

(temporal continuity of the arguing event) is represented in terms of a concrete domain (physically repeated circling motion of hands) (Calbris 1990; Cienki and Müller 2008; McNeill 1992).

While in the above examples speech and gesture provide different types of semantic information about an event, gesture can also become the main carrier of information. Speakers may index their gesture with spoken deictics as in utterances like *she held it like this*, followed by a gesture (Streeck 1993; 1994). These gestures can be, for example, pantomimes of actions someone performed, or they can be elaborate depictions of the shape of an object. This kind of relationship can also be observed in pointing gestures accompanied by demonstratives like *here*, *there*. Without the gesture the recognition of the proposition remains incomplete.

Speakers may use gesture to express something that is socially unspeakable or that should not be overheard, and speakers also substitute words with gestures when they deploy a gesture in the verbal slot of a word not being articulated. Slama-Cazacu (1976) calls these ‘mixed syntax’. She reports a case in which a director is talking about spotlight number 5 on a balustrade. He tells an electrician *Five balcony* and the makes a gesture as if switching on the light. The gesture here is basically a substitute for the verb.

In short, in utterances composed of speech and gesture, both modalities contribute to overall utterance interpretation. The relationship between gesture and speech is complex and speakers have a variety of ways to combine the information expressed in the modalities.

## 6.2.2 Gesture and pragmatics

Gestures, as semantic entities, are also used for pragmatic effect. Speakers can use gesture to assist the listener in interpreting how the verbal part of the utterance should be interpreted. A speaker who deploys a ‘quotation mark’ gesture during a specific part of the verbal part of an utterance provides the recipient with the information that an utterance is a quote, or should not be taken literally. While many cultures have repertoires of these gestures, their usage for pragmatic effects has rarely been studied (but see Kendon 1995; 2004a for a classification and also Müller 2004; Neumann 2004; Seyfeddinipur 2004; Streeck 2009b; Weinreich 1992).

- p. 151 In contrast to gestures that show, for example, how something moved, gestures can also mark the ‘speech act’ or interactional move an utterance performs in conversation, like asking a question or offering information. In Italy, the *grappolo* hand shape (see Fig. 6.1) is deployed in a gesture that functions as a marker for a certain kind of question (Kendon 1992; 1995; Poggi 1983). In this function of the ‘finger bunch’, the hand moves upwards and inwards towards the speaker multiple times. This gesture is used ‘when a speaker asks a question about something because he is surprised, annoyed or puzzled by it, or when he is testing another’s knowledge of something’ (Kendon 2004a: 231–2).

**Figure 6.1.**



Finger bunch hand shape.