

Seminar: Multimodality in discourse and interaction

February 6–7, 2011

University of Helsinki

Instructors: Maurice Nevile and Pentti Haddington

Organizer: Pentti Haddington

Venue: Helsingin yliopisto, Metsätalo, sali 10

Mon	Feb 6, 2011	12:15 – 13:45 Dr. Pentti Haddington: <i>Introduction to multimodality in interaction</i>
		Coffee break
Mon	Feb 6, 2011	14:15 – 15:45 Dr. Maurice Nevile: <i>What's the point? Gesture and social action in naturally occurring interaction.</i>
Mon	Feb 6, 2011	16:00 – 17:30 Group work on readings
Tue	Feb 7, 2011	9–16 Students presenting their data, methods and interests and preliminary findings (e.g. 10 min presentation + 35 min discussion)

All interested Langnet supervisors are also more than welcome to participate, especially on Tuesday when students will be presenting their own research.

Course description

This course is perfect for anyone interested in multimodality in discourse and interaction. The course will comprise of two lectures, group work based on a reading assignment and short student presentations and discussions based on the presentations.

In Haddington's session, we will discuss recent research, approaches and findings on the ways in humans use language, prosody, gestures, their body, objects, materials and other multimodal features around them in different interactional settings for constructing meanings and making sense of what other people say and do in interaction. The session will also include group activity and analysis of gestures and multimodal interaction.

In Nevile's session, we will consider pointing as a common gesture in naturally occurring social interaction, in both ordinary and institutional settings. Pointing can take many forms, and participants in interaction point for numerous reasons, both communicative and otherwise. Participants might point to something in the immediate physical environment, such as a specific object, or another participant, or even at themselves. Or they might point to something more distant. The session will explore how pointing contributes to social action, that is, for how people meaningfully create and understand what is going on, what it is that they others are doing. We will see how acts of pointing are fitted and relevant within the temporal and sequential flow of talk and other embodied and multimodal conduct, and that pointing is ideal for highlighting aspects of materiality and spatiality in interaction. The session will discuss some approaches and findings of key studies on pointing in social interaction, and draw on the presenter's own research across a diverse range of settings: commercial aviation, ordinary car journeys, higher education, participatory design, and gambling. The session will include some group activity for dealing with video data to represent and analyse pointing.

Working methods

- Lectures (Haddington and Nevile)
- Home assignment (readings and preparing questions)
- Group work based on the home assignment
- Student presentations (10 mins + 35 mins discussion)

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to describe how speakers use gestures and other embodied features in everyday social interaction. Students will learn of the ways in which the forms of gestures connect and often add to information given through language. Students will also learn how humans interpret even the slightest embodied actions, such as gaze shifts and pointing gestures to have particular meanings or to perform social actions. They will also understand and be able to explain the theoretical and methodological starting points and principles involved in gestures studies and multimodal interaction analysis.

Readings

Students are expected to read the following chapters and to be prepared to ask one question from each chapter and to discuss them. (The readings will be sent to the course participants separately.)

- Kääntä, L. and Haddington, P. (2011). Johdanto multimodaaliseen vuorovaikutukseen. In Haddington, P. and Kääntä, L. (Eds.), *Kieli, keho ja vuorovaikutus: Multimodaalinen näkökulma sosiaaliseen toimintaan*, (pp. 11-45). Helsinki: SKS.
- Haddington, P., Mondada, L. and Nevile, M. (in press). Being mobile: interaction on the move. In Haddington, P., Mondada, L. and Nevile, M. (Eds.), *Interaction and Mobility*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Streeck, J., Goodwin, C. and LeBaron, C. (2011). Embodied Interaction in the Material World: An Introduction. In Streeck, J., Goodwin, C. and LeBaron, C. (Eds.), *Embodied Interaction: Language and the Body in the Material World*, (pp. 1-26). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Completing the course

This is a 4-credit course. In order to complete the course, the student is required

- to participate in the course,
- to read the assigned literature and prepare one question and one critical comment from each reading,
- to present his / her research and data and (preliminary) interests and findings and
- to participate in the discussions during the course.