

Temporal relationships between pitch, prominence features, and hand gesturing at potential turn boundaries in German and Swedish

Margaret Zellers, Universität Kiel

Research investigating the complex interplay of prosody and gesture in spoken communication has led to proposals that these should be treated as a single communicative system rather than two separate systems (cf. Gibbon, 2009; Wagner et al., 2014). One functional area in which both prosody and gesture have been shown to be relevant is the management of turn-taking and the possible selection of a next speaker in conversation. I will report on research studying the use of prosodic features and hand gestures at locations at which speaker change becomes relevant, comparing their use in German and Swedish. While there are some shared functions of prosody and gesture with regard to turn-taking in the two languages, these shared functions appear to be mediated by the different phonological demands on pitch in the two languages. I will present data analyses focusing specifically on the temporal relationship between prosodic and gestural features in the vicinity of turn ends, specifically the placement of the gesture in the context of prominent syllables and the chosen pitch contour, and how different feature configurations can promote speaker change and/or floor holding in these contexts.