in authentic social settings and how this context shapes the interpretation of language meaning.

While virtual environments have been widely studied, the role of multimodal gestural communication within these contexts, particularly in social media platforms, has not been explored in-depth. Previous research has primarily focused on the interaction between verbal and visual modes of communication, without considering how gestural cues, such as hand signals and facial expressions, contribute to meaning-making in cybertext. This presents a gap in the current literature. For example, Cornelius & Marston (2009) and Fominykh et al. (2011) have noted that in a virtual setting, individuals can engage with the surroundings or other users through technological interfaces, such as virtual reality devices, keyboards, or mice. This enables individuals to engage in various activities, including but not limited to gaming, communication with peers, and remote education via e-learning platforms.

Virtual environments offer interactive experiences that are more immersive and enable users to participate in activities that were previously unattainable in the physical world.

Nevertheless, utilizing virtual environments presents a distinct array of obstacles and potential hazards, including but not limited to data security and privacy vulnerabilities, social detachment, and psychological consequences stemming from excessive usage. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual contexts have gained significant prominence in daily life owing to their ability to curtail physical interactions and necessitate a shift toward online interactions and activities (Park, 2017). As a result, virtual environments are becoming more prevalent in diverse domains such as education, commerce, and recreation. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how multimodal gestural cues function within cybertext, specifically within the framework of cyber pragmatics. By examining gestures, facial expressions, and body postures in digital communication, particularly in social media contexts, this research offers a novel contribution to the understanding of how nonverbal cues influence online interaction and meaning-making in a virtual environment.

## METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. The focus of this study is to explore the role of gestural cybertext contexts as a backdrop for the pragmatic meaning of speech. The data for this research consist of speech excerpts and social media content that reflect the manifestations of gestural cybertext contexts influencing the pragmatic interpretation of speech. The primary data sources include texts from various social media platforms, which provide instances of gestural cybertext contexts impacting speech pragmatics (Kate Beeching, 2015; Smith et al., 2011). The locational data sources are social media platforms present during the course of the study, containing relevant data on the manifestation of gestural cybertext as a context for pragmatic meaning.

The data collection method employed in this research is observation. This method is implemented using a note-taking technique, wherein researchers document relevant information during their observation of the social media content. After the data is collected, it undergoes a classification and typification process to categorize the data into meaningful

groups. Once classified, the data is analyzed using the equivalent method. Specifically, the contextual equivalent method, as proposed by Sudaryanto (2015), is applied to interpret the data. This method is based on interpreting the data within the context of the situation and the cybertext context in which the speech occurs. To implement the contextual equivalent analysis, a comparative linking technique is used, particularly for equating various data points. Context is the primary tool used to carry out the process of comparative linking. The final analysis results are reported informally, providing interpretations in standard orthographic language, as opposed to the symbolic language often found in field studies outside of linguistics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

This research has produced five findings on the role of gestural cybertext context as a background for the pragmatic meaning of speech in pragmatic research with a cyber perspective. Discussion for each finding of the role of gestural cybertext context, which includes the following roles: (1) The gesture cybertext context as a background for personal assumptions of speech pragmatic meaning, (2) The gesture cybertext context as a background for communal assumptions of speech pragmatic meaning, (3) The gestural cybertext context as the background for illustrating the pragmatic meaning of speech, (4) The gestural cybertext context as the background for confirming the pragmatic meaning of speech, (5) The gestural cybertext context as the background for affirming the pragmatic meaning of speech.

