Embodied Activities

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1 Introduction[1]

With the advent of the video camera in data collection, there has been a general realisation of the importance of multimodality and embodiment among interactional (socio)linguistic scholars and conversation analysts. To complement their interest in talk as it develops in real time, the study of talk-in-interaction has expanded its scope to situated, visual interaction in space. This rather recent interest in multimodality and embodied interaction calls for a deepened understanding of how verbal, vocal, visual-spatial, and material resources are deployed by participants

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for meaning-making in social encounters. One level of organisation of these resources which has largely been neglected is that of embodied activities. This volume proposes the notion of 'activity' as a perspective on the thick descriptions that are now available to researchers through video-recordings of naturally occurring social interaction.

We understand activities as coherent courses of action in which participants engage, sharing a joint goal and/or topic. This understanding is informed by Heritage and Sorjonen who use:

> the term activity […] to characterize the work that is achieved across a sequence or series of sequences of a unit or course of action – meaning by this a relatively sustained topically coherent and/or goal-coherent course of action. (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 4)

As Levinson points out, "we need to distinguish projects as courses of action from the sequences that may embody them" (Levinson 2013: 121). For instance, participants in question-answer sequences can pursue different courses of action, depending on their institutional role in, for example, courtroom interaction (cf. Levinson 2013) or parliamentary interaction. News delivery sequences are a good example of how conventionalised the link between sequence organisation, course of action as well as linguistic practices can be (Reber 2012).

As regards social interaction performed through talk only, e.g. in telephone conversations, it has been argued that courses of action are organised in a sequential fashion which are minimally built as adjacency pairs of actions "implemented through talk" (Schegloff 2007: 9, cf. also 26), a view that has been challenged by Stivers and Rossano (2010) with regard to embodied, face-to-face interaction (cf. also the discussions in Stivers 2013; Levinson 2013). While research on how embodied interaction and the concurrent use of embodied resources are systematically organised for action formation is still in its beginnings, it is indeed a recently held view that an analysis of turn constructional units (TCUs; Sacks et al. 1974) as units for actions in embodied interaction not only involves linguistic units such as lexicogrammar and prosody but also what is achieved and made relevant through the full range of embodied resources in space (e.g. Keevallik 2013). Moreover, it has been

acknowledged that there are "nonverbal action sequences," i.e. courses of actions which are achieved through physical actions only (Levinson 2013: 125). Findings like these show that the common understanding of action in Conversation Analysis—"the ascription or assignment of a 'main job' that the turn is performing" (Levinson 2013: 107)—must be revisited. Actions in embodied activities are not necessarily built exclusively through turns or turn-constructional units (TCU), i.e. through talk, but also involve non-verbal resources whose form cannot be described solely in terms of TCUs.

Along these lines, we argue that participants perform activities through embodied interaction in creating meaningful actions, drawing on their linguistic as well as their bodily resources and objects in their material world in ways designed to meet their goals. We assume that this coherence of topic and/or goal across a course of action forms the core organising dimension of activities. As is illustrated by the contributions to the volume, further levels of organisation may vary and may—but do not necessarily have to—be distinguishing dimensions of what we call different activity types, making the notion of 'activity' a rather loose and flexible concept. The defining dimension of what we call 'embodied' activities is that they are performed face-to-face (even if the performance may be enacted for a split audience). This contrasts with activities that are performed with other mediums of communication, such as telephones and smartphones, Skype and/or instant messenger programmes (Frobenius and Gerhardt 2017). These types of mediums put constraints on the communicative resources available and thus the practices—ways of doing things—that participants may engage in to construct the activity (cf. Schegloff's 2007: 231–250 related discussion of sequence as a practice, cf. also Heritage 2010; Schegloff 1997).

