

Sujet de Mémoire M2 Sciences Cognitives

2023-2024

Proposed by Cristina Galusca, lieu Grenoble LPNC et LIPPC2S

EN: Cross-linguistic differences in the use of gestures as a communicative strategy

Abstract: Speakers adapt their message to their communicative intent in speech & co-speech gestures. Gestures adapt to the context of an interaction, for instance if the addressee is visible or to the common ground between them. Interestingly, speakers adapt not only the number of gestures, but also their kinematic features. One characteristic of the addressee that is expected to have a dramatic impact on a speaker is the age of the addressee. Gestures can serve as a communicative strategy that adapts when addressing a child or an adult. We know that adults use mostly pointing gestures with young children, but very little is known about the gestures they use with older children. To the best of our knowledge no study has investigated i) how child-directed gestures are affected by the culture or language of the speaker or ii) the aspects that differ between child and adult-directed gestures. The goal of this study is to compare the use of gestures for adults and children between a higher-gesture rate language, i.e., French, and a lower gesture rate language, German. We will investigate if speakers of the two languages use more gestures (iconic or beat gestures), and more two-handed gestures for children than for adults. We will ask 20 adults to perform a set of short stories, to describe a path, to explain a new concept and a set of novel words either to a child or to an adult. This project will be carried out in collaboration with a German research team, thus a working knowledge of English is a plus.

Tasks to be carried out during the internship:

- literature search
- participation in story translation and preparation, and video recordings
- gesture annotation (ELAN), speech transcription and prosody analysis (Praat)
- data analysis (ideally in R)
- communication with our German collaboration

The student will be supervised by Cristina Galusca from LPNC / LIPPC2S.

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