### The Gesture Cybertext Context As A Background For Personal Assumptions of Speech Pragmatic Meaning

The role of gestural cybertext context, which is very important to mention first from the results of this study, is as a background for personal assumptions of the pragmatic meaning of speech. The pragmatic meaning of speech, whether in social media as a manifestation of virtual linguistic landscapes or in real public spaces that can be found in various actual linguistic landscapes, can only be interpreted

correctly if the personal assumptions of the people involved in the speech it is known exactly. Without identifying personal assumptions correctly, one person's intentions in communicating cannot be precisely understood by other people. Likewise, when someone communicates his intentions to others, it will be very difficult for the speech partner to understand the message he wants to convey because the personal assumptions are poorly understood. In other words, interpersonal communication will be realized only if the personal assumptions that are owned and built by someone are well understood. For example, in Data 1: LG1 below, with a gestural illustration of a hand holding his forehead, a linguistic utterance reads, 'the eyes of the deceased and the moon that accompanies me,' which assumes people's awareness of sadness. Further, examine the following illustration more closely.

**Data1: LG1**



**Source:** Youtube "*Kunto Aji-Pilu Membiro Experièce*"(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JskEYFuUpA>)

Data 1: LG1 above contains a multimodality cybertext context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. This aspect can be seen from the hand gestures and expressions of the characters in the illustration. The character has a sad expression, probably because his lover left him. This expression can be seen from the eyes that look down with teary eyes and tears. Then, the character's hand gestures also point to the eyes according to the linguistic context in the sentence "*Mata almarhumah dan rembulan yang nemenin aku*" which means "The eyes of the deceased and the moon that accompanied me". The word "mata" which means "eyes," corresponds to a gesture that shows the context of this video on YouTube, where someone is

telling a sad experience when he was hit by a natural disaster and had to lose someone important to him. Such an understanding can only be obtained because of the personal assumptions placed by the speech partners, the listeners, and the YouTube viewers. Thus it can be emphasized that the context of gestural cybertext can play an important role in interpreting speech intent in virtual linguistic landscapes (Roth, 2000). The same can be observed in data below.

**Data 2: LG2**



**Source:** Instagram (js\_khairin)  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CoHMGpUvGam/?igshid=Yzg5MTU1MDY=>

Data 2: LG2 contains a cybertext context with a multimodality dimension in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspect of the commentary quoted in the post "*Asli ya.. baca ini tuh satire banget nunjuk ke kasus2 viral yang ada di negara wakanda*" that means "Original... read this, it's satire pointing to viral cases in the country of Wakanda". The author of this Instagram commentary is eager to reveal the contents of a book with a lot of satire based on current events in Indonesian society. "Wakanda" refers to the word "discourse," which has almost the same meaning in social media. The public uses various state policies that still have a lot of "discourse" or have not been realized in reality to express one of the satires in the book. The aspect of the gestural cybertext context in this post clarifies the context that the author wants to express in a book entitled "Bungkam Suara" by moving the right hand in front of the mouth to describe "Mute the Voice" and the left hand holding a book entitled "Mute the Voice". The claims on social media above can be interpreted correctly only by understanding the personal assumptions of the messenger. Neglect to

integrate personal assumptions in interpreting the meaning of speech in social media will allow erroneous interpretations. In other words, the determining role of the gestural cybertext context aspect is very large, as seen in the gestures in Data 2: LG2 above.

### The Gesture Cybertext Context As A Background For Communal Assumptions Of Speech Pragmatic Meaning

In communicating with others, whether through social media platforms or real speech vehicles, communal assumptions are very important to examine and pay attention to. If personal assumptions have a decisive role in interpreting the meaning of speech described in the previous data, communal assumptions also have a very large and decisive role in pragmatic studies. Communal assumptions can be understood as the collective beliefs of all communities, whether the community is large as a society or limited to groups or certain in-groups and out-groups. Data 3: LG3, as shown below, shows how important the communal dimension is to understand so that the illustration is easy to understand and interpret.

