

THANKS FOR A FANTASTIC THREE DAYS IN KINGSTON IN JUNE

By Frédéric Vallée-Tourangeau, Kingston University
(f.vallee-tourangeau@kingston.ac.uk)

It was with much anticipation that I welcomed the ISSILC community in Kingston for the third conference on interactivity, language and cognition at the end of June. It was a genuine pleasure to get reacquainted and meet new people. But this wasn't merely a social occasion: What a fantastic three days of talks, symposia, workshops and debates (and ahem, of course, drinking). My only regret: Parallel workshops at the start of each day meant that we could not hear and see everything.

I was also impressed with the quality of the scholarship showcased in the postgraduate students' presentations delivered, invariably, with verve and aplomb.

ISSILC is formidably multidisciplinary. It pushes a very broad research agenda animated by certain core themes and, from my personal perspective, themes that have shaped and informed my thinking as I plot my next problem solving experiment (that will change the world). Its multidisciplinary puts it at risk of fragmentation though.

I, along with the governing board of the society, will work to reduce this risk beyond the planning of the biennial meetings. The launch of this newsletter is one such initiative. We'll seek to identify intervening conferences where we could propose ISSILC-informed symposia in addition, of course, to the events organised by the Centre for Human Interactivity, and the next Distributed Thinking Symposium that will likely take place in the UK in early 2017. CogSci is coming to London next summer and this might also be an opportunity for the ISSILC community to plant a flag of sorts.

During the general assembly on the first day of CILC3 (29 June 2016), Christian Johannesen was elected to the governing board of ISSILC, and joins myself, Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi, Bert Hodges, Dongping Zheng, Sune Vork Steffensen, and Stephen Cowley. On behalf of the board I wish to thank Christian for all his work leading to, during and after the conference; he also produced the thinking hand logo for CILC3 (which was, well, kind of cool).

Fred

SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE APPLICABILITY OF ECOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY TO 4E LANGUAGE SCIENCE

By Matthew Isaac Harvey, University of Southern Denmark
(harvey@sdu.dk)

There is a great deal which might be said positively about recent work by Andrew Wilson and Sabrina Golonka, which was highlighted in a workshop at CILC3 this year ("Reducing the mystery behind Gibsonian information"; see Golonka 2015; Golonka & Wilson forthcoming; Wilson & Golonka 2013). Their work has been to add rigor and precision to core Gibsonian concepts, in just the way that is needed for ecological psychology to be most useful to complementary efforts in 4E cognitive science (the 4 E's refer to the embodied, ecological, enacted, and extended perspectives on cognition in this tradition). I am concerned, however, that when it comes to 4E approaches to language, they have chiefly succeeded in showing that neo-Gibsonian concepts are just a poor match for the phenomena of interest.

The problem here, if I am right that there is one, arises primarily from their careful separation of law-based information (that is: correlations between worldly structure and structure in energy arrays, which correlations are directly due to natural laws, e.g., the correlations between structure in the visual array and the structure of surfaces in the environment) from convention-based information (where the correlations are not due to natural law, but are instead due to the activity of conspecifics or other organisms, as, for instance, when some particular vocalization is correlated with sexual receptiveness on the part of its producer). They contend that convention-based information is primarily suitable for action "selection", rather than real-time "control" of action as it plays out, where this former term refers to moments "when an organism chooses between alternatives, changes from one task to another, or parameterizes the performance of the current task" (Golonka & Wilson forthcoming; see Wilson & Golonka 2013 for context).

In the case of human vocal activity, this leads the authors to portray vocal articulation as a mix of well-rehearsed ballistic or semi-ballistic motor sequences with "on-line" control, such that in principle it would be possible to delineate individual linguistic actions, such that they might be individually selected for or parametrized. This raises a two-part worry: first, that it looks like nothing so much as the

completely unwarranted acceptance of the basic premise of structuralist approaches to language, i.e., that languages are comprised of syntactically-defined units (even if, in this case, they are also supposed to be delineable through an examination of their mechanisms of articulation). For instance, the authors do not scruple to talk of "words" and "word selection". Second, it is not clear either that "action control" and "action selection" are separable groups of processes, even in principle, or that law-based and convention-based information are themselves separable when it comes to what aspects of the environment are being tracked and responded to in the regulation of vocal activity.

If we are trying to build an exciting new 4E approach to linguistic activity, founded on ecological considerations, structuralist assumptions are the worst possible place to start. If a neo-Gibsonian perspective leads in the direction of structuralist assumptions, then it, too, will only make the the development of such an approach more difficult.

CALL FOR PAPERS: CILC3 PROCEEDINGS IN SPECIAL ISSUE OF *PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION*

By Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi, University of Warsaw
(raczasze@psych.uw.edu.pl)

The third International Conference on Language, Interactivity and Cognition (CILC3) took place at Kingston University 29 June – 1 July 2016. The theme of the conference was "The Tactility of Thinking and Talking": The transactional weaving of people, things, and words, that reflects a coordination at different time scales and from which language and cognition emerge.

We are inviting CILC2016 contributors and participants to consider submitting a paper (either a full-length article or a short communication) for a special issue of *Psychology of Language and Communication* (<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/plc>), co-edited by Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi and Frédéric Vallée-Tourangeau based on the theme of the conference (and the associated workshops).