There are some activities which may be limited to certain types of mediums altogether: For instance, cooking together appears only to be done face-to-face. As regards space, participants in embodied interaction are typically co-present. Here activities can be performed with participants either located in space or moving through space, or doing a mixture of both as in, for example, guided tours. We assume that their positioning is reflective of 'fixed-feature', 'semi-fixed feature' and 'informal' space (Hall 1969), which in its turn provides for specific activity

types. Although activities are produced in a material world with objects naturally present, there are activity types whose goal it is to manipulate and even transform objects and space in various ways, as for instance in abdominal operations. The participation framework (Goffman 1979) contextualised by participants in activities may be transformed in situated ways and yet the participant roles—especially in 'formal' settings (Atkinson 1982)—may both be constitutive of an activity and at the same time shaped by it (for mediated settings, cf. Gerhardt et al. 2014). Turn allocation (which can be mediated in formal settings) is further constrained by participant roles. Activities may or may not be temporally bounded in advance in that they have to be completed in a fixed time span (or not). Participants can display 'alignment' with an activity, i.e. they can support its progress (Stivers 2008). Participants can show 'affiliation' (Stivers 2008), i.e. side, with a stance displayed.

Although this list may not be complete, we argue that each of these dimensions may be oriented to by participants when enacting embodied activities. Moreover, activities can form part of a larger coherent whole, a project (Robinson 2003). Although all of these dimensions are present in the following chapters, there are three that are noticeably shared and will provide a framework for the sections in the volume: The contributions assembled in the section *Objects in Space* focus on activities where material objects are manipulated in interaction, such as, in surgery, specific parts of organs, in a child's bedroom, toys, or, at a market, goods for sale. The section *Complex Participation Frameworks* offers work on embodied activities which are performed in front of a (split) audience, drawing on recordings of music masterclasses, handball time outs, and British Prime Minister's Questions. The chapters in the third section, *Affiliation and Alignment*, home in on practices and actions across a variety of settings, private and institutional, where people side with each other, orienting to the progressivity of the evolving sequence.

On a general note, the volume aims to revisit the concept 'activities' and neighbouring notions from a multimodal perspective and to extend the repertoire of activities studied from an interactional perspective. Informed primarily by the methodological approaches of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics with a focus on multimodality and embodied interaction, the contributions to this volume present

studies of specific activities grounded in the analysis of video recordings of naturalistic and naturally occurring, mediated and unmediated, face-to-face interaction in Chinese, Dutch, English, French, and German.

The volume begins with a theoretical-methodological discussion about:

1. how activity types can be differentiated along a language-body continuum and
2. how video data, on whose basis activities are analysed, are constituted.

In what follows, authors analyse specific activities addressing the questions of:

3. how embodied resources are recruited to perform tasks and actions specific to certain types of activities and the transitioning between activities, and
4. how a specific activity type brings about the mobilisation of a specific embodied resource to perform specific tasks and actions.

The introduction is structured such that Sects. 2 and 3 will provide a review of past research on activities and Sect. 4 provides a summary of the contributions to the volume.

2 The Advent of Key Notions

Activities as meaningful social constructs have been an object of study at least since the middle of the last century. This section will trace the notion 'activity' and also neighbouring concepts such as 'practice' in different disciplines. Terms such as 'activity' or 'practice' are oftentimes employed without any concrete references. In laying open the tradition of these terms, we will concurrently try to anchor this volume in the research tradition.

In the middle of the last century, a number of researchers became interested in the interplay between language and human action.