#### Data 3: LG3



Source: <https://www.detik.com/edu/foto/d6552363/aksi-siswa-dan-guru-sd-pangudi-luhur-solo-memungut-sampah-saat-cfd>

Data 3: LG3 contains a cybertext context in the multimodality dimension in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspect of the post's title in the online mass media above reads "Aksi Siswa dan Guru SD Pangudi Luhur Solo Memungut Sampah Saat CFD," which means "Students and Teachers of SD Pangudi

Luhur Solo in Action of Picking Up Garbage During CFD". The author uses the word "action" at the beginning of the title sentence to give the impression of a positive action carried out intentionally with the participation of students and teachers as a representation of a particular school community in Solo. The gestural cybertext aspect of this post clarifies the context that the author wants to convey, showing a photo of two students as the main subject holding trash bags together. Students in blue shirts with hand gestures holding trash bags, while students in white shoes are seen with gestures holding trash bags and putting trash in bags. Thus, it is clear how communal assumptions are very decisive in conveying the meaning of speech in online mass media. Likewise, the meaning of messages and information in online mass media can be carried out easily when the communal assumptions of the illustrations conveyed in a multimodality perspective are properly understood (Schandorf, 2013). A similar thing can also be observed in data 4 below.

#### Data 4: LG4



Source: Instagram (harianjogja)  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/CmnCgkbSV3t/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CmnCgkbSV3t/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Data 4: LG4 contains a multimodality cybertext context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspect of the post title reads, "Dari Januari sampai November 2022, Angka Pernikahan Dini di Bantul Tergolong Tinggi" which means "From January to November 2022, the Early Marriage Rate in Bantul is High". The author uses the phrase "early marriage" at the beginning of the title sentence to provide contextual confirmation that the subject of the marriage is a vulnerable person



who has not reached the age of 19 according to the law governing marriage. In this post, the gestural aspect in the form of images clarifies the context that the author wants to express by showing photographs of men and women. As seen in the picture, the man moves his hand, holding the woman's hand with the movement of the body kneeling on one leg. Women are depicted standing straight while stretching out their hands. Based on his gestures, the man appears to be expressing his love for the woman. Young people often use this gesture to propose to loved ones. The image that forms the background of this post clarifies the context of the existing title quote regarding marriage. Communal assumptions greatly determine the meaning contained in the illustration presented before it. It is very easy for the community of young children to understand the meaning conveyed in the illustration of Data 4: LG4 on the bag because they are the owners of these communal assumptions (Rahardi, 2016). Thus, it can be emphasized that the decisive role of the gestural cybertext context as a platform for personal assumptions becomes very important for its presence and involvement in determining the meaning of speech.

### **The Gestural Cybertext Context Is The Background For Illustrating The Pragmatic Meaning Of Speech**

This study also found the role of gestural cybertext context with multimodal dimensions to illustrate speech intently. With the role of illustrating this intention, speakers will find it easier to communicate their messages with their speech partners. And vice versa, with the presence of illustrations in the form of gestural movements, the speech partner will be much easier and assisted in capturing the meaning to be conveyed by the speaker. In virtual worlds such as those on social media, the following visual illustrations in Data 5: LG5 are widely practiced and easy to find. Visualizing colors, shapes, graphics, and the like is now a determinant in interpreting the meaning of a speech, as illustrated below.

### **Data 5: LG5**



Source: Instagram (sampahisasi)  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/CnjinXL1PDJ2/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CnjinXL1PDJ2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Data 5: LG5 contains a multimodality context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects, as also presented in the previous data. The linguistic aspect of the post quoted above reads, "*Ini nek saya beli dagangannya*" which means, "This is my grandmother buying the wares." The next sentence reads, "*Alhamdulillah makasi banyak mas*" which means "Thank God, thank you very much, mas", which expresses gratitude from the seller. The last sentence expressed by the buyer, namely the one that reads "good luck, nek", is an additional sentence that refers to the expectations conveyed to the seller with specific intentions and purposes. The buyer is depicted as a young man kneeling on one leg and making hand gestures giving money to the seller. The facial expression of buyer looks happy with a marked smile. The seller is depicted sitting, both hands looking up to receive a sad face. The next character is a man capturing sellers and buyers transacting with a bent posture holding a camera with a complete range of tools. The character gestures in the post describe current events that many people share with others just to be famous and get positive views from many people on social media. Thus, it can be emphasized that the role of the gestural cybertext context in the data above is to provide a background for conveying speech intently. With the right gestural illustration, the speech partner will more easily capture the meaning conveyed through language forms. Things that are not much different from what has been presented above are the illustrations in data below.

