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(Re-)constructing words and gestures in Belgian French

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(Re-)constructing words and gestures in Belgian French

A multimodal look at utterance reports in the FRAPé Corpus

Further information:



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So I told them:
« It's lashing down »

Guillaume flinched:
« It's lashing down?! »

« Ok Guillaume, so, (it means) it's raining lots and lots in Belgium ».



	00:04:33.000	00:04:34.000	00:04:35.000
CA:summary1 [19]	CA: SPEAKER ANSWERING GUILLAUME		
CA:gaze1 [24]	unclea	yes	yes
CA:face1 [13]	yes		
CA:head1 [27]	yes		
CA:torso1 [8]	yes		
CA:LHA1 [18]	yes		
CA:RHA1 [21]	yes		

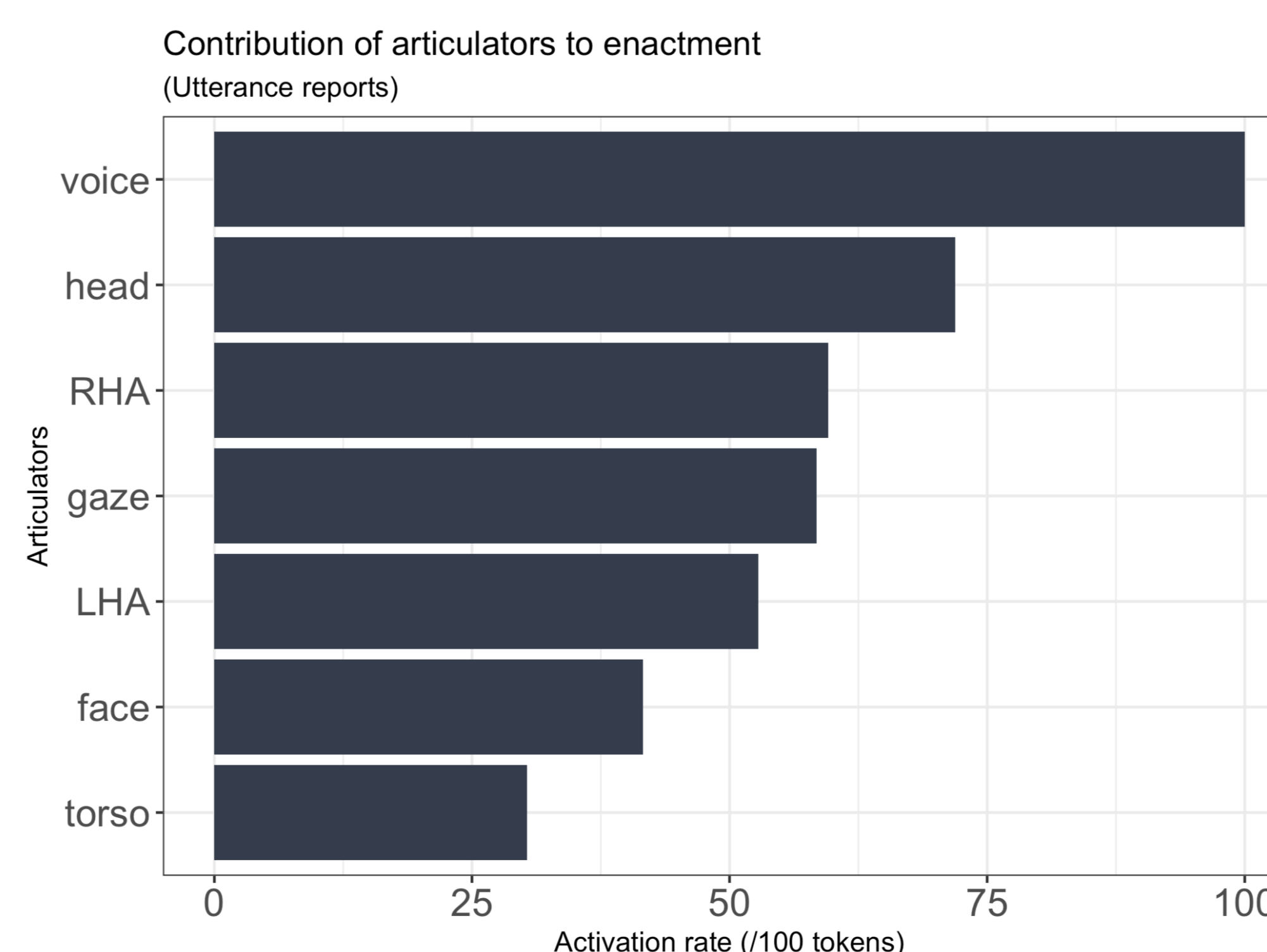
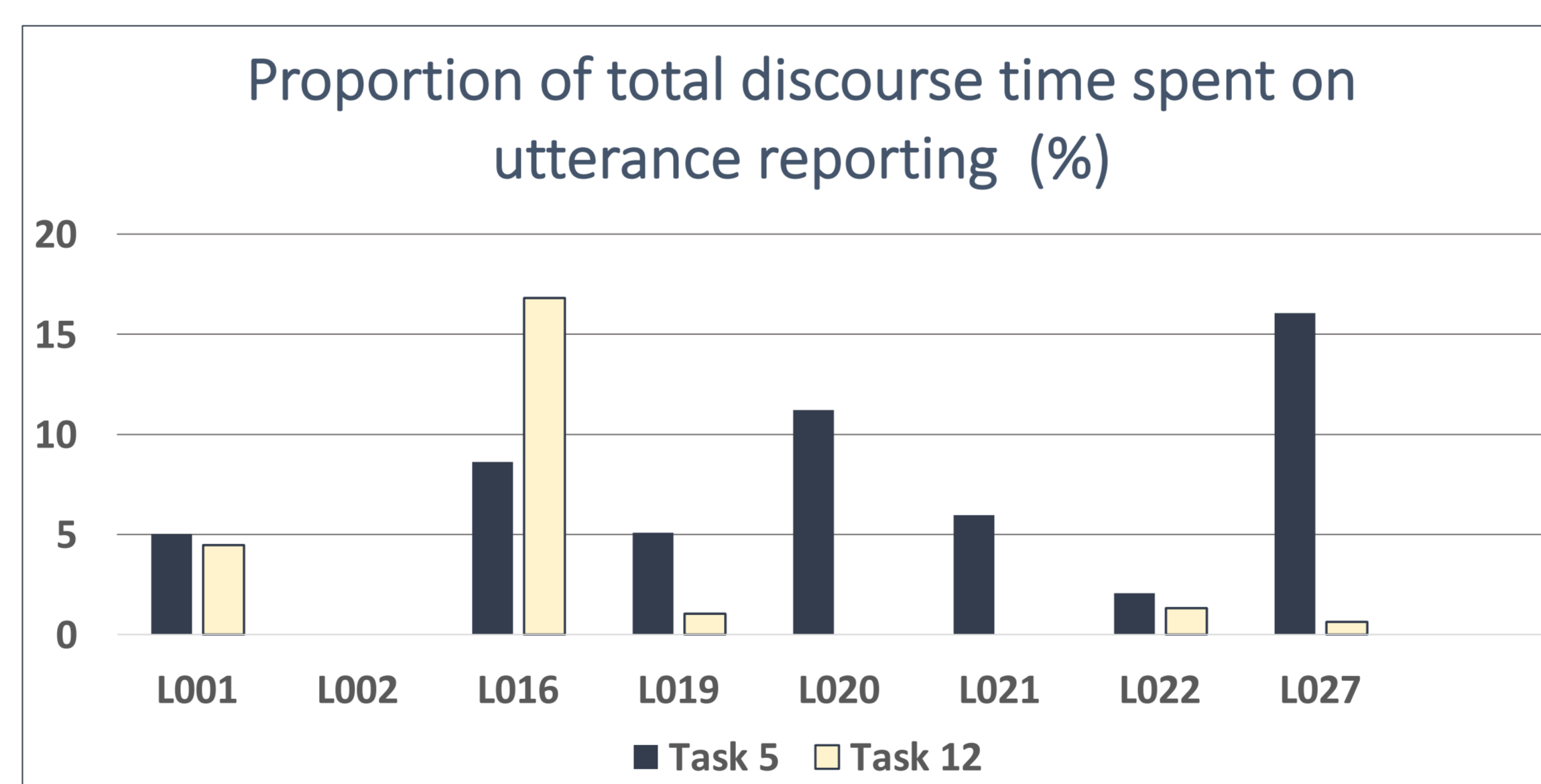
Utterance reporting is a multimodal phenomenon involving not only voice but also an ensemble of visible bodily articulators in Belgian French .