Wittgenstein may have been the first in modern linguistics who, in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1958 [1953]), stresses the inextricable nature of 'speaking' and 'activity' in his idea of language games: "Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life" (Wittgenstein 1958: 11). Language is not a closed system of mental entities, but part of an activity, embedded in human projects and undertakings. Two builders working together on a construction site (1958: 3) exemplify Wittgenstein's idea that utterances are inseparable from their context of use.[2] As this volume illustrates, it is not only in what Wittgenstein calls "primitive" (1958: 3) language games that a general knowledge of the activity under way is required for participants to understand what linguistic utterances mean; rather, participants must also comprehend the context-specific use of vocal resources, gestures, body movements, and other communicative resources. Even though, from a grammatical point of view, there may be a lack of complexity in the language use of the imagined builders above, activities situated in the material world are far from simple (cf. Workplace Studies, e.g. Luff et al. 2000; or Goodwin 1994). With vast impact on the psychology or cognitive reality and hence the conceptualisation of 'activities', for Wittgenstein, rather than some core feature, it may

[2]However, the examples Wittgenstein gives following this quote, for the most part, do not represent activities for us. His list seems to comprise actions or practices or speech acts rather than activities. Devoid of the context of use, their exact nature is impossible to determine though.

> Giving orders, and obeying them-
> Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements-
> Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)-
> Reporting an event-
> Speculating about an event-
> Forming and testing a hypothesis-
> Presenting the results of tables and diagrams-
> Making up a story; and reading it-
> Play-acting-
> Singing catches-
> Guessing riddles-
> Making a joke; telling it-
> Solving a problem in practical arithmetic-
> Translating from one language to another-
> Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying. (Wittgenstein 1958: 11–12)

also be 'family likeness' that allows the recognition of types of activities in that they resemble each other and share overlapping features. While Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* can be counted as one of the ground-breaking publications in this domain, the often unclear and fragmented nature of his writings also resulted in a number of problems: "Wittgenstein's failure to make a distinction between speech acts and the activities they are used in" (Levinson 1992: 96f) or his "abstention from a distinction between speech acts and speech events, both of which fell under the rubric of 'language games'" (Levinson 1992: 98) seem to echo in the literature until today in that the language used within activities (and other resources used, such as gestures), the practices employed by the participants to pursue their goals, and the activities that provide for the meaningful overall organisation are often collapsed into one fuzzy category. It may not always be relevant to make these distinctions; analytically, however, they must be teased apart for an understanding of the organisation of embodied interaction.

When discussing activities in interaction, speech act theory from the Philosophy of Language made an important contribution. Austin's title *How to do things with words* (1962)[3] illustrates that using language means acting in the world. So when speaking, people are not only saying something (the locutionary act), but they are also mainly performing actions, more or less explicitly (illocutionary acts like 'greeting someone' or 'sending someone to prison'). While this volume also holds the fundamental tenet that people use language to get things done, we do not embrace classical Speech Act Theory (Searle 1969) because of its neglect of context (both linguistic context as well as exogenous contexts of use) and its disregard of forces such as sequentiality or temporality, the role of the recipient in interaction, and other resources such as facial expressions or gestures. One cannot logically deduce the meaning of an utterance from its intrinsic qualities as a specimen of a speech act

[3]The years of publication both of Wittgenstein's (1953 for the first (bilingual) edition) and Austin's (1962) works may be misleading. Wittgenstein finished the first part from which we quote here in 1945 (Wittgenstein 1958: vi–vii) and Austin lectured in 1955 (cf. the subtitle *The William James Lectures delivered in Harvard University in 1955*).

(cf. also Schegloff 1988; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014 for a critical discussion of Speech Act Theory).

In linguistic anthropology, Dell Hymes proposed an Ethnography of speaking (1962) to describe the use of language as part of social life. The 'SPEAKING grid' allows for the classification of different speech events according to **S**etting or scene, **P**articipants or Personnel, **E**nds (goals/purposes and outcomes), **A**ct characteristics (form and content of talk), **K**ey (tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done), **I**nstrumentalities (channel or code), **N**orms of interaction and of interpretation, and **G**enres (categories or type of speech act and speech event) (Hymes 1972). Ethnography as well as social anthropology and sociolinguistics stress the inseparable nature of language, culture, and society (Bauman and Sherzer 1975). While Hymes' idea of a taxonomy of activities may be debatable (Levinson 1992: 70), for the conceptualisation of 'activity', the ethnographic enterprise highlights the importance of empirical work on situated discourse to reveal the systematic use of resources available to convey social meaning.