**Data 6: LG6**

**Source:** Instagram (sampahisasi)  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/CneOhcLP1NV/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CneOhcLP1NV/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Data 6: LG6 contains multimodality contexts in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspect of the chat quote in the post above reads, “*Aku ga nyangka ya kamu kayak gini*” which means, “I didn't expect you to be like this”. This sentence is expressed by the female character with a gesture that is angry with another person, which is reflected in the character's gesture. The facial expression of this female character looks angry, with her hand pointing at the male character. The phrase “didn't expect” is used by a character who feels surprised because he knows something from another character. The male character is depicted trying to apologize by using the sentence “Yes, sorry babe” with a shocked face marked by wide-open eyes. The shocked expression on the male character's face occurs when he sees the angry female character like that. The female character says the last word, “sorry?” which signifies why male characters deliver only apologies. So, the linguistic form above will be more difficult to grasp because the cybertext context is not present clearly. However, when the meaning does not forget the presence of visual illustrations, the meaning is believed to be easier and maybe more precise. Thus, it can be emphasized that the context of gestural cybertext is very important as a platform for the pragmatic meaning of speech that the speech partner wants to convey. It will be easy for people to know whether they are angry, happy, disappointed, or otherwise just because someone understands the gestural cybertext context carefully in interpreting speech intent in social media, as in the data above.

### The Gestural Cybertext Context Is The Background For Confirming The Pragmatic Meaning Of Speech

The gestural aspects clearly show their role, for example, when someone explains in front of the public. For example, a teacher or a lecturer will easily make his point when speaking in front of his students or students when those gestural aspects are conveyed when speaking in front of them. The affirmations will be much better if the strengthening of body and limb gestures is replaced correctly. See also the debates that we can see in the meeting forum of the DPR with certain ministers. The gestural aspects are very much replaced by everyone who is speaking out loud in these meetings. Even when you're angry and emotional, it's not uncommon for someone to clench their fists while banging the table. So, the role of the gestural cybertext context in communication can be seen very clearly. In connection with applying the gestural context aspect as a background for confirming the meaning of the utterance, please examine data further below.

**Data 7: LG7**

**Source:** Youtube (Nihongo Mantappu)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B N9WZqHAUPw>

Data 7: LG7 above also contains a multimodality context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. The linguistic aspect of the chat quote in the post above reads, “*Eh! Nanti yang Roller Coaster gimana ya, takut banget jadinya*” which means “Eh! How about the Roller Coaster later? I'm really scared.” Linguistically the question word “how” in a sentence is used to ask about the state of something. Gesturally, you can see the facial expression of a female character who looks scared with her head moving upwards. The female character's hand movements are one hand



placed on the chest and one hand gripping the male character's clothes. Genetically, the male character is depicted with a happy face marked by a smile on his face, straight body movements, and both hands beside the body. Based on the gestural aspect, it is known that the situation context asked by this female character is where she and her male friend will feel more scared, normal, or even happier. It is clear from the gesture that the female character feels scared, which is supported linguistically in the quoted sentence "I'm so scared", while the male character looks happy. Thus, the aspect of the gestural cybertext context functions as an affirmation in conveying the pragmatic intent of the speech. Facial expressions, hand movements, head movements, and the like are gestural manifestations that cannot be ignored in interpreting the meaning of speech because their function is to emphasize the pragmatic meaning. The illustration shown in Data 7: LG7 above clearly illustrates the meaning of affirmation from this gestural cybertext context. Like the illustration in Data 8: LG 8 below, the pragmatic intent of the speaker expressed in the written language is emphasized by the gestural illustration shown by the two figures.

