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## Centre for Social Practices and Cognition

The Centre for Social Practices and Cognition (SoPraCon) was established 2006 by Catherine E. Brouwer, Dennis Day, Anette Grindsted, Anders Hougaard, and Gitte Rasmussen, whose research was situated within the broad field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, EMCA (Francis & Hester, 2004; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Maynard & Clayman, 1991; Sacks, 1995; vom Lehn, 2014). They had received training by researchers in anthropology, communication, and sociology, such as Jack Bilmes, Paul Drew, Chuck Goodwin, John Heritage, Gene Lerner and, most of all, by Gail Jefferson. Guided by the so-called EMCA ‘mentality’, these researchers approached linguistic research in a variety of areas, e.g. classroom teaching, cognitive linguistic studies, foreign language for specific purposes (business communication), organizational communication, and second language acquisition. With the establishment of SoPraCon another field of interest was added, namely language and communication issues concerning members of society with language, communication or hearing impairments, for example aphasia (Isaksen, 2016), dementia (Rasmussen, Andersen, & Kristiansen, 2019), severe speech and physical impairments (Pilesjö, 2012), specific language impairments (Rasmussen, 2013), and hearing loss (Brouwer, 2012; Day, 2012). The purpose of such studies is often to theorize, or build on, societal understandings of different language, communicative, cultural, cognitive, and social (in)competences, in order to document or identify what people, children, adolescents and adults, can or rather cannot do. Research in SoPraCon, however, focuses on *how* participants make social order possible in and through social interaction involving these kinds of issues.<sup>1</sup> The researchers pursue the same kind of interest in so-called ordinary, mundane social interaction—i.e. interaction that is assumed not to be influenced by language, cognitive, or communicative disorders, or challenges attributed to foreign or second language competences. In the case of mundane interaction, co-participants are assumed to rely on abilities to use language, to talk, see, and hear as well as abilities to remember, recognize, learn and understand.

In all areas of investigation, SoPraCon researchers study how co-participants in everyday (institutional) interaction accomplish social actions and practices and organize whatever kind of activity they are engaged in in socially recognizable ways. The co-participants may carry out interactions face-to-face or through digital means, and they may use any kind of ‘raw material’ (Hazel, Mortensen, & Rasmussen, 2014) that is available for them as a resource, for example languages, gestures, bodies, objects, and technologies. Potential limitations concerning what

<sup>1</sup> The approach occasions interesting discussions both in the traditional fields (Firth & Wagner, 1997) as well as in traditional EMCA research (Robillard, 1999; Schegloff, 2003; Wong & Olsner, 2000).

to use, how to use it, and when and where to use it, are set by the co-participants. And co-participants do, as a matter of fact, place constraints on- or engage in processes of typifying (Rasmussen, 2018) resources and actions e.g. by reference to social environments and situations, while they simultaneously spontaneously draw upon, modify, change, combine, and accommodate established ways of doing things. This double-sided coin of what seems to be key to the possibility of social orderliness is the heart of SoPraCon research.

Colleagues with an interest in language at the Department of Language and Communication may wonder where SoPraCon's EMCA research interests leave the study of language. Language is a vehicle for social interaction and so falls within the scope of EMCA. However, SoPraCon's interest in language in use by people conveying something to one another does not concern language per se, although CA may be *applied* to research to achieve descriptions of this kind. Language is of interest in so far as it co-constitutes (along with other embodied resources or modalities (Mondada, 2015; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011)) actions, types of action, and ways of acting (Heinemann, 2010; Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson, 1996). In order to forefront this focus, a number of researchers categorize their field as multimodal or embodied EMCA (Hazel, Mortensen, & Rasmussen, 2014).