The notions 'speech situation' and 'speech event' have been proposed in ethnography and sociolinguistics to capture different types of activities (Hymes 1972). Speech situations like "ceremonies, fights, hunts, meals, lovemaking, and the like […] may enter as contexts into the statement of rules of speaking as aspects of setting (or of genre)" (Hymes 1972: 56). Speech events are "activities, or aspects of activities, that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech" (Hymes 1972: 56). Speech events can then be broken down into (one or more) speech acts, and, according to Hymes, the status of a speech act may also depend on factors such as intonation or sequential position (1972: 57). While the grammar-like nature of ethnographic description has been criticised (Brown and Levinson 1979; Bourdieu 1977; cf. Gumperz 1999), its focus on empiricism and context of talk as an indispensable factor remain undisputable. This is also evident in the definition of speech events: "In interactional sociolinguistics, speech events are not exogenously defined, fixed givens, but have to be recreated by the participants through their talk" (Gumperz 1999: 455). Gumperz states further:

> Speech events (and genres) are schemata or frames, embodying presuppositions associated with ideological values and principles of communicative conduct that in a way bracket the talk and thereby affect the way in which we assess or interpret what transpires in the course of the encounter. (Gumperz 1999: 456)

In that sense, speech events may be seen as another formulation of what we would consider activities. With regard to the psychological reality of activities, i.e. Gumperz's referring to schemata or frames, the studies collected in this volume pursue the idea that participants do orient to some overarching form (an activity) that is socioculturally acquired, but as a phenomenon that emerges locally in the interaction, context bound.

In sociology, Erving Goffman calls "the natural unit of social organisation in which focused interaction occurs a *focused gathering*, or an *encounter*, or a *situated activity system*" (1961: 7–8, emphasis in the original). In focused interaction, people decide to do something together over a certain period of time, e.g. hold a conversation.[4] Properties of situated activity systems are

> embarrassment, maintenance of poise, capacity for non-distractive verbal communication, adherence to a code regarding giving up and taking over the speaker role, and allocation of spatial position. Furthermore, a crucial attribute [is] the participant's maintenance of continuous engrossment in the official focus of activity. (Goffman 1961: 10–11)

For the participants, an encounter involves communication arrangements:

> a single visual and cognitive focus of attention; a mutual and preferential openness to verbal communication; a heightened mutual relevance of acts; an eye-to-eye ecological huddle that maximises each participant's opportunity to perceive the other participants' monitoring of him. (Goffman 1961: 17–18)

[4]People do this rather than, for example, just changing their behaviour because of someone's presence, which represents unfocused interaction.

All of these, including the beginning and ending of encounters, may be acknowledged through expressive signs: "A 'we rationale' is likely to emerge, that is, a sense of the single thing that *we* are doing together at the time" (1961: 18, emphasis in the original). Goffman's examples of situated activity systems include "a tête-à-tête; a jury deliberation; a game of cards; a couple dancing…, love-making, boxing" (1961: 18). To summarise Goffman's concept [1972] (1961: 95–96), Mazeland and Berenst write that he developed it

> to describe repetitive encounters in social establishments in which an individual is brought into face-to-face interaction with others for the performance of a single joint activity, a somewhat closed, self-compensating, self-terminating circuit of interdependent actions. (Mazeland and Berenst 2008: 62–63)

As the expression "situated" stresses, Goffman's important contribution to 'activities' lies in the idea that people do not passively follow preconceived fixed scripts, but actively work together to make activities come into being, then and there, for the participants. Similar to the differentiation between speech events and speech situation, Goffman also suggests that situated activity systems or encounters may be governed by a larger structure, the domain: "Of course, *what* definition of the situation the encounter will be obliged to maintain is often determined by the social occasion or affair in whose domain the encounter takes place" (Goffman 1961: 19, emphasis in the original).