#### Data 8: LG8



Source: Youtube (Jessica Jane)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdQ2hfl3qzc>

Data 8: LG8 shown above also contains a multimodality context in the form of a gestural linguistic cybertext context. The linguistic aspect of the chat quote in the post, "Makin Lama Makin Berat, Ya" means "The Longer Becomes More Heavy, Yes". Linguistically this sentence is a sentence in the form of a statement that describes the actual state of the character. Gesturally, the two figures are seen bending

their bodies with straight arms pressing downwards to use the air filler in the tent manually. The facial expressions of the two characters are happy, as indicated by a smile on their faces, but based on the sentences uttered with the marker "getting heavier or heavier," the context of this sentence is a statement of the character's state of being increasingly tired. When playing a role in taking a video, the character will show positive things and reduce negative things in the form of complaints that the audience does not deserve to hear or see. This gesture appears naturally to indicate that the activities the character is currently doing drain energy. However, they still must show a happy expression to entertain the audience. With a gestural illustration, as shown in Data 8: LG8 above, the speaker's affirmation of conveying the intent has been carried out by the speaker to his speech partner. Kinesic movements, facial expressions on someone's face, are easier to capture in YouTube shows as described above. The purpose of affirming the pragmatic meaning of speech becomes even more obvious when these gestural movements are conveyed in real broadcasts such as on the YouTube social media above.

#### The Gestural Cybertext Context As The Background For Affirming The Pragmatic Meaning Of Speech

The role as a determinant of pragmatic intent or meaning is a fundamental role of a context in terms of social, social, cultural, and situational types, as has been widely used in general pragmatic analysis and culture-specific pragmatics. In analyzing the pragmatic meaning of speech, the fundamental role of context is always as a determinant of intent. This means that the same speech can have different pragmatic meanings or purposes in different contexts. Thus that is what is meant by context in pragmatics as a determinant of speech intent. In a multimodality perspective, the gestural cybertext context has a role in determining intent, just as the context generally has a role in determining that intention. In the following Data 9: LG9, the role played by the gestural cybertext context is obvious.

**Data 9: LG9**

Source: Instagram (mwv.mystic)  
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CobVCY2sN1d/?igshid=Yzg5MTU1MDY=>

In Data 9: LG9, there is a multimodality-based cybertext context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. For example, the linguistic aspect of the chat excerpt in the post “*Saat sedang shooting film “Waktu Maghrib”*” means “While shooting the film “Maghrib Time”, one of the ghost roles experienced a trance. Linguistically this sentence is a sentence declaring an event that is described based on the gestural aspect of the subject in question. The word “possession” describes the character's gesture or behavior. Possession is possessed so that someone will be able to act strangely. Gesturally, one can observe the movement of the body of the white-haired character standing straight, but raising one hand with open fingers is abnormal because the shooting process has not yet started. Another character considered to be able to cure this incident is standing straight with a right-hand gesture embracing a white-haired figure, and head tilted as if he is whispering something. Based on the gestures of the visible characters, it can be noted that the context of this post is clarified by using the linguistic aspects in the captions of the posts and the gestural aspects of the characters in the video posts. The gestural illustrations in Data 9: LG9 above are used as determinants of speech intent. Without the involvement of the gestural cybertext context, the linguistic entities used in the data will not be able to reveal many things because of the limited role of linguistic aspects in a multimodality perspective. In interpreting speech's intent, language is the bearer of conveying information or communication. However, its communicative role can be less than optimal in language that is

present alone without being accompanied by other aspects of multimodality. The same can be seen in the following data.