Humans often talk about utterances and, in the process, give away more than just the words that were uttered: we also report gestures or other aspects of reported utterers' appearance and actions, e.g., gaze direction, facial expression, body posture, vocal prosody.

(Cormier et al. 2015, Stec et al. 2016, Hodge & Cormier 2019)

How often do language users **construct utterances**? In addition to words and sentences, what **other aspects** are **also depicted** while **enacting reported utterances**?

The FRAPé Corpus is a **multimodal corpus** of **Belgian French** dyadic interactions (Lepeut et al., submitted). Its collection follows the methods used to collect the LSFB Corpus (Meurant 2015). Utterance reports retrieved from a subset of the FRAPé corpus (64 min.) were annotated in ELAN for **8 participants** (Crasborn & Sloetjes 2008). The data consists in two tasks: one conversation on language attitudes (task 5) and a narrative retelling task (task 12). The coding procedure aimed at identifying enactment of utterances as well as enacting behaviour of several visible bodily articulators (Cormier et al. 2015, Stec et al. 2016).



Belgian French speakers show important individual variation in how frequently (if at all) they use utterance reporting. Belgian French speakers in the sub-corpus all use visible bodily articulators to enact more than the report (in the narrow sense). This attests to the depictive and multimodal nature of quotation.

Further studies could, using statistical tools, delve into the impact of individual variation, task, discourse genre in larger, possibly more naturalistic samples. In addition, the study of prosodic modulations of voice should be carried out using acoustic analysis.

Cormier, K., Smith, S., & Sevcikova-Sehyr, Z. (2015). Rethinking constructed action. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 18(2), 167–204. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sll.18.2.01cor> • Crasborn, O. & Sloetjes, H. (2008). Enhanced ELAN functionality for sign language corpora. *LREC 2008*. • Hodge, G., & Cormier, K. (2019). Reported speech as enactment. *Linguistic Typology*, 23(1), 185–196. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingty-2019-0008> • Lepeut, A., Lombart, C., Vandennitte, S., & Meurant, L. (submitted). *Spoken and Sign Languages Hand in Hand: Building and Using Parallel and Directly Comparable Corpora of LSFB and Belgian French*. • Meurant, L. (2015). *Corpus LSFB. First digital open access corpus of movies and annotations of French Belgian Sign Language (LSFB)*. LSFB-Lab, University of Namur; Corpus LSFB. <http://www.corpus-lsfb.be> • Stec, K., Huiskes, M., & Redeker, G. (2016). Multimodal quotation: Role shift practices in spoken narratives. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 104, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2016.07.008>