The promise of multi-modal analysis in sensemaking and CCO
“[Discourse] may take a variety of forms, including written documents, verbal reports, artwork, spoken words, pictures, symbols, buildings, and other artifacts” (Phillips et al. 2004: 636)

→ yet we rarely look at these other modalities (means of communication and meaning making) outside of conversations and texts

“social–organizational becoming does not depend solely on the linguistic in terms of its organization and communication, but on the ongoing negotiation of intelligibility in virtually any domain: gesture, posture, software design, tool manipulation, spatial placing and so forth” (Iedema, 2007: 937).

→ but analyses often restricted to one or two modalities, and does not systematically address the relationship between them in any given setting
Multi-modality at micro level of analysis (in communicative interactions)

- Gesture
- Gaze
- Body posturing (including shoulder shrugs)
- Props (creation and manipulation of artifacts)

Analysing the relationship between them is key (multi-modality)

“gesticulation arises as an integral part of an individual's communicative effort and....has a direct role to play in this process” (Kendon, 1983: 27).

Gesture is an integral component of communication in this view, not merely an accompaniment or ornament. Such gestures are synchronous and co-expressive with speech, not redundant, and are frequent—about 90% of spoken utterances in natural discourse are accompanied by them.

McNeill (2005) conceptualizes the synchrony of speech forms and gestures as the basis for an imagery-language dialectic.
Sensemaking

Umbrella construct for meaning making within organizations
  – Cognitive and behavioral psychology
  – Discourse and narrative turn

→ abstracts sensemaking away from its material context

→ focus on symbols alone, as opposed to processes of meaning making in human communication (including multi-modality)
Case example – Cornelissen, Mantere & Vaara (2014, JMS)
Communication constitutes organization, and generates reality of organizational life (culture, power, routines, coordination, networks).

→ initial focus on conversations/speech and texts
→ turn towards sites, objects, and bodies as part of communication (Ashcraft et al., 2009, AMA)

“emergent displays...integrate the bodies of the participants into the production of talk, and are important constitutive features of the conversation” (Goodwin, 1981: 125).

Multi-facetedness of human communication
→ example: use of head tilts and shoulder shrugs in stance-taking (Debras & Cienki, 2012)