**Data 10: LG10**

Source: Instagram (kompascom)  
[https://www.instagram.com/reel/CoW73lAv67n/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CoW73lAv67n/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Data 10: LG10 above contains a multimodality context in the form of gestural linguistic aspects. Linguistic aspects of the chat excerpt in the post “Mahasiswa Diduga Tewas Dianiaya Senior, Pihak Kampus Bilang Korban Terpeleset” that means “Student Suspected Killed by Senior Persecution, Campus Says Victim Slipped”. Linguistically this sentence is a sentence in the form of a statement of alleged events whose truth is still uncertain. This post includes illustrations to emphasize the context of the post. Gesturally, it can be seen in the illustration that there are two figures. The character on the left with a contortionist movement; both hands are raised forward with the details of the right hand towards the front of the top while the right hand is downward as if he were dodging something. The character on the right with a slightly bent body movement, both right hands straight ahead as if he is hitting and gripping something. Based on the gestural aspect, the context of this post illustration is hitting, and other people are protecting themselves, or it is referred to as an act of persecution following the phrase “persecuted by seniors” in the title sentence of the post. Thus, it can be further emphasized that the role of gestural cybertext context is a determinant of speech intent. With the right gestural illustrations, the task of written language seems to be lighter because part of the burden of conveying the meaning of the speech

is taken over by the visual illustrations, as mentioned above. Pragmatics from a cyber perspective cannot escape the big role of such a gestural cybertext context.

The gestural cybertext context is usually also closely related to the visual cybertext context because these visual aspects also accommodate kinesic, mimic, and even proxemic movements. From a monomodal linguistic perspective, the involvement of aspects outside of such language is highly not recommended. Even language in a monomodality perspective is also not related to the society that is its container. Because the aspect of society as a vessel for language to exist and develop is eliminated, the cultural aspect is also neglected and cannot be intertwined with language in interpreting its meaning. In contrast to the multimodality dimension, which emphasizes the visual, spatial, gestural, aural, and linguistic aspects, the involvement of these many aspects becomes very important in interpreting the meaning of a speech.

## Discussion

This study has identified five key roles of gestural cybertext in shaping the pragmatic meaning of speech in virtual environments. These findings highlight the complex interplay between gestures and spoken language, reinforcing the significance of multimodal communication in digital contexts. The results show that gestures serve not only as illustrations or reinforcements of speech but also as independent communicative elements that contribute to meaning-making. Specifically, gestures function as a background for personal and communal assumptions, an illustrative tool, and a means of confirming and affirming speech intent. These roles demonstrate that gestural cybertext is not merely a supplementary aspect of digital discourse but a fundamental component in interpreting pragmatic meaning. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of gestural multimodality, which includes hand movements, facial expressions, and body posture, within cybertext contexts. In traditional face-to-face communication, multimodal elements play an integral role in meaning construction, but in digital settings, these elements take on new dimensions. One novel aspect uncovered by this study is the

ability of gestures in digital communication to create shared contextual meaning across diverse virtual audiences. Unlike physical interactions where gestures are constrained by direct visibility, in online environments, they are often embedded within visual texts such as video clips, memes, and emoji-based expressions. These multimodal elements bridge the gap between spoken and written communication, offering richer interpretative cues in virtual interactions.

One key finding highlights the role of gestural cybertext as a background for personal assumptions about speech meaning. In digital communication, individual interpretations of speech acts are shaped by the interplay between linguistic and non-verbal elements. Gestural cues help users assign emotional tone and intent to messages, thereby reducing ambiguity. For instance, when a social media post includes a video where a speaker uses hand gestures and facial expressions to accompany a statement of disappointment, audiences rely on these non-verbal signals to gauge the severity and sincerity of the emotion. This supports existing studies on multimodal communication, which emphasize that gestures are not merely decorative but play an active role in shaping meaning (Rahardi et al., 2024). In addition, the role of personal assumptions in digital communication extends to the way individuals process cultural and contextual knowledge. This study confirms that personal assumptions about gestures vary based on social background and previous experiences. As Capone (2019) suggests, psychopragmatic factors influence language interpretation, and in digital spaces, these influences become more pronounced due to the absence of immediate contextual references. The findings indicate that when interpreting gestural cybertext, individuals use their own socio-cultural frameworks to attribute meaning to online discourse.

