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The Forum

Multimodality in the Classroom: An Introduction

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As a methodological approach that studies naturally occurring social interaction in various settings, conversation analysis (CA) uncovers how social actions are organized in the moment-by-moment details of interaction and how participants as Members make sense of each other *in situ* (Psathas, 1995; ten Have, 2007). Due to technological limitations, early CA research largely relied on audio recordings of telephone conversations (see Lerner [2004] for a collection of first-generation studies on topics including turn-taking and sequence organization). From the 1970s, as video recordings became a possibility, CA pioneers also started to turn their attention to the interactional details and multimodal resources visibly accessible in face-to-face interaction. Issues addressed in their seminal work include how listenership can be displayed through gaze and other embodied behaviors, and how mutual orientation is established through gestures and other embodied resources (Goodwin, 1981; Heath, 1986). Overall, such work on multimodality views social interaction as Members' practical actions organized by and accomplished through concerted talk and embodied actions, and investigates interactional resources available through the visual, auditory, and haptic channels as made relevant by participants of an interaction. In recent years, multimodal CA research has gained momentum and produced important analysis on various types of multimodal resources from data collected in diverse contexts. In work meetings, for example, pointing has been found to be a resource to establish speakership (Mondada, 2007). In adult-child interaction, touch is used in conjunction with verbal directives to resolve the child's non-compliance or manage the child's attention (Cekaite, 2015, 2016). In dance instruction, corrections can be done through bodily quoting and turns can be constructed through syntactic initiations and embodied demonstrations (Keevallik, 2010, 2013).

While embodied practices have been studied in various contexts, we are interested in exploring how they manifest in instructional settings. Considering the "asymmetric nature" of teacher-student relationships (Markee & Kasper, 2004), what roles might these practices play in student comprehension and learning? Consider gestures in the classroom, for example. They can promote simultaneous shared knowledge (Chui, 2014) and exhibit trouble in understanding and engender repair (Seo & Koshik, 2010). Tellier (2010) investigates how gestures were employed to promote memorization in the second language (L2) classroom with young children. Matching gestures can display co-engagement in interaction and create a teaching and learning opportunity (Majlesi, 2015). Kupetz (2011) demonstrates how hand gestures, gaze, and posture/body orientations were effectively utilized by students while doing explanations in pedagogical activities. Cho and Larke (2010) show that certain head movements were employed as part of repair strategies by students in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom.

Student participation is another significant point of embodied interaction in the classroom. In existing studies, the focus has been more on the teacher's role in managing turn-allocation rather than on how students are involved in the participation process. For instance, Kääntä (2010) explored a teacher's turn-allocations and found that they were constructed through "the use of address terms and gaze; invitations and commands to respond; head nods and gaze; pointing gestures and gaze; or through a combination of these" (p. 266). However, students were also found to take part in being selected as the next speaker by sending some embodied signals. Sahlström (2002) showed that when transition relevance places (TRPs) of the previous speakers

are projected, a willing next speaker engages in both hand-raising and self-selecting. Mortensen (2008; 2009) identified non-lexical pre-speech signals, as well as gaze and changes in body posture, as resources to establish recipiency prior to the turn beginning. With the dispatch of these signals, students express interest in pursuing class participation.

Other than conducting instructional and explanatory activities and managing student participation, employing mitigation, creating alignment, and building a collaborative environment in dealing with trouble are also major purposes of using embodied practices in the classroom. This can occur between the teacher and students as well as between students. For instance, Haakana (2010) claims that smiles are used to display affiliation when the prior talk is found potentially delicate or problematic. Similarly, Sert and Jacknick (2015) discuss smiles as interactional resource for achieving alignment with hearers in order to manage the interactional trouble. Jacknick (2013) further shows how ESL students soften their own challenges to the teacher with laughter. She demonstrates that in response to such student challenge, the teacher also employs laughter or smiley voice to set a lighthearted, playful tone.

These are just some of the limited number of studies on multimodality in the classroom despite its significance both theoretically and practically. Thus, our forum of this issue endeavors to attract more analytic attention to this field, presenting a variety of short empirical analyses in different pedagogical settings.