With a similar interest in everyday life, Garfinkel (1967) proposes ethnomethodology (a pillar of Conversation Analysis, cf. below), i.e. descriptions of member's methods, as accounts of practices allowing the accomplishment of activities, indexically and reflexively constituting them at the same time. In his framework, "familiar scenes of everyday activities, treated by members as the 'natural facts of life,' are massive facts of the members' daily existence both as a real world and as the product of activities in a real world" (Garfinkel 1967: 35). In other words, by doing what we do, we create the world we live in. Together with Sacks, Garfinkel describes the following formal structures for everyday activities as being available for our understanding:

> (a) in that they exhibit upon analysis the properties of uniformity, reproducibility, repetitiveness, standardisation, typicality, and so on; (b) in that these properties are independent of particular production cohorts; (c) in that particular-cohort independence is a phenomenon for member's recognition; and (d) in that the phenomena (a), (b), and (c) are every cohort's practical, situated accomplishment. (Garfinkel and Sacks 1970: 346)

In this vein, activities are orderly phenomena. They are achievements by people, efforts to create coherence in everyday life as well as in specialised domains, based on the co-operation of members and their linguistic competence. In this framework, activities are not based on cognitive structures, but accomplished by people engaging in observable practices (for practices, cf. also below).

A scholar who has been interested in activities for a long time is Levinson. Based on Wittgenstein's idea of the language game, Levinson proposes 'activity types' as:

> a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with *constraints* on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party, and so on. (Levinson 1992: 69, emphasis in the original)

In contrast to Hymes's speech event (1972), Levinson's activity types do not have to be co-existent with speech. The notion is fuzzy, because borderline cases exist, and gradual in that such social episodes range from prepackaged to unscripted. This cline may correspond to levels of formality which co-occur with style choices. Hence, Levinson proposes that activities vary according to the grade of integration of talk. So activity types may consist of talk only (e.g. a telephone conversation or lecture), or talk may be non-occurring or incidental only (e.g. a game of football) (1992: 70). Levinson subdivides the structure of an activity into episodes. Each episode includes:

> any prestructured sequences that may be required by convention, the norms governing the allocation of turns at speaking, and so on. There

> may, further, be constraints on the personnel and the roles they may take, on the time and the place at which the activity can properly take place. There are also more abstract structural constraints, having to do with topical cohesion and the functional adequacy of contributions to the activity. (Levinson 1992: 71)

Furthermore,

> wherever possible I would like to view these structural elements as rationally and functionally adapted to the point or *goal* of the activity in question, that is the function or functions that members of the society see the activity as having. (Levinson 1992: 71 emphasis in the original)

This structural rather than taxonomic approach (cf. Hymes 1972) allows for a focus on a few basic principles. On the one hand, there are structural constraints on allowable contributions. On the other hand, as a mirror image, activities come with a set of inferential schemata that are activity specific and again tied to the structural properties of the activity. Hence, utterances are only meaningful with knowledge about the particular constraints and structural properties of the activity in question, including the general assumption of cooperation (Grice 1975) and general knowledge about the organisation of interaction (Sacks et al. 1974). Inferences tied to specific activities can then be conceptualised as relaxing, to different degrees, parts of Grice's maxims, or the maxims must be taken as "specifications of some basic unmarked communication context" (Levinson 1992: 78). Hence, activities represent marked or special cases that deviate from these general norms. Referring to Wittgenstein, Levinson differentiates between the rules of language use within an activity (the language game), the activity, and "particular strategies or procedures within the activity" (lower-order structures) (1992: 92). In his view, strategies and procedures (what we will call 'practices', see below) are intrinsically tied to activities in that they are "rationally adapted to achieving the overall goals" (1992: 93) of the activity. Thus, according to Levinson (1992), the verbal part of activities, the language game, depends on the chosen procedures that allow realising the goals of the participants, and the different levels of organisation are coherent overall.