Beyond individual interpretations, this study underscores the significance of communal assumptions in digital communication. Online communities, whether large-scale social networks or smaller virtual groups, develop collective understandings of gestures and multimodal expressions. The study's data show that visual representations of collective action—such as students picking up trash in an environmental campaign—generate shared interpretations that reinforce social responsibility and group identity. This supports previous

research on social semiotics, which emphasizes that meaning in digital discourse is not only constructed by the speaker but co-created by the audience (Rahmat et al., 2024). The role of communal assumptions in shaping digital discourse is particularly relevant in culturally diverse online spaces. For instance, while some communities may interpret direct hand gestures as assertive and authoritative, others may perceive them as aggressive or confrontational. This reinforces the need to consider cultural sensitivity in digital communication. The study findings align with Rahmat et al., (2022), who argue that linguistic politeness strategies extend to multimodal expressions, making cultural awareness crucial in online interactions.

Gestures function as a visual means of illustrating speech intent, making abstract concepts more comprehensible in digital discourse. In traditional multimodal communication, speakers use gestures to emphasize key points, structure information, and provide additional explanatory cues (Rahardi et al., 2023). The study findings demonstrate that this function is equally significant in digital communication, where visual representations such as emoji gestures, GIFs, and video snippets enhance message clarity. One unique contribution of this study is its focus on how digital gestures illustrate pragmatic meaning. Unlike traditional spoken communication, where gestures are naturally synchronized with speech, in digital environments, they can be strategically selected and edited. This flexibility allows communicators to emphasize key points, reframe interpretations, or create humor by exaggerating gestures in memes and animations. These findings align with research by Rahmat et al. (2023), which highlights how visual semiotics and digital storytelling influence online communication patterns.

Gestural cybercontext also plays a crucial role in confirming and affirming speech intent, particularly in cases where clarification is needed. The study found that in digital discourse, speakers often use gestures to reinforce sincerity, resolve ambiguity, and validate emotional expressions. This is especially relevant in online debates, public speaking, and educational settings, where gestures help audiences distinguish between genuine and performative speech acts. For example, a speaker discussing fear in a YouTube video may unconsciously

display nervous gestures, reinforcing the emotional weight of their words. This supports Rahmat et al., (2023), who found that speakers use multimodal cues to reinforce narrative authenticity in online storytelling. Furthermore, affirmation gestures—such as nodding or expressive hand movements—serve as an additional layer of meaning, emphasizing commitment, sincerity, or intensity in digital interactions. These findings provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of digital multimodality. As online communication increasingly relies on a combination of textual and visual elements, understanding the nuances of gestural cybercontext becomes essential. This study contributes to the growing field of cyberpragmatics by demonstrating how traditional linguistic theories on gesture and speech pragmatics apply to digital spaces. The results reinforce the idea that digital gestures are not mere accessories to speech but play an integral role in shaping meaning, social identity, and interpersonal relationships. Future research should explore the impact of cultural variations in gestural cybercontext interpretation, particularly in multilingual digital environments. Additionally, further studies could examine how artificial intelligence and virtual reality technologies influence the production and perception of gestures in online discourse. Understanding these dynamics will be crucial for improving human-computer interaction, cross-cultural digital communication, and the design of more inclusive virtual environments.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing discourse on multimodal communication, particularly within the framework of cyberpragmatics. Theories on multimodal discourse, such as those proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001), suggest that meaning-making in digital spaces is a dynamic interplay between verbal, visual, and gestural elements. This study reinforces their argument by demonstrating how gestural cybercontext functions as an independent yet complementary mode of meaning construction. Furthermore, the findings align with Johnson et al., (1975). concept of "display rules," which explain how cultural and situational factors shape gestural expressions. However, unlike traditional face-to-face communication, where gestures are naturally synchronized with spoken discourse, digital gestures in cybercontext are selectively

curated, edited, and even exaggerated for communicative effect. This level of intentionality in digital gestural expression represents a unique aspect of multimodal discourse that has not been fully explored in previous theories.