With its background in EMCA, SoPraCon research encompasses a variety of interests, possible collaborations, and discussions with other research areas, which it enriches and which in turn enrich it. SoPraCon studies show how human beings carry out their everyday practices, like having discussions in an on-line chat forum (Andersen, 2015), or buying and selling products, using e.g. digital possibilities/solutions ("The Digital Resemiotisation of buying and selling Interaction (RESEMINA)," 2018-2021, in collaboration with Centre for Multimodal Communication). They demonstrate how people accommodate established ways of doing things in different environments as they orient toward the possibilities provided by the digital solutions in use. However, and importantly, they also show how people make these solutions fit their purposes. In this way, new practices emerge in their own right (Andersen, 2015). The dynamic ways in which human beings engage with technology in ways that make sense for their purposes are also exhibited in studies of human-robot interaction for (physical) rehabilitation purposes (Sørensen & Rasmussen, 2018).

Technologies as well as tangible objects are usually designed and constructed by professionals for others to use. SoPraCon's interest lies in that use. Moreover, it lies in how they are used socially, i.e. in actions that are oriented towards others and take account of their behavior. An interesting analysis of two different professions' significantly divergent practices (speech and language therapists and ID designers) showed that (inscribed) objects were not randomly embedded in actions, but were constitutive of practices, which, as it were, were carried out for very different purposes. Moreover and importantly, the possession of the objects in specific turns was consequential for the right as well as the obligation to talk and act (Day & Rasmussen, 2019) in both practices. For studies in design processes see also (Brouwer, ten Bhömer, Tomico, & Wensveen, 2015)

Technologies, objects, games etc. may be exploited to actually stimulate talk in teaching and learning environments of different kinds; e.g. children learning Danish as a second language (Brouwer, 2018) or they may be used to make conversations possible when the cognitive, speech and/or language abilities are impaired (Pilesjö, 2019; Rasmussen, 2017). In the latter case, elements on e.g. a board may as a matter of fact be turned into constitutive elements of turn constructional units (TCU) which the turn-taking-system operates on. Moreover, the production of the grammatical units of the TCU may be distributed between the co-participants in interaction (Pilesjö & Rasmussen, 2011).

Finally, SoPraCon research includes the organization of interactions in which ‘cognitive matters’ are an issue (Rasmussen, Brouwer, & Day, 2012) and oriented to, e.g. in classrooms (Day & Kjærbeck, 2012) or in institutional settings with the purpose of resolving ‘problems’ to individuals and/or to society (Andersen & Isaksen, 2017; Brouwer, 2012; Jensen, 2012; Kristiansen, Rasmussen, & Andersen, 2019; Vetter, 2017)

The paper presented in this issue “Piling up and Spelling out! – Repair work in Challenged Interaction”, by Brouwer & Rasmussen, addresses the question of how co-participants deal with interactional troubles that may occur by reference to the abilities of one of the co-participants, e.g. hearing, understanding, speaking (in)abilities or language skills and (in)competences. (Multimodal) CA research on repair in the realm of Atypical Interaction and of Second Language Acquisition respectively has a broad range. It typically does not cross the two research areas’ boundaries, neither does it cross the boundaries of subareas within Atypical Interaction, e.g. aphasia, hearing impairments, and dementia. However, Brouwer & Rasmussen investigate an interactional phenomenon that is found across the areas (dementia, hearing impairment and second language use) (see also Kristiansen, Marstrand, & El Derbas, 2017)<sup>2</sup>. The authors describe how (unsuccessful) attempts at repairing a trouble may be piled up and result in one of co-participants, the one whose turn turned out to be a trouble source, resort to spelling out what she or he tried to convey at the outset. Although the troubles diverge with regard to type, the speakers of the ‘trouble source turn’ engage in new attempts at repairing the trouble as they use repair methods that differ from the one used in prior attempts. Also, whether the trouble source speaker is ascribed to the social categories of professionals; native speakers; ordinary, typical speakers; or of hearing, speaking or cognitively impaired persons; or non-native speakers, she or he takes on the responsibility of resolving the problem. When resorting to spelling out, which is overwhelmingly accomplished with bodily and prosodic features of emphasis, she or he seems to indicate that the trouble is not necessarily her or his original turn, nor is it her or his different repair methods, rather the trouble lies with the co-participant who found the prior turn troublesome.

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2 Both studies were presented in talks in a panel ‘Linguistically and Communicatively challenged Interactions’ organized by Brouwer & Rasmussen at the International Conference on Atypical Interaction that was hosted by SoPraCon 2016.

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