

## 1. Introduction

Our 2015-2017 Research Strategy is organized around four key *themes* which embody our main aspirations. Each of these involves one or more specific *objectives*. We also suggest the *criteria* by which it will be possible to assess our achievements at the end of the 3-year period.

## 2 Theme 1: Promoting Multimodality and Multimodality Research

Multimodality, as understood here, is the study of the semiotic resources people use to communicate and the way they use these resources in concrete social settings. When the study of linguistics expanded into studying texts and communicative events, it came to be recognized that, in texts and communicative events, language works together with other semiotic resources to make meaning. This resulted in an approach to the study of these resources which on the one hand derived from and was based on concepts deriving from linguistic concepts and methods, but on the other hand sought to engage with other disciplines that study these resources.

In promoting this area of research, CMC has three main objectives

### 2.1 Theme 1, Objective 1: Developing a distinct Odense approach to the theory and practice of research in the area of multimodal communication.

To develop a distinct 'Odense School'\* of multimodality, we have formulated six principles:

1. We see the social semiotic and systemic-functional study of language as having a central place in multimodality studies
2. We study single semiotic modes as well as modes in combination, all within the broader framework of a general theory of multimodality
3. We see the physical embodiment of signs and sign articulation as a crucial part of understanding their social and cultural organization
4. We combine the study of semiotic artefacts with the study of the practices in which they are embedded, with some emphasis on business communication and various forms of story-telling.
5. We study technologically mediated semiotic resources both analytically and critically
6. We combine pure research aiming at developing innovative methods and theories for the study of multimodal communication with applied research that engages at all times with key social, cultural, political and economic issues such as globalization, corporatization, social exclusion and social control.

Our CMC seminar series plays a crucial role in developing the 'Odense approach'. In these seminars we critically re-assess the key concepts of multimodal theory, address theoretical issues which we feel have been underdeveloped in multimodality theory, and formulate concepts and methods that can advance the study of these issues.

By the end of 2017 we hope to have achieved the following results:

- An internationally published theoretical publication, jointly authored by key members of the CMC, resulting from the work done in our seminar series, and outlining the 'Odense approach'
- One or more international publications addressing the physical embodiment of signs and sign articulation in its relation to the social and cultural context, building on the work started by the 2014 'Making Traces' symposium
- One or more international publications in the area of multimodal communication in organizations, in connection with colleagues from Vienna Business University and Copenhagen Business University
- One or more international publications in the area of visual grammar, revising and expanding aspects of the theory presented in Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design*.
- A number of nationally and internationally published publications in the area of linguistics and language description, especially on Danish, English and German
- A n international book publication on multimodal stylistics

We expect that, by the end of 2017, we will be able to show evidence of the international recognition of our 'Odense School', through citation, reviews, invitations to contribute to edited volumes, handbooks and encyclopaedia, inclusion in anthologies etc. We also expect 8ICOM (the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Multimodality), which will be held in Odense in 2018, to play a role in consolidating the 'School'

## **2.2 Theme 1, objective 2: Developing a vibrant research culture around the theme of multimodality through regular exchange with academics from other universities and through arranging talks, conferences and other events**

We aim to continue to invite at least four guest speakers to our seminars each year, two of them renowned international scholars in the field.

We also aim to continue to organize 2 to 3 symposia each year, with high level international presenters. These symposia will be open to non CMC members from SDU or other universities, and, where possible, co-organized with other ISK research centres, or research centres from other SDU departments.

And finally we have committed to organizing the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Multimodality (8ICOM), which will provide a key platform for presenting our approach to, and vision for, the field.

## **2.3 Theme 1, objective 3: Disseminating knowledge of multimodal communication to a range of relevant audiences, through seminars, short courses, websites and other online media**

Students, in particular research students, are of course a key audience for disseminating our work. We will therefore continue to organize our PhD master classes which have so far been very successful in attracting high level presenters and international audiences of PhD students, and we are aiming at developing both a Masters program and a 'profilfagpakke' to the BA program in 'International Virksomhedskommunikation' in the field of multimodality.

A broader audience will be reached through our website on which we will publish an encyclopaedia of keywords in multimodality studies, as well as a series of short videos on keywords, professionally produced and presented by CMC members. This will be done in stages, with approximately 30 entries and 4 videos produced each year.

### **3. Theme 2: Partnerships and collaborations**

We will engage in two kinds of partnerships, external partnerships and internal partnerships.

#### **3.1 Theme 2, objective 1: Seeking external partnerships with relevant industries, universities and individuals**

CMC currently has formal relationships (e.g. honorary appointments, appointments on international boards) and/or joint research projects or publication projects with a range of Universities.

Agder University  
Auckland University of Technology  
University of Copenhagen  
Copenhagen Business School  
Vienna Business University  
Cardiff University  
Lancaster University  
Institute of Education of the University of London  
Bremen University  
University of Technology, Sydney  
Macquarie University  
Australian Catholic University  
Buskerud and Vestfold University College  
Stockholm University

These relationships will be continued and expanded and we expect to be able to report significant outcomes from them at the end of the 2015-2017 period.

As far as industries are concerned, we aim to establish at least one new industry PhD position in the 2015-2017 period, and to have at least one research project co-funded by industry

#### **3.2 Theme 2, objective 2: Seeking internal partnerships with other centres of the department of Language and Communication and other Departments in the University of Southern Denmark**

This objective will be realized through at least three joint research projects involving two or more ISK centres; collaboration with other ISK centres and/or other SDU centres in the

organization of at least one symposium event each year; and continuing active participation in the MILC initiative which explores common ground between the ISK research centres.

#### **4. Theme 3: Research funding and growth strategy**

Here the key objective is to vigorously pursue funding for research in multimodal communication and for the expansion of the membership of the centre. It is our ambition that, by the end of 2017

- at least one major funded research project is underway
- at least one minor funded project has been achieved each year
- at least one project has attracted industrial funding.
- At least one further PhD stipend and two postdoc positions are obtained, as well as, as already mentioned above, one new industrial PhD

#### **5. Theme 4: Internationalization**

As mentioned, it is CMC's aspiration to achieve a solid international reputation for the Odense School of multimodality studies. By the end of 2017, this will be evident from

- our international publications and the evidence of international esteem for these publications
- international attention for our website and any other digital media we may use
- the number of international visitors we host, including guest seminar speakers, participants in symposia and conferences, PhD students attending master classes, and foreign scholars and PhD students seeking to spend periods of study leave in Odense.

#### **Notes**

\*In the literature of semiotic and multimodality there is frequent reference to the 'Prague School', the 'Paris School' and the 'Sydney School'. In the development of multimodality the 'Newtown Semiotics Circle' (Newtown being a suburb of Sydney) played a significant role. Hence the idea to 'brand' ourselves as the 'Odense School'.