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POINTING IN SHOPS

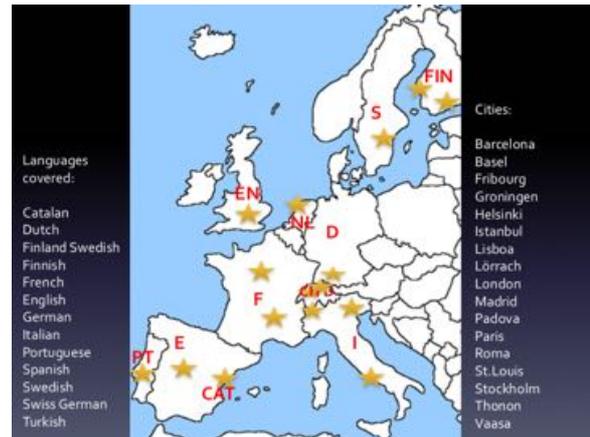
Project:

Multimodality: Reconsidering language and action through embodiment

- **Starting point:** Human interaction is constitutively embodied but theories of communication are still very centered on language.
- **Multimodality:** Not only gesture and language but a wide array of linguistic and embodied (gaze, head movements, facial expressions, body postures, movements, use of artefacts) resources.
- **Question:** How are various multimodal dimensions integrated and coordinated in social interaction – creating complex multimodal Gestalts?
- **Exemplary empirical fields:** Pointing and gazing, touching, tasting, waiting, walking, writing...
- **Comparative corpus:** Kiosks, bakeries, cheese shops in Europe
- **Approaches:** Conversation Analysis, Interactional Linguistics, Ethnomethodology, Ethnography, Video analysis, Comparative CA

Corpus:

int.counters



Pointing, identifying and specifying:

Requesting information about products in bakeries

To appear in: *Encounters at the counter: Language, embodiment and material objects in shops*. Ed. by B. Fox, L. Mondada & M.-L. Sorjonen, CUP.

- **The phenomenon:** While/instead of requesting a product, client may engage in asking questions about it and requesting information and specifications about its features. The questions are produced while pointing at the objects on the shelves.
- **Issues:** This is an exemplar setting to study the establishment of a common focus of attention and at the same time the engagement in asking for specific information in order to “find out what it is.” Participants both identify and are puzzled by these objects.
- **The examples:** Two different sequential environments: In the first (Germany), the client initiates a request, promptly transformed into a question about a possible product. In the second (Finland), the sequence is initiated by the seller, who invites the client to make a request, but the latter, instead, asks a question.

- **Pointing and gazing:** In ex. 1, client starts to point during the request turn and continues when the request is converted into a question; the gesture is withdrawn when the seller turns to the pointed at direction. In ex. 2, client starts pointing during the seller’s initiation, and the pointing is transformed into a self-touch gesture as the question continues. In ex. 1 the seller gazes, walks and points towards the indicated object; in ex. 2 she points during the request for confirmation on the shared identification of the object.
- **Closing:** The question is answered in both cases with the name of the product. This allows the customer to make a decision, either to buy (ex. 2) or not to buy (ex. 1): the client has gathered enough knowledge to move forward.

Pointing starts during the request turn

```

Extract 1 (BAK_D_LOR_170415_46-32_CLI2/SEL2_V)
01 +(0.3) + (0.7) * (1.0)
sel +nods--+
cli *leans on her L and fwd-->
02 CLI 'ich nehme gerne'
'I take please'
(2.5) • (0.4) #
cli *points-->
fig #fig.1
04 CLI 'ich nehme gerne' was- (0.2) was 'is es?' +
'I take please 'what- (0.2) what is it?'
->
sel +turns twds pointed at dir+
+(0.2)
sel +walks and pts twd the pointed at direction->
06 CLI (fä-)
(fä-)
(0.4)
07 SEL ein fei+genbro[:t?]
a fig-brea[:d?]
->+turns to CLI->
09 CLI [nei]:n=
[no]:=

```

Request converted into a question

Generic question

CLi abandons and SEL continues pointing

Decision not to buy

Fig.1

Pointing starts during SEL initiative to next request

Question

Description of visible features

```

Extract 2 (BAK_FIN_HEL_210415_0.28.50-CLI10.1_CLI10.2/SEL1)
01 SEL:s:itte=
then
cli *.....->
02 CLI: =mi•tä's noi +pit•kä- (.) pitkulaiset +leivät (-).
what.CLI DM2.PL long oblong bread.PL
what are those long longish breads
->*points--*,,,, *adjusts scarf-->
sel +gazes at breads-----> +.....->
03 SEL:+(n)ää.
these
->+points-->
04 CLI: [ni.
yes
05 SEL: # [tää o :ouhet lei tpä.
this is groat bread
---->*,,,,+
fig #fig.2
(0.3)
06 CLI: ↑sehän näyttää hyvältä.-otetää semmone mykää.+
it looks good=let's take one to go
sel -->+fetches bag->

```

SEL requests for confirmation and points

Assessment + Decision to buy

Fig.2