

Guest Lecture

The Department of English and American Studies invites all students and university staff to the following guest lecture:

“Gesture and prosody as points of access to cultural conceptualizations in talk-in-interaction”

By Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schröder (University of Minas Gerais, Brazil)

Thursday, July 11th | 10:00 s.t.
Campus Neues Palais, 1.08.0.59

Recently, an interface between cognitive linguistics and conversation analysis as well as interactional linguistics has emerged mainly as a result of two basic insights: On the one hand, there is a growing demand between cognitive linguistics to put their theoretical assumptions and presuppositions onto the solid empirical grounds of language use; on the other hand, conversation analysts also have become increasingly aware of the fact that they no longer can abstain from cognitive phenomena, especially when taking into account that the conversational ‘machinery’, as Sacks called it, does not function all by itself. Rather, the participants with their individual, social, and cultural knowledge interactively construct the communicative patterns under investigation. Hence, the pivotal question which arises from the reciprocal relationship between the two areas concerns precisely the cognitive aspects of the co-constructed meaning-in-context. Currently, researchers in the field of gesture studies and cognition account for this new interface which assumes a phenomenological-anthropological, embodied, and praxeological point of view. This includes the assumption that gestural acts are rather conceived as a result of distributed cognition and situated coordination with others than as pre-ordained psychological structures determining language and gesture in a unidirectional way, as it was proposed by the first generation of conceptual metaphor theory. Nevertheless, it is still hard to find the examination of real interaction from an ‘embodied’ and multimodal perspective in empirical practice, concurrently maintaining the operational framework of interactional linguistics which implies drawing attention simultaneously to prosodic cues. The lecture proposes a dialogue between the two disciplines by analyzing how exchange students conceptualize their experiences within their host culture in terms of key conceptualizations displayed on multimodal levels and serving as triggers for the construction of alterity.