Another theoretical implication of this study relates to the integration of psychopragmatics in digital communication. Capone (2019) emphasizes that pragmatic meaning is often shaped by both psychological and contextual factors. This research extends that perspective by showing how digital gestures act as both a reinforcement and a validation of pragmatic meaning. Unlike in traditional spoken discourse, where gestures emerge spontaneously, the digital environment allows users to strategically select or modify gestures to shape interpretations more precisely. This supports the idea that cyberpragmatics is evolving beyond conventional linguistic models to incorporate digital affordances, which influence how meaning is constructed and perceived.

The results of this study align with previous research on multimodal communication and cyberpragmatics, particularly in highlighting the role of gestures in reinforcing speech intent. Rahardi et al., (2024) found that online discourse frequently relies on multimodal cues to establish social meaning, a finding that is consistent with the present study's emphasis on how gestures contribute to both personal and communal interpretations. Additionally, Rahmat et al., (2023) observed that online interactions often involve "pseudo-directive" speech acts, where gestures serve as pragmatic markers that modify the interpretation of speech. This study confirms that gestural cybertext plays a similar role by illustrating and affirming speech meaning, further solidifying the argument that multimodal cues are integral to digital discourse.

However, this research also presents notable differences from previous findings. While prior studies have focused on the interplay between verbal and visual elements, this study uniquely emphasizes the role of digital gestures as an independent modality of meaning-making. Unlike traditional multimodal studies that primarily examine gesture as a co-occurring feature of speech (Rahmat et al., 2022), the findings here suggest that in digital contexts, gestures can function autonomously, sometimes even replacing spoken discourse entirely. This

insight expands the understanding of multimodal pragmatics by highlighting how digital communication allows for new forms of gestural expression that are not constrained by real-time interaction.

The implications of these findings extend beyond theoretical contributions to practical applications in digital communication. As online interactions increasingly rely on multimodal elements, understanding the nuanced relationship between speech and gesture in cybertext can improve digital literacy and cross-cultural communication. The study highlights the need for users to be aware of how gestural cues influence interpretation, particularly in intercultural online discourse where gestures may carry different meanings. Future research should explore how digital gestures function across different languages and cultural contexts, as well as their role in virtual reality and artificial intelligence-mediated interactions. Additionally, expanding the scope of research to include more diverse digital platforms would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gestural cybertext shapes communication in various online environments. By bridging theories of multimodal communication, psychopragmatics, and cyberpragmatics, this study offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of digital discourse. As technology continues to reshape communication practices, the study of gestural cybertext will remain an essential area of inquiry, providing a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed, negotiated, and interpreted in the digital age.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research with a critical pragmatic dimension has produced findings in the form of five roles of gestural cybertext contexts in a multimodality perspective. The five roles of the gestural cybertext context are presented as follows: (1) Gesture cybertext context as a background for personal assumptions of speech pragmatic meaning, (2) Gestural cybertext context as a background for communal assumptions of speech pragmatic meaning, (3) Gestural cybertext context as the background for illustrating the pragmatic meaning of speech, (4) Gestural cybertext context as the background for confirming the pragmatic meaning of speech, (5) Gestural cybertext context as the background for



affirming the pragmatic meaning of speech. Even so, this research has several limitations in its implementation, especially limitations in terms of the amount of data and sources of data. In more extensive research with more flexible opportunities, the researcher will conduct research that reaches more extensive data and data sources. Other researchers with similar

concerns are also invited to research this theme so that future research on gestural cybertext contexts in a multimodality perspective becomes clearer. The results of this study will certainly be very useful for developing pragmatics, especially cyber pragmatics, and aspects of gestural cybertext contexts from a multimodality perspective.

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