

## **The effect of emblematic hand gestures on visual attention**

Arman Abrahamyan<sup>1</sup>, Catherine Stevens<sup>1</sup>, Andreas Ioannides<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *University of Western Sydney*

<sup>2</sup> *Brain Science Institute, RIKEN, Japan*

a.abrahamyan@uws.edu.au

Facial expressions and affective words can capture attention. The question of whether affective propositional hand gestures (emblems) are able to capture attention has not yet been examined. It was hypothesised that recognition accuracy for neutral stimuli is better than recognition accuracy for positive and negative stimuli, due to attentional capture by affective stimuli. Twenty-eight female participants completed a recognition task that required counting the number of male/female emblems and expressive faces. Items were displayed in one of four quadrants for 100 ms each, in blocks of eight; participants were not told about the valence manipulation. As hypothesised, accuracy of counting neutral emblems was significantly better than accuracy for positive ( $p = 0.002$ ) and negative emblems ( $p = 0.01$ ). There was no effect for face stimuli. This experimental paradigm will now be extended to investigate effects of dynamic stimuli with the aim of implementing these tasks in a magnetoencephalography (MEG) setting.