Another key notion that has gained in importance in the conceptualisation of activities in interaction is the notion of 'practice' that can be traced back to Bourdieu and his insistence that social conduct, even though constrained by objective structures, is not the automated outcome of the application of pre-formulated rules, but is located in time and space, undertaken by actors with their own competences, identities, and goals (1977). Lave and Wenger's 'communities of practice' (1991) have been widely applied to theories of learning as well as fields such as sociolinguistics. Practices in this framework are shared repertoires of resources that are based on sustained interaction between members. They do not represent fixed cognitive schemata in the heads of individuals, but are empirically observable, negotiable, and locally achieved and concerted by actors in such communities. Focusing on the use of the term 'practice' in conversation analytic tradition, Garfinkel in his ethnomethodological project uses 'practice' in local synonymy with 'practical actions' and 'indexical actions' as methods for people to accomplish activities (Garfinkel 1967; see also above). Together with Sacks, Garfinkel exemplifies members' 'practices of formulating' (1970: 350ff.). More recently (but see also below), Schegloff cautions researchers:

> not to abdicate analytic responsibility to some one-to-one practice/action pairing, but to remain alert to an action-formation resource pool, in which practices, deployed always in some position, can accomplish *different* actions; and actions can be accomplished through a *variety* of situated practices. (Schegloff 1997: 505, emphasis in the original)

In other words, one practice can fulfil different functions in different activities by virtue of its potential to bring about different actions. One and the same activity consisting of sequences of actions may be performed with the help of different practices. And, in turn, the accomplishment of an action in a meaningful sequence does not pre-suppose a specific practice.

One last notion needs to be mentioned here: besides 'action', 'activity', and 'practice', the term 'project' has gained in popularity to convey one (or more) speaker's attempt to launch a specific sequence of actions

(cf. Levinson 2013: 119ff.; Clark 1996: 205ff.). In contrast to the other terms discussed here, its use in the field of language as action seems more recent. What unites all of these notions is not only that they are frequently used in the literature—the Latin root 'act' and its derivations probably unavoidably—but that they are often used without any reference to a specific source or tradition or an in situ definition that would clarify their exact use. This discussion of these notions can be taken as a backdrop to the papers in this volume, unless otherwise stated.

3 Embodied Activities: Empirical Findings from Studies in Conversation Analysis

Drawing on Garfinkel's understanding of 'activity' (1967), studies informed by Conversation Analysis have provided emic descriptions of embodied activities in social interaction since the late 1970s. The main concerns have concentrated on the initiation, closing, and internal organization of activities and the role of embodied resources in these contexts, yielding a minute analysis of the interaction of vocal, verbal, and visuo-spatial cues (e.g. Goodwin 1980a, b; 1984; Heath 1982, 1984). For instance, M. Goodwin (1980a) describes these core features of what she calls the 'he-said-she-said' activity:

> The he-said-she-said activity is constructed through an underlying set of cultural procedures that provides a particular ordered field of events, including such things as relevant actions and identities for participants in both the past and present. Phenomena within this field do not obtain their meaning in isolation, but rather from their position within the entire structure. Thus, categories of person, the structure and interpretation of events, forms of action, and the sequencing of these phenomena through time are interdependent aspects of a single whole. (Goodwin 1980a: 689)

This early work has laid the groundwork for the study of activities to date. It is commonly agreed that activities are sequences of actions produced and shaped by an overall structural organisation which participants construct and orient towards as a coherent whole. This overall

structural organisation is locally achieved in time, space, and interaction and shows an intrinsic reflexivity of participants' actions (cf. Robinson 2013). At the same time, these actions are reflexive of participants' understanding of the activity or multiactivities at hand. Despite the above-mentioned early work grounded in video analysis, fundamental findings with respect to the structural organisation of activities were made on the basis of audio recordings.

