

Towards increased empiricism in multimodality research

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We are happy to have professor Hiippala as our guest: Tuomo Hiippala is Professor of English Language and Digital Humanities in the Department of Languages at the University of Helsinki. His current research interests include multimodal corpora and the use of computational methods for supporting empirical research on multimodality. His main works include *The Structure of Multimodal Documents* (Routledge, 2015) and *Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis – A Problem-Oriented Introduction* (De Gruyter, 2017, with John A. Bateman and Janina Wildfeuer).

ABOUT THE TALK

Multimodality research is a discipline that studies how human communication relies on combinations of multiple ‘modes’ of expression. A key debate within the discipline concerns how to account for the complexity of communicative situations in a way that allows cumulative theory-building (Bateman 2022). In other words, a closer bond between data and theory is seen as necessary for improving our understanding of multimodality as a phenomenon. In this presentation, Professor Hiippala discusses his current project, *A Foundation for Empirical Multimodality Research*, funded by the European Research Council (2024–2029). Using crowdsourcing and computational methods, the project develops large multimodal corpora from sources like textbooks, news broadcasts, and technical manuals. The aim is to create methods for multimodal corpus analysis that can reassess and refine key theoretical concepts in multimodality research.

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