

Project:

Multimodal Activities and Situated Agencies, 2006-2009

The project on multimodal activities and situated agencies analyzes the actions that compose ongoing situated social practices. The studies on action in interaction provide a rigorous analysis of materialised competences of social activity in real time and in real settings. The aim is to offer a more comprehensive understanding of talk-and-action-in-interaction in themselves and for social and cultural structures. Talk and other actions inform each other in the ongoing accomplishment of the task they contribute to. It is not talk as such, but the coordination of talk and action that establishes the sense of the ongoing action. This is especially important in cases where “talk itself” has been broken down, such as encounters with people with aphasia, or environments in which multimodality dominates, as in technical environments. The Multimodal Activities and Situated Agencies project addresses the achievement of intersubjectivity, team-work, the role and uses of artifacts for communicating practices, and the social organization of interactive environments. The project concerns two empirical fields: the occupational training of aviation-related professions in a technology-mediated environment and the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in the rehabilitation of people with aphasia. Both studies make relevant a distinction between sequential organization and sequence structure. The former is a broader term that concerns ordering and the relative positioning of any kind of action, move and utterance, i.e., social actions in their multimodality. Sequence structure concerns courses of action that have been realized through talk only, being a sub-set of sequential order. In this fashion, the project further develops the research program of studies on social interaction. The study of aviation training practices aims at 1) revealing and elaborating the training practices used both in simulated and authentic work environments, 2) discovering the tacit learning paradigms embedded in an ongoing action and 3) comparing the training practices and learning paradigms between simulated and authentic environments. The study on augmentative communicative means addresses 1) the ways in which communication means and equipment are used by patients with language deficit, and 2) elaborates rehabilitation practices and the possibilities of AAC. In all, the project addresses the achievement of intersubjectivity, the role and uses of artifacts for work and other social practices, and the social organization of teamwork.

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