Activities may involve frequent turn-taking (e.g. question-answer sequences in medical encounters; Heritage and Sorjonen 1994) or consist of longer multi-unit turns where turn-taking is suspended (e.g. story-telling; Jefferson 1978). They may be organised through a minimal sequence, i.e. a single adjacency pair, e.g. a greeting (Sacks 1972; Schegloff 2007), or they may come in 'big packages' (Sacks 1992: 354), i.e. longer, more extended sequences, such as troubles talk (Jefferson 1988).

An important distinction in Conversation Analysis is between what is traditionally labelled mundane versus institutional interaction. There has been substantial work on the turn-taking organization, participation framework, and action design in institutional activities and how these aspects contrast with those observed in mundane encounters (e.g. McHoul 1978 on classroom interaction, Atkinson and Drew 1979 on courtroom trials, and Clayman and Heritage 2002 on news interviews).

What is not yet fully understood is how embodied practices might pertain to and differ in the accomplishment of institutional or everyday activities. A question related to this is how embodied practices makes activities more or less "formal" (Atkinson 1982).

What has recently become a research field in its own right, the work on "multi-activity" (Goodwin 1984; Mondada 2008, see also the contributions to Haddington et al. 2014) impressively provides evidence about what can be gained by analysing activities using video analysis. The term was coined following the observation that participants can engage in more than one activity at the same time, e.g. when engaging in story-telling and eating at a dinner table conversation (Goodwin 1984), when working at a computer and talking to a client during telephone calls at a call centre (Mondada 2008) or the multi-activities occurring when people watch televison (Gerhardt 2006, 2007, 2014) or use other media (Ayass and Gerhardt 2012). Here "parallel activities

can be either autonomous or interrelated, and their status is not always given a priori and definitely. Instead their status is acquired during the unfolding of these activities and thanks to their temporal and functional coordination" (Mondada 2008: para. 53).

Other more recent lines of research have been concerned with aspects of space (e.g. Auer et al. 2013; Haddington et al. 2013) and the manipulation of objects in embodied interaction (e.g. Nevile et al. 2014), without having a special focus on the concept 'activity'.

Despite this relevance of activities to the social organisation of mundane and institutional interaction, it has been noted that the concept of the 'activity' as a unit of interaction is often far from clear. Linell (2009; see also 2010) notes that little attention has been paid to the description of activity types in Conversation Analysis:

> Activity types are a central concept in Conversation Analysis (CA) […], especially in its application to talk at work (Drew and Heritage 1992: 22). Yet, it usually remains a relatively pre-theoretical notion in CA and elsewhere; one would let one's data collection be governed by considerations of activity type (i.e. one collects a corpus of talk from activity type X), but it is unusual to find a critical discussion of what constitutes a particular activity type. (Linell 2009: 202)

To conclude, before the technology of video cameras became available to a broader audience in Conversation Analysis, the pioneering work on embodied (multi)activities in face-to-face interaction was conducted by a small group of researchers side-by-side with scholars generating key findings on activities based on audio recordings. Today, video recording represents the state of the art of data collection and constitution in Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics. Not only does this visualisation of data allow new insights into the rich semiotic resources used in face-to-face interaction in general, it also opens up the possibility of a largely unexplored field of research: on how embodied practices are used in specific (multi)activities and how goals pursued in a (multi)activity become visible in specific embodied practices in time and space. Beyond expanding our understanding of social activities and their embodied contextualisation in particular, this research offers the

opportunity to reflect on the methodologies used for the constitution and analysis of video data as well as on our understanding of interactional units and processes in general.

4 Overview of Papers in the Volume

Following this introduction, the volume opens with two contributions which discuss theoretical and methodological issues in the analysis of activities and embodied interaction as such.

To explore how activity types can be differentiated, Mazeland describes two activities that stand on either end of a continuum: two friends making an appointment for going to the movies in a phone call and a nurse putting on compression stockings in a caretaking interaction. He argues that the former is exemplary of activities where talk "entirely or almost entirely" constitutes the base line, while the latter stands for activity types with "a series of physical actions or tasks as their base line".