The forum comprises seven short, empirically-based studies within the CA framework. Using video-recorded data, we aim to showcase analyses from a wide range of instructional settings, including elementary and graduate schools, content-based to ESL/English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, and tutoring sessions both face-to-face and online. All of the extracts in the articles use the transcription conventions by Jefferson (2004). See Appendix A.

The first contributor, Lauren Carpenter, examines a tutoring session between a native English speaking tutor and a 6-year-old L2 tutee. She demonstrates how the teacher's use of gaze, head movement, and other embodied resources along with talk manages the student's attention and participation. Carol Lo focuses on peer interactions in an adult ESL classroom and meticulously observes how *iconic gestures* play a key role in promoting a student's vocabulary comprehension. Junko Takahashi investigates the students' participatory gesture of hand-raising in the graduate classroom. Her analysis specifically pinpoints a phenomenon she calls *contribution with hand-raising*, where hand-raising and speaking are performed simultaneously to achieve self-selection. Di Yu and Silvia Maggio analyze the unique setting of video-conferencing online Italian tutoring sessions. They reveal how a word search sequence unfolds between the tutor and the tutee, with collaboration by both parties as well as with the aid of external resources. Nadja Tadic investigates student-teacher interactions during a writing activity in an English Language Arts (ELA) class at a public school. Incorporating the approach of interactional sociolinguistics, she demonstrates how the student's display of verbal and embodied conduct reflects stances of alignment and disalignment with the teacher and the activity. Gahye Song looks at an EFL classroom at an elementary school in Korea, taught by two teachers: one Korean and one native English speaking teacher. Specifically focusing on the teachers' coordinated gesture-cues, her analysis illustrates how teachers can convey the completion of instruction-giving and expectation for compliance with an instruction to students of low English proficiency. Finally, viewing co-teaching from a different perspective, Allie King examines two teachers' talk and movement in an American graduate classroom. Her illuminating study shows how the teachers' embodied conduct represents their different roles as an *expert* and a *story-teller*, and how such collaboration is accomplished in a complex, multimodal way.

Multimodality in the classroom is a relatively new focus in the field. We hope this forum will shed light on the intricate nature of embodied practices in the pedagogical environment—an area worthy of further research. Given the paucity of studies in this area, we hope that the diverse findings from this forum attract much-deserved analytic attention. These findings are also significant in providing practical implications for teachers and teacher-trainers. They will enhance teacher knowledge of how linguistic, paralinguistic, and embodied actions can facilitate their instruction, promote student comprehension, and encourage student participation in their classrooms or tutoring sessions. Further, teacher-training programs can incorporate embodied conduct in the classroom. With such pragmatic awareness and skills, we hope that teachers can enhance the effectiveness of their teaching and classroom management.

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COMMENTARIES

Appendix A

Conversation Analysis Transcription (Jefferson, 2004)

(.)	untimed perceptible pause within a turn
<u>words</u>	stress
CAPS	very emphatic stress
↑	high pitch on word
↓	low pitch on word
.	sentence-final falling intonation
?	yes/no question rising intonation
,	phrase-final intonation (more to come)
-	a glottal stop, or abrupt cutting off of sound
:	lengthened vowel sound (extra colons indicate greater lengthening)
=	latch (direct onset or no space between two unites)
→	highlights point of analysis
[ ]	overlapped talk; in order to reflect the simultaneous beginning and ending of the overlapped talk, sometimes extra spacing is used to spread out the utterance
◦soft◦	spoken softly/decreased volume
> <	increased speed
( )	(empty parentheses) transcription impossible
(words)	uncertain transcription
.hhh	inbreath
hhh.	exhalation
$words$	spoken in a smiley voice
(( ))	comments on background, skipped talk or nonverbal behavior
{(( )) words.}	{ }marks the beginning and ending of the simultaneous occurrence of the verbal/silence and nonverbal; absence of { } means that the simultaneous occurrence applies to the entire turn.