Universität Basel

Research Project

Finland Distinguished Professor Programme

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Department
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The project *Multimodality: Reconsidering language and action through embodiment* is funded by the Academy of Finland (FiDiPro/ Finnish Distinguished Professorship program). The FiDiPro program is a very competitive grant, open worldwide to all senior academic outside Finland and within all disciplines. The project will be based at the Centre of Excellence on Intersubjectivity in Interaction at the University of Helsinki.

Human communication in face-to-face interaction involves unavoidably both language and the body – be it interaction between family members, colleagues at work, or people in services and health care. Despite this, communication and action have been largely studied by favoring spoken language only. Consequently, the orchestration between language, gesture, gaze, head movements and body postures is still largely ignored. This has also led to a theoretical emphasis that ignores the connection of language to other semiotic resources for communication and underestimates that most of its features are actually strongly associated with and even shaped by situated embodied practice. This project aims at proposing an integrated and holistic view of the multimodality of social interaction, considering the full range of multimodal resources. This broader vision will be developed at theoretical, analytical and methodological levels. Moreover, on the basis of rich corpora of video recordings of authentic interactions in Finnish, French, English and German, an empirical exemplary study of specific social actions will be conducted, in order to foster cross-linguistic comparison. Systematic analyses of general patterns, as well as cross-linguistic and cross-setting comparisons form a novel contribution of the project in the field of multimodal conversation analysis.

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