Introduction

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On February 16-17, 2017, the first Young Researchers conference of the Centre for Research on Social Interactions (CRSI-YR) was held at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The conference brought together scholars from various academic fields and different levels of research experience with a shared interest for the study of social interaction. The program included invited talks and keynote presentations given by more advanced researchers, as well as oral and poster presentations primarily authored by young researchers. In line with the general ideas of the Centre for Research on Social Interactions[1], the CRSI-YR conference aimed at promoting interdisciplinary dialogue. The event thus provided researchers at the beginning of their academic career with a concrete opportunity to discover and discuss innovative research topics and methodologies, to partake in scientific debates from various strands of social interaction research, and to benefit from the experience of more advanced researchers. Since a detailed report of the conference has been presented elsewhere[2], we will not provide more details here than specifying that the complete list of the 36 (oral and poster) presentations of the conference can be found in the aforementioned publication.

This TRANEL issue offers a glimpse into the richness of the exchange that took place during the CRSI-YR conference by publishing a subset of the presented papers in the form of short articles. In line with the broad theme of the conference, the articles included in the issue address a diverse set of activities, situations and contexts in which social interactions occur. Sending a message filled with emoticons, going to the museum with a friend, asking for another piece of cake, warning one's group members of a danger, arguing in an attempt to

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[1]   The Centre for Research on Social Interactions (CRSI) was founded in 2014 as a consortium of researchers from different disciplines working on issues related to interpersonal interaction processes, in order to support research on these issues and to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

[2]   Volpin, L., Skogmyr Marian, K., Gfeller, F., Gonzalez, S., & Bangerter, A. (2017): Young researchers conference of the Centre for Research on Social Interactions. Conference Report. In: Studies in Communication Sciences, 17(2), 263-270. Available at: https://doi.org/ 10.24434/j.scoms.2017.02.012.

solve a conflict - these are only a few examples of situations investigated by the conference presenters that illustrate the pervasive nature of social interaction in our daily lives. In studying these situations, researchers examine a wide range of questions such as: What makes these interactional encounters possible? How are they mediated, and notably what is the impact of new technologies? What are the skills and competences involved in social encounters and how do they develop? What is the role of emotions in all this? The complexity of social interaction makes this phenomenon an intrinsically multidisciplinary object of study. Thus, this TRANEL issue groups contributions from researchers working in such varied fields as linguistics, psychology, sociology, biology, and many more.

Whilst these researchers all share an interest for social interaction, it is important to note that the ways of understanding and studying this phenomenon – the theoretical, methodological and epistemological approaches used – are diverse and differently linked to the various disciplines. In the present issue, we have tried to organize the contributions according to the nature of the processes studied by the authors, in an attempt to highlight the diversity of study objects. Indeed, some of these contributions focus on an understanding of interactional processes observably manifested at the surface level of social interaction. In this first group of studies, we mainly find research from the field of conversation analysis and from the study of argumentation. Another set of papers comes from a more cognitive research tradition, and primarily addresses the cognitive and emotional skills involved in social interaction. One author draws on socio-cultural psychology and focuses on artefacts and the psychological processes they arouse. Finally, on a more conceptual level, two articles provide reflections about the conceptual and epistemological questions involved in research on social interaction. In what follows, we summarize the contributions in the order in which they appear in the issue, reflecting the different foci of study mentioned above.

In a situation of disagreement, conflict escalation is common but not inevitable. **Sara Greco**'s paper seeks to demonstrate how important the argumentative micro-analysis of conflict resolution is to maintain and reinvigorate relationships in the everyday life of individuals. In order to explore how to deal with disagreement in argumentative dialogue, Greco presents people's discursive argumentative practices in social interaction, showing and developing the main features of argumentative dialogue (e.g. *decentration, critical attitude of all parties*, etc.) as well as the concept of *communication design*. She finally discusses the impact of dispute mediators on the partaking in argumentative dialogue.

Also situated in the vast field of argumentation studies, **Rebecca G. Schär**'s contribution aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of issue negotiation in argumentative discussions between children and their parents. To

do so, Schär analyzes the emergence and the negotiation of an issue in a case where the issue is not completely shared between the participants of the argumentative discussion. The data collected for this study are naturally occurring discussions in everyday family interaction and the analysis is conducted based on the pragma-dialectical model of critical discussion. The results, demonstrating the child's ability to negotiate the issue throughout the emergence of different arguments, contribute to a better understanding of negotiation processes in child-adult interaction.

