

«ça bouge!» Embodying language? The body in language?

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.

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

- a) Generally, what can theories of embodiment 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: language learning through movement;
 - non-verbal communication;
 - mindfulness training;
 - brain gym;
 - neuro-linguistic programming;
 - metaphor and vocabulary selection.

We invite you to attend the conference and to share your ideas in a 1-2 page overview for this issue of Babylonia.

Can what we understand from the newer theories of embodiment or embodied cognition be transferred to foreign language teaching? As a small example: is it better to present language in ways that speed up processing time (e.g. in teaching a noun, is it better to have learners show HOW to hold it because using our hands helps us to internalize the word, or does a picture of the object suffice?) or to make learners work at it (by NOT matching words and gestures and having learners indicate this)? To quote Birkett (2012) "What is linguistically new about his [Bergen's] hypothesis is that he and his researchers believe that the "mentalese" that we all speak to ourselves within our own minds is very much dependent on our own motor systems, as opposed to the traditional view that grammar and syntax are more or less independent entities that can be used freely by the human mind to think of any thought that one's heart desires on a whim." These theories can well touch upon [foreign] language education in Switzerland and encourage a re-thinking of classic teaching techniques.

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:

- February 2, 2019: abstract submission
- February 24, 2018: you will be informed if your article has been accepted
- June 1, 2019: Article submission
- June – September 2019: Proofreading
- November 15, 2019: Final corrections

- Early 2020: Publication

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