

From Distributed Language to Cognitive Event Analysis: A Methodological Introduction

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Abstract

This methods seminar introduces the theoretical foundations and analytical methods of the Distributed Language approach, situating it within the broader corporeal turn in cognitive science. The session begins by tracing how programs such as Distributed Cognition (Hutchins, 1995) and Radical Embodied Cognitive Science (Chemero, 2009) challenged traditional cognitivism by locating cognitive processes in embodied dynamics across organism-environment systems. The Distributed Language movement is then presented as having extended these insights to human linguistic behaviour (Cowley, 2011; Steffensen, 2015; Steffensen & Cowley, 2021; Thibault, 2021), developing key theoretical constructs including: *linguaging*, *multiscalarity*, and *sense-saturated coordination* (Steffensen, 2013; Steffensen & Harvey, 2018). Finally, the theoretical framework is operationalized through *Cognitive Event Analysis*, a methodological approach designed to trace how agents coordinate attention, perception, and action across timescales. The session prompts a joint discussion of the method's implications for collaborative research, including its applicability to various domains of human interaction and its compatibility with multimodal data collection technologies.

Speaker

Dr. Sune Vork Steffensen (Ph.D. 2007, Aarhus University) is Professor of Language and Cognition at the University of Southern Denmark and serves as Chair of the Humanities at the Danish Institute for Advanced Study. As an internationally recognized leader in ecolinguistics, Dr. Steffensen has developed a transdisciplinary approach that integrates ecological linguistics, radical embodied cognitive science, and Marxist anthropology. Dr. Steffensen has edited six volumes and published over 80 articles and book chapters. He currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Language Sciences*.

Date: 13 October 2025 (Monday)

Time: 10am-12:00nn HKT

Venue: M5050, Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, City University of Hong Kong and Zoom (online)



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