Also focusing on child-adult interaction, **Klara Skogmyr Marian**'s conversation analytic study investigates the ability of a young au pair and second language (L2) speaker of French to give directives to the host family children in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The analysis is based on a corpus of 79 sequences of directives and their responses, and documents changes in the L2 speaker's interactional methods for accomplishing these directives during the four-month stay. Such changes include for example an increased ability to adapt the methods to the local circumstances of the situation. The results are discussed in terms of the speaker's development of L2 interactional competences.

In a similar epistemological and methodological vein as the previous contribution, **Cécile Petitjean**'s article focuses on the role of laughter in text-based and face-to-face institutional interaction. The paper provides an overview of a number of studies done by the author and her colleagues on this topic. Some of these studies take a purely qualitative conversation analytic approach; others combine this framework with quantitative analyses. The studies demonstrate how participants use laughter in a highly coordinated manner to accomplish particular social actions in various types of interaction. Specifically, Petitjean shows how laughter can be used to manage interactional trouble for example in the classroom or in a speech therapy session. Based on the cumulative evidence from the different studies, the author argues that laughter constitutes an integral part of speakers' interactional competences.

Another practice that may also be considered in terms of interactional competences is people's ways of making things explicit in interaction. This is the focus of **Elizaveta Chernyshova**'s conversation analytic study. She examines two types of practices used in these 'explicitation sequences': formulations, and candidate inferences. Drawing on ordinary conversation in French, the author demonstrates a difference in usage between the two types of practices. While both formulations and candidate inferences display an inference based on what was said prior in the conversation, only the latter practice adds new informational content, or 'articulates the unsaid', in the author's words. Chernyshova discusses these observations in terms of information processing and common ground, and comments on the interactional import of these different practices on topic development.

Even if the previous conversation analytic contributions have all, to some extent, considered other semiotic resources than merely verbal ones, **Christina Brandenberger** and **Christoph Hottiger**'s research has a more clearly defined interest in multimodality. Their paper focuses on the multimodal practices used by participants in interaction to share sensory perceptions with their co-participants. The authors analyze a short sequence taking place between two visitors at a science center, in which one of the visitors vocally depicts her tactile experiences in manipulating an exhibit. The study relies on both video recordings and eye-tracking data of the interaction. The analysis demonstrates the finely coordinated way in which language, tactile perception, proprioception, and vision, are used by the participant in order to make her experience available to the co-participant. The study thus highlights the important role of different semiotic resources in the way we communicate with each other and the necessity of investigating these issues from a holistic perspective.

The following contributions introduce a shift in perspective, with a focus that is more centered on the socio-cognitive skills underlying interactional phenomena. One of the main current scientific interests concerns questions relating to evolutionary origins of cognitive abilities, such as those relating to language. Starting from well-established results suggesting the presence of basic referential capacity in animal communication, **Klaus Zuberbühler** presents a set of studies on the communication of great apes. Based on Dennett's *intentional stance*'s theoretical framework used to assess animal behavior in relation to the levels of intentionality present in human communication, the author highlights that monkeys do not use vocal or gestural signals automatically, but rather in an intentional, social and goal-oriented way. But although great apes are able to adapt to a recipient and seem to understand that a signal refers to something specific, Zuberbühler nevertheless concludes that the ability of *shared intentionality* seems to be exclusively human.

Daniel Dukes' paper introduces a new concept called *emotional social learning* that takes into account social context in the emotional interpretation of others. According to Dukes, it is this cognitive structure that allows the individual to acquire knowledge about the world (e.g., physical objects, concepts). In the paper, the author identifies the various processes implicated in this structure, and describes its functioning as mainly based on the appraisal of others' feelings. Through various experiments, he shows that emotion recognition is not only based on emotional facial expression. Instead he argues that the appraisal process, which he calls *emotion appreciation*, incorporates both emotional and contextual information. Based on these findings, Dukes encourages researchers in affective sciences to take into account contextual information (e.g., body language and gestures) in their studies.