Discussing the methodological and theoretical implications of camera work when collecting video data, Mondada analyses visual conduct from two perspectives: that of participants in a guided tour as well as the researcher's in situ practices of video recording for conversation analytic study. She finds that both participants and the filming researcher face problems in constituting the common focus of attention: Intense interactional work is required by participants, which has to be documented in its full sequential and embodied detail by researchers.

The remainder of the volume has been structured according to three organising features of activities that cut across the diverse chapters focusing on single activities: objects in space, complex participation frameworks, and affiliation and alignment.

The chapters in the section *Objects in Space* are concerned with how participants traverse and/or interact with their material world, as well as manipulate, transform, and make relevant parts of this material world to engage in evolving activities. In doing so, engaging in an activity may manipulate, transform, and make relevant parts of this material world.

Bezemer, Murtagh and Cope discuss a particularly challenging gall-bladder operation performed through laparoscopic surgery by consultant surgeons and surgical trainees at a London teaching hospital. On the one hand, the surgeons identify and negotiate the physical structure of the patient's body to turn it into meaningful entities for the activity under way, seeking agreement and joint decision-making across the team before the highly consequential cutting of the tissue. On the other hand, in the specific case discussed here, the challenges of the "object", i.e. the patient's unclear anatomy, also forces a negotiation of the participants' roles, in that the consultant surgeon (the "teacher") signals uncertainty and the surgical trainee makes unsolicited proposals. So here the object has an impact not only on the practices employed, but also on the very roles that may seem exogenous for this particular activity of surgery in a teaching hospital.

Gerhardt examines the activity of tidying a room (Zimmer aufräumen) in a single case analysis of a dyadic German interaction between a father and his eight-year-old daughter. Her analysis concentrates on the father's practice of 'showing' (rather than e.g. 'pointing') as a realisation of one action in a sequence of actions which is functional in both keeping his daughter aligned with and engaged in the ongoing activity and constructing her as an expert with the epistemic authority to decide what to do with the object shown. It demonstrates how the affordances of the physical context shape the affordances of the embodied activity and how the embodied activity transforms the physical context.

The contribution by Stukenbrock and Dao shows how gaze is relevant for participants in achieving joint attention on an object which is treated as a possible buyable by people shopping at the farmer's market. The methodology of how the data were generated presents an innovative approach to multimodal analysis and deviates from traditional ways of collecting data within Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics: The recordings were made by participants wearing mobile eye-tracking devices, which provide the analyst with a quasi-naturalistic impression of participants' gaze.

In sum, the section *Objects in Space* continues the methodological discussion by Mondada, in that Gerhardt shows how the structuring

and transforming of the socio-material world constitutes an essential feature of the activity, observing the interaction from a static external vantage point, and Bezemer and Murtagh, as well as Stukenbrock and Dao, base their analyses (at least in part) on observations through a device merged with participants' seeing.[5] In doing so, these research papers enrich the methodological discussion with respect to a topic—objects in space—which has already long been an interest in studies on embodied interaction. This stands in contrast to the topics of Sects. 2 and 3, the handling and performance of complex, mediated participation frameworks as well as of affiliation and alignment, which are largely under-researched (but see e.g. Arnold 2012; Kupetz 2015; Stivers 2008) from an interactional, embodied perspective.

The section *Complex Participation Frameworks* subsumes chapters where activities are performed for and against the backdrop of various public audiences.

Meyer and von Wedelstaedt's paper is concerned with the multimodal, interactional organisation and achievement of handball timeouts in the German first handball league and the junior national team. The multimodal analysis expands on other approaches to embodied interaction by not only including the verbal, vocal, visual, and spatial but also intercorporeal resources deployed by coaches and players to achieve a meaningful whole in a challenging environment of noise and distraction. Accordingly, human action is conceptualