

Jean-Rémi LAPAIRE

Visuo-kinetic Explorations of Grammar

Diagrams and gestures are natural carriers of meaning which are routinely used to handle abstractions. By abstracting away conceptual structure, *schematic gesture imagery* allows powerful forms of *visual thinking* (Arnheim 1969) to take place. In this presentation, I will attempt to show how the invisible cognitive architecture of grammar can be made *visible* and *meaningful* by using special iconic, deictic and metaphoric gestures – or KineGrams. This special kind of *gesture symbolism* requires the poetic / artistic / fictive *creation, observation and manipulation of imaginary objects of conception*, as well as a highly plastic and symbolic use of space, since *regions* or *domains* must be formed to allow the *location* of “things”. In this visuo-kinetic rendering of grammatical processes and meanings, *speakers-cognizers* are cast in the role of *viewers* and *movers* who adopt a number of *socio-cognitive* and *socio-pragmatic stances* : “moving closer or away”, “standing near or at a distance”, “creating, detecting or removing sources of obstruction”, “offering or rejecting”, “exploring or extrapolating”, “stretching or compressing”, “splitting or lumping together”, “leaning forward or backward”, etc.

The presentation will include screen captures from *Grammar in Motion* (Lapaire & Masse 2006) and shots from the “Movement and grammar workshop” currently run at the University of Bordeaux.



Jean-Rémi LAPAIRE is professor of cognitive linguistics at the University of Bordeaux, France and President of the French Association of Cognitive Linguistics (AFLICO). His current academic research is focused on the role played by imaginary regions, objects and motions in conceptual systems. In the emerging field of “applied cognitive linguistics”, he has developed new ways of construing grammatical meanings and processes, using special metaphoric and metonymic gesture symbolism (KineGrams).

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