Abstracts (150-200 words, with keywords) should be submitted to Joanna Rączaszek-Leonardi (raczasze@psych.uw.edu.pl).

New extended deadline:
31 October 2016.

CILC4 IN MANOA 2018

By Dongping Zheng, University of Hawaii at Manoa
(zhengd@hawaii.edu)

CILC4 in 2018 will be convened by Dongping Zheng and organised by Dongping Zheng, Stephen Cowley and the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC). It will be held at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in August, 2018. The theme of the conference has been provisionally set to “Ecological Learning: Appropriation, Enskilment, and Technology”, which aligns it with the funding by the University of Hawaii, National Foreign Language Resource Center. The provisional title is on par with on “Project-based Learning”.

We envision CILC 4 to be an exemplary model of trans-disciplinary and cross-cultural research in all aspects: from theory, concepts, to data driven empirical studies, from psychology, cognitive science to education and applied linguistics, from the East to the West. The University of Hawaii at Manoa is not only fit geographically for this theme, but also offers exceptional resources that can be exploited by participants. The NFLRC is but one example with its effort on Project-based learning, the diverse faculty of the Department of Second Language Studies and Linguistics, and the three stand-alone units housed in the College of Language, Linguistic and Literature. The Philosophy Department is considered the best department in its mission for East and West Philosophy. The world renowned philosopher, Roger Ames has provisionally accepted our invitation as a local keynote. Last, but not least, the Department of Psychology is home to researchers working on behavioral neuroscience, clinical, cognitive, community and culture, developmental, and social psychology, as well as experimental psychopathology.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF *NEW IDEAS IN PSYCHOLOGY*: “LEARNING AS INTERACTIVITY, GROWTH AND BECOMING”

By Paul J. Thibault, University of Agder
(pauljthibault@yahoo.com)

New Ideas in Psychology Special Issue on 'Learning as Interactivity, Growth, and Becoming: Explorations of Learners, Teachers and Teaching & Learning Environments. Guest Editors: Dr. Mark E. King, Professor Paul J. Thibault.

The guiding principle of the Special Issue is the concept of *interactivity* (Vallée-Tourangeau et al, 2011) in contrast to the more usual concept of interaction that informs many approaches inspired by social constructivism and discourse-analytical approaches. On the latter view, ‘interaction’ tends to be seen as something that goes on between individual cognizers rather than investigating how teaching and learning unfold as process and event that is interactively constituted, sustained and changed as a living, mobile temporal trajectory. Text-based literacies have often privileged teaching and learning strategies that abstract away from this basic fact. Learning and teaching are embedded in, enacted by, and depend upon culturally saturated forms of interactivity that enable teachers and learners to draw upon and orchestrate neural, bodily, cultural and technological resources in real-time teaching and learning situations. As shown in the research findings of Vallée-Tourangeau et al (2011), humans learn best in situations that promote rich, culturally saturated interactivity when they engage with and manipulate external artefacts to solve learning tasks and cognitive problems in complex learning environments. Teaching and learning tend to be conceptualized as the outcomes and products of individual cognition that are merely expressed through the linguistic and other media of the educational process. The concept of interac-

tivity is intended to contrast this view and to highlight and to show through empirical analysis how people *do* teaching and learning as socially organized and distributed processes in time and across time scales. Teaching and learning are temporal processes of unfolding and becoming. They are living, mobile events, forms of future-oriented movement, rather than the static outcomes and representations of individual-centred cognition.

The purpose of the Special Issue is to provide educationalists and theorists of learning with new tools of thinking and new empirical approaches to the analysis of teaching and learning as multi-scalar interactive process. Educationalists are invited to understand, analyse, and theorise student learning together with teaching as it actually occurs in real-time teaching and learning situations. Our starting point is a premise that is central to the theory of Distributed Cognition developed by Hutchins (1995, 2014)—teaching and learning do not simply occur inside the heads of individual learners. Instead, they involve learners’ and teachers’ embodied practical engagements with the learning environment as they together forge and enact learning events-in-becoming. Teaching and learning are not predefined and fixed roles, but take place in fields of relations in which what is taught and what is learned are seen as processes of growth and becoming in which teachers and learners are enmeshed, in which they act and are changed.

Contributors include: Morana Alač, Stephen Cowley, Helle Høgh, Tim Ingold, Alfredo Jornet, Mark E. King, Jay Lemke, Sarah Bro Pedersen, Wolff-Michael Roth, Sune Steffensen, Paul J. Thibault, Frédéric Vallée-Tourangeau, Gaëlle Vallée-Tourangeau, Marlene Ventzel and Line Brink Worsøe.

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Frédéric Vallée-Tourangeau, Kingston University. f.vallée-tourangeau@kingston.ac.uk.

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Joanna Raczaszek-Leonardi, University of Warsaw. joanna.leonardi@gmail.com

Stephen Cowley, University of Southern Denmark. cowley@sdu.dk

INTERACT

We are happy to receive comments and feedback. Please send them to ISSILC President Frédéric Vallée-Tourangeau at f.vallée-tourangeau@kingston.ac.uk.

The Interactor invites the postgraduate community to submit short pieces (max. 500 words) on any ISSILC-related topic that strikes your fancy, to be included in the next issue.