

Languages on the move

Updated February, 5, 2019

In reading Benjamin Bergen's 2012 book, "Louder than Words", I was entranced: philosophers for years have talked about language and cognition and now Bergen has launched a new era of thought concerning the theories of embodiment and how our minds make meaning of language. Furthermore, the ideas behind the concept of embodiment naturally lead to using elements of drama and theater pedagogy in language teaching. As Piazzoli (2018) puts it:

...despite all efforts to make the language learning activities creative and fun, sentences were reduced to ashes, stripped of all expressive meaning. Ash is a peculiar substance: residue of fire, it lacks body. Rather, it appears to have body but then, when firmly grasped, it smudges away. The idea of embodiment, on the other hand, conjures up a kind of learning that anchors tangible connections between language, emotions and the body. (p. 323)

Can what we understand from the newer theories of embodiment or embodied cognition be transferred to foreign language teaching? These theories can well touch upon [foreign] language education in Switzerland and encourage a re-thinking of classic teaching techniques.

In this call for papers, we want to address three main points:

- a) Generally, what can theories of embodiment and performance pedagogies teach us about foreign language education? (2-4 page articles)
- b) More specifically, do you have a successful language-teaching/learning activity to share that embraces notions of "embodiment" and is grounded in some theory? (2-4 page articles)
- c) In the scope of a "mini conference" at the PHZH in September 2019, we aim to bridge theory and practice in German, Daz, French, Italian and English at the primary and secondary 1 levels by offering workshops on the following topics and we invite you to attend the conference and to share your ideas in a 1-2 page overview for this issue of Babylonia.:
 - language learning through movement;
 - non-verbal communication;
 - mindfulness training;
 - brain gym;
 - neuro-linguistic programming;
 - metaphor and vocabulary selection.

Would you like to contribute to this issue? Feel free to submit an abstract (max ½ page) in English, French, Italian or German to laura.buechel@phzh.ch,

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Deadlines:

- March 1, 2019: abstract submission, indication of interest to contribute
- March 30, 2019: you will be informed if your article / idea has been accepted
- July 1, 2019: Article submission
- July – September 2019: Proofreading
- November 15, 2019: Final corrections
- Early 2020: Publication

References

- Bergen, B. (2012). *Louder than words*. Basic Books. Perseus. New York.
- Fischer, M.H., & Zwaan, R.A. (2008). Embodied language – A review of the role of the motor system in language comprehension. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 61, 825-850.
- Macedonia M (2015) Learning Styles and Vocabulary Acquisition in Second Language: How the Brain Learns. *Front. Psychol.* 6:1800. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01800
- Piazzoli, E. (2018). *Embodying Language in Action: The Artistry of Process Drama in Second Language Education*. Springer.