

## ISGS – Second Congress – Interacting Bodies – Lyon 06/18/05

### Closing speech

Jacques Cosnier, Honorary Chairman

<http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/membres/jcosnier/>

## SOME AXIOMS INSPIRED BY INTERACTING BODIES CONFERENCE — Lyon 2005

At the end of this stimulating congress I had the task of saying a few words.

Such a congress was a wonderful event, with spectacular presentations from so many disciplines : semantics, micro-sociology, developmental psychology, and linguistics; teaching, learning, and pedagogy; pathology and handicaps; sign language; cultural comparison; artifacts and virtual agents; cross cultural comparison; and last but not least, the recent contributions of neurosciences.

The list is not exhaustive but it is long enough to be convinced of the rich future of our Society.

To finish my thoughts I had imagined a set of axioms inspired by what I heard during these last days. I think that they roughly represent my follow-up impressions at the end of this fruitful meeting.

### **BODIES**

#### **1.1. Face to face interaction is multimodal**

This first axiom is nothing but original, at least for all of us, scholars of communicative-gestics: it is obvious that gestures and facial expressions play a fundamental role in utterance building and in the regulation of interactions.

We can schematically formulate this in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{The Whole Utterance (WU or ToText)} &= \\ \text{Text (Speech)} &+ \text{CoText (Gesture +Voice)} \end{aligned}$$

#### **1.2. Corollary: The WU exceeds what is pronounced**

If we accept the previous formula, it is clear that the Whole Utterance results not only from putting thought into words, but also from putting it into gestures, and that this WU exceeds simple verbal utterance .

##### **2.1. Putting thought into gestures precedes putting thought into words**

The micro-analysis of the speaker's co-verbal motoricity shows that it precedes verbal stream or is juxtaposed with it: motoricity offers a bed to verbality.

##### **2.2. Corollary: Co-verbal motoricity is as useful to the speaker as to the hearer**

The co-verbal motoricity of the speaker integrates itself in utterance composition, and so, facilitates the hearer's understanding; but it also reflects the intermediary work of putting

thought into gestures, and the body into context (“enunciative work“) and in this way facilitates the speaker’s work.

### 2.3. Corollary: One cannot speak without moving

The WU results from putting thought into gestures necessary for the wording.

### 3. The speaker’s body is the point of origin for spatio-temporal coordinates of his(her) discourse

The speaker’s body furnishes fundamental “enunciative“ support for temporal and spatial representations.

### 4. The law of designation of the referent present or representable

Every presented or representable referent is designed (by a gesture, a gaze or a head movement). If the referent is absent but can be symbolically represented, then its representant is designed. In the absence of the referent or of its representant it could happen that an arbitrary point will be used for a virtual and shared reference and should be designed in the discourse continuation.

## INTERACTING

### 5. The W-Utterance is a product of a co-enunciation

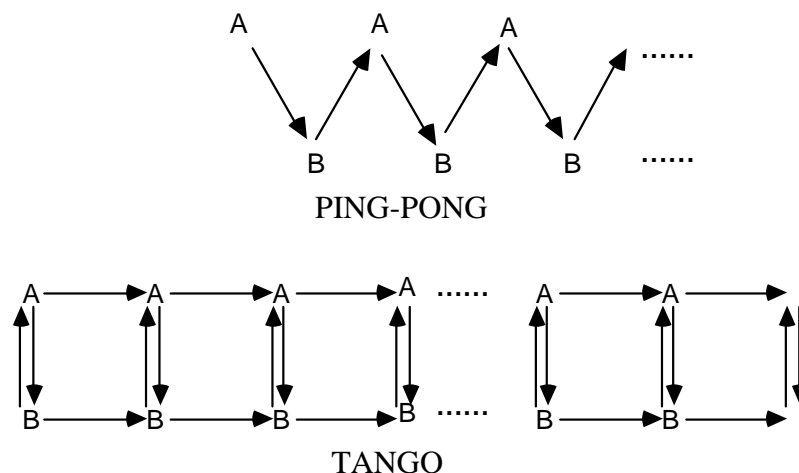
The face to face communication is a body to body interaction, its model is not Ping-pong but Tango.

The hearer performs on his (her) side a gestural activity which produces interactional synchrony.

The device of co-piloting includes phatic activity of enunciator (gaze, facial expressions) and regulatory activity of the co-enunciator (head nods, facial expressions, mirroring...).

### 6. The interactive co-piloting and the co-verbal motoricity are the inductive tools of empathic inferences necessary for the interpretation of the Whole Utterance

Speaker’s gestures serve as empathic induction in giving the partner an effector model, which facilitates body-echoing , basis of an empathic process (c.f.: neuro-physiological works about mirror-neurons).



Thank you for your attention.  
Jacques Cosnier