Based on the consensus that emotions play a central role in successful collaboration, **Sunny Avry** and **Gaëlle Molinari** have tested *Emotion*

Awareness Tools (EATs) as a technological solution to access emotional cues in remote computer-supported collaboration. The authors used an inter-group design (EATs group vs. control group) to assess the effect of the EATs on the verbal interactions of dyads performing a collaborative computer-mediated task and by taking into account the gender variable. Analyzing collaborative units from verbal interaction, the authors show that EATs had a positive effect on the management of relational aspects (on the mutual modelling of emotions) and on the cognitive dimensions of collaboration. Their results also show different trends between women and men in the way they used relational and problem-solving processes.

Hazbi Avdiji and **Stéphanie Missonier** present the use of a different tool, the *Team Alignment Map* (TAM), to understand how teammates coordinate in uncertain and changing situations such as innovation projects. The authors have developed this collective tool on the basis of a theory assimilating language as a joint activity and a concept of *joint inquiry*. The TAM, which is in the form of a poster containing columns related to the theoretical postulates, was evaluated in an ecological situation using an approach to design science research and semi-directed interviews with teammates. Through a thematic analysis, the authors highlight the effectiveness of the device and show for example that it allows team members to better coordinate and adapt to changing situations.

Ottilie Tilston and **Gillian Sandstrom**'s contribution also articulates emotions and intragroup relations, but with an interest in larger groups than the previous paper. Starting from the results of a previous study in a Canadian context showing that strong and weak ties have an impact on our subjective wellbeing and sense of belonging to a community, the authors examine the link between the cultural context and the type of ties in an attempt to better understand the universality of the "weak tie effect". Relying on self-report data, they analyze the number and nature of social encounters experienced by 40 Latin American participants, considered as living in a collectivist non-Western culture. Preliminary results suggest that the Latin American sample had more weak tie interactions than the Canadian sample of the previous study, but a similar number of interactions per day. The authors discuss these results in terms of the relationship between the sense of community of Latinos and their weak tie interactions.

Fan Hua's paper certainly occupies a particular place in this special issue, as this author focuses more on objects (photographs) than directly on interactions between human beings. Drawing on Vygotsky's work on art, she proposes a socio-cultural psychological approach of the making and use of photography. Analyzing the work of a photographer as well as considering digital photos taken by smartphones and portable cameras, she examines the psychological processes involved in art experiences in contrast to those in amusement. This discussion contributes to the understanding of social interaction by highlighting

the presence of artefacts, such as art works, in social dynamics. These objects are used by people as mediums allowing them to act both on themselves and on others, as, according to Vygotsky, art is a mean to participate in the shaping of society and to orient its evolution.

Now, it is sometimes necessary to take a step back and examine the concepts and categories we use in order to conduct research with a solid epistemological and conceptual background. The two following papers both contribute to this kind of reflexive work. Through the careful examination of different understandings of what interaction actually is, **Michèle Grossen** contributes to a conceptual clarification of the notion of "interaction". She proposes a distinction between interactions apprehended as a sequence of several actions acting one upon each other and interactions understood as one single action created by several actors. She then highlights the implications of these definitions on the theoretical and methodological levels, which she illustrates with the example of a study conducted in schools. Doing this, she draws our attention to the epistemological level of research and underlines the concrete consequences epistemological choices have in the research process.

While the previous contribution is a reflection by a social psychologist on the uses of the notion of interaction in psychology and other social sciences, **Alain Perusset** draws on semiotics to propose a functional conceptualization of practices. The formalization he presents is based on the distinction between the different actants (*operator, operatio, operans* and *operandum*) which are part of any practice. Perusset then discusses different types of existential attitudes, before highlighting the presence of what he calls a transcendental authority, which characterizes the commitment in the practice. The categories of this formalization, he argues, provide a useful analytical tool for social scientists who work on interactional practices.

Finally, before leaving you to read the articles in this issue, we would like to thank the CRSI and the University of Neuchâtel for making the CRSI-YR conference possible, the TRANEL committee for supporting the creation of this issue, the colleagues who participated in the review process, all participants at the conference, and in particular the contributors to this issue, who filled the frame that we set out for them with engaging content.