DIRECT INTERACTION:
METHODS OF RESEARCH, EPISTEMOLOGY, CONCEPTUALIZATION (I)

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"Are you investigating direct multimodal interactions?" This is the first question that we addressed to our colleagues who are conducting research in fields, such as linguistics, education science, didactics, psychology, sociology, anthropology and, of course, philosophy. If you are interested in knowing more about this topic or you are conducting yourself an investigation in this area, you might enjoy some of the research papers presented at the hybrid event hosted by the Dept. of Philosophy of Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca in June 2nd – 4th, 2022.[1]

The interactions constituted a topic of investigation in social sciences and philosophy starting with the beginning of the 20th century. Initially, the study of interactions was associated with the investigation of human experience. Georg Simmel and Erving Goffman have shifted the understanding of social phenomena by reversing their traditional framing as means-end and cause-effect chain models.

For Simmel, the phenomena of face-to-face interaction were central to the sociological investigation. Through Cooley and Mead, social interactionism emphasized the importance of interaction in social psychology. In developmental psychology, Vygotsky was among the first to speak about the role of interpersonal interactions for cognitive development. The interrelations of people's behaviors in each other's immediate presence became the focus of interest for many researchers in the first half of the century. Therefore, the method of measuring and analyzing the behavior of persons in face-to-face interactions received a greater attention. However, the investigation of interactions was not the primary object of study, but rather a means for explaining social institutions and human relationships. Linguistics, ethnology and anthropology largely contributed in the last decades of the century to bring about the structure of the interactions and to describe accurately the entirety of elements involved in them. In linguistics, three major fields of research were opened: the conversation analysis (Goffman, Kerbrat-Orecchioni), the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson) and speech acts theory (Austin, Searle). The "action" as unite of the behavior have been identified and measured (Chapple), paving their way for quantitative research on social organization structure. Studies on body motion (the Birdwhistell's kinesics, for example), and the recent surge of gesture studies field of visible bodily action (driven by authors such as Kendon or McNeill), that plays a central role in understanding

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1 The event was and co-organized with LIDILEM laboratory from Grenoble Alpes University (France). The complete program of the workshop, as well as the abstracts of the keynote papers and the overview of the panels cand be found at https://lidilem.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/direct-interaction-methods-research-epistemology-and-conceptualization.

language and more broadly the communication process in human interaction, in various culture and social context, nowadays have many applications areas. Goldin-Meadow even shows that gestures have an important role in cognition in general. On the other hand, joint attention, i.e. attention to an object or situation that is shared with another person, plays an important role in language development (Yu & Smith).

Another parallel approach focused on the classification of the content of what people communicate. Bales' system of categories, for example, is based on a theory of the interactive process as problem-solving situation.

In the first two decades of the 21st century a larger quantity of research has been directed towards direct interaction, in which participants are standing in direct contact and are wholly engaged or immersed in interaction. As a consequence, researchers considered new aspects of the interrelation between the body, the surroundings, and the interaction itself when actors are coming together.

The theoretical and methodological advances in studying interactions, particularly face-to-face interactions, both required and prompted a series of conceptual (philosophical) clarifications:

- the definition and the structure of the situation; emerging traits in situation;
- the definition of action and interaction; typology of interactions; verbal and co-verbal aspects; taking-turns; multimodality;
- the role of subjectivity in interactions; children and adults in interaction;
- the potential impact of an interactive theory of various field of research and human activity;
- the types of theories which are fit to capture the nature and the complexity of interactions; the theoretical models subjacent to the measuring and analyzing of interactions.

From the 19 papers presented during the workshop, 7 are contained in this issue. The second part of the contributions will be published in the Issue No 3 (December). The papers are covering a large variety of topics and areas of research, such as embodied learning, interactions in distant languages, philosophical training, professional skills, and mediating systems, with very few exceptions, adopted a strongly interactionist perspective. Also, they have all put a methodological concern in the center of their investigations and made an effort to construct a model for the studied interactive processes or, more generally, for (direct) interaction. From this perspective, one can say that the workshop made some advances in the research of direct interaction and in bringing new light on it.

In her paper, **Manon Boucharechas**[2] proposes a theorization of interaction anchored in the framework of socio-didactics, as a 'linking concept', and the different issues that arise from this position. This way she conceptualizes interaction allows her to make a bridge between different disciplinary traditions and ways of analyzing human interactions. As an object *and* a tool, it makes it possible to link and to take into account different points of view of the participants', as well, as their imaginaries.

For the study of dimensions coming from the imagination of the participants in a relational perspective, she relies on the model of ethos (Amossy) in interaction (Sandré), as a place of the crystallization of these different dimensions. Thus, the interaction is analyzed by

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[2] Manon Boucharechas, L'interaction en didactique du FLE : du concept reliant aux défis méthodologiques. In : *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 11-27, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.01

adopting an angle that cuts across imaginary dimensions of the discourse in a dynamic perspective of co-construction. The ethos works as a heuristic "machine" (Chevallard), which gives access to didactic interaction. In order to show that the ethos is an all-encompassing notion, she selected a short interaction snippet from her research corpus, that she eventually transcribed. This extract allowed her to observe the possible links to be made between the study of the negotiations of the interpersonal relationship and that of the imaginaries in soliciting the notion of ethos.

Clotilde George[3] is interested in the form of the interaction that takes place between a chef and an allophone apprentice in a French restaurant, through the comparative analysis of one speech act, a coffee proposal, captured by a camera on four occasions, from the first day of training to the fourth month of the apprentice's employment. This data set allows her to bring to light two combined temporalities, that of production-reception and that of language acquisition. She illustrates the relevance of the longitudinal dimension in describing not only the form and function of the interaction, but also its evolution over time.

After a definition of the interaction situation, in which the notion of *role* has a central place, and the description of the relationship of the interactants, based on the notions of common ground and conversational history, Clotilde George presents the corpus and the sub-corpus of her study and propose a description, as well as a comparative analysis of the "coffee" sequences. The "micro-comparison" approach that she develops points to the constitutive asymmetry of this type of interaction that implies a phenomenon of interactional "bricolage" made from a repertory of shared multimodal languages resources, which are continuously evolving and are genuinely co-constructed.

Loulou Kosmala's paper[4] presents a multimodal and multilevel model of "inter-fluency", which takes into account different levels of analysis (talk, gesture, and interaction) by combining different theoretical frameworks and methodologies in gesture studies and interactional linguistics. The aim of the paper is to go "beyond the production model" of *(dis)fluency* (*uh* and *um*, filled and unfilled pauses, self-repairs and the like). In this view, this phenomenon should not be solely regarded as a mental process, but as a multimodal process which includes the whole range of semiotic features of language (the stream of speech, hand gestures, body posture and orientation, gaze behavior).

Following McCarthy's notion of confluence, Kosmala proposed the term inter-fluency, placing it in the more general framework provided by the notions of intersubjectivity, interpersonal relations, and interaction and signaling the ongoing interaction between the different dimensions of fluency. With the help of some examples, the author highlights the interactional dimension of fluency, which does not solely reflect online cognitive processes, but also relies on participation and cooperation. As a possible conclusion, disfluency should not solely be regarded in terms of its opposition to "fluency", but rather as a multi-level embodiment of the notion fluidity and flow.

The next paper[5] is a theoretically and methodologically oriented study rooted in the field of social developmental psychology. Its major aim is to show how transgressive situations

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3 Clotilde George, « Petit ou grand café ? » : quelques questionnements liés à l'analyse d'un acte langagier saisi dans une temporalité large en contexte de formation professionnelle exolingue. In : *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 29-48, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.02

4 Loulou Kosmala, Rethinking (dis)fluency within the scope of interactional linguistics and gesture studies. In: *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 49-66, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.03

5 Hélène Maire, Rawan Charafeddine, Jean-Baptiste van der Henst, interaction and its failures: an approach through embarrassment and shame. In: *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 67-81, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.04

are conducive to study of social norms governing interactions. For that, shame and embarrassment are outlined in order to better describe how they can highlight social norms in interactions. The authors are illustrating their proposal to study social norms through emotional reactions by presenting an ongoing experiment, that examines how children may react to a power situation. The authors are paying attention to the observable emotional reactions produced by the transgressions and show that everyday transgressions, especially those involving power relations, may be useful for understanding how social norms govern interactions. Many questions regarding gender identity and cognitive development in connection with this topic are discussed.

"Is interaction just a dynamical process?" **Mihai-Alexandru Petrişor**[6] invites us to imagine the landscape of types of interactions as a line segment whose ends represent radical positions: purely inferentialist or purely simulationist theories on one end and radical embodied cognition on the other. In order to articulate his position, he critically discusses Gallagher's radical claims of embodied cognition as constituting social interaction. The main point that he makes regarding this theory is that, even though it provides a satisfactory explanation for types that correspond to motor-perceptual processes, it only manages to metaphorically describe cases of interaction that involve articulated language use and, generally, semantically charged actions. As a concequence of that, the author supports a pluralistic vision of interaction and social cognition. He also points out that, by seeing mental states as being fundamentally interwoven, a better model of interactions can be drafted.

Martina Properzi's article[7] is addressing the issue of the meaning of human-machine interaction as configured in the light of the results achieved in the design and the manufacture of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. The starting point of her investigation is a solution for meaningful AI recently suggested by Froese and Taguchi from the perspective of "augmented intelligence", which distinguishes itself by the fact that it merges the interacting poles into a new hybrid entity. In the final part of her paper, Martina Properzi takes into account the concept of "bio-synthetic augmentation," where hybridization overlaps with the enhancement of human bodily skills.

In the last paper of this dossier, **Claudia Varga and Ion Copoeru**[8] provide an insight on the successful elements of the group counseling interaction through which addicts manage to overcome the denial of addiction and go through the stages of recovery. This exploratory study attempts to identify an innovative perspective of the aspects pertaining to the recovery from addiction which are susceptible to be disclosed primarily by using methods inspired by the analysis of interactions. After transcribing and annotating data concerning interactions from video and audio recordings, the findings are suggesting a particular dynamic of change in which the key elements are related to the shifting roles of the participants in the context of the "organization of the action" (Goodwin). We are thus able to see that the group makes possible real, open, and direct interaction, allowing individuals to express their vulnerability, to be receptive, to anticipate change, and finally to change their behavior.

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[6] Mihai-Alexandru Petrişor, Is interaction just a dynamical process? In: *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 83-100, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.05

[7] Martina Properzi, Meaningful human-machine interaction: some suggestions from the perspective of augmented intelligence. In: *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 101-112, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.06

[8] Claudia Varga, Ion Copoeru, Interactions as source of the change of behavior in addiction and recovery from addiction. An exploratory study. In: *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 67 (2022), 2, pp. 113-134, DOI:10.24193/subbphil.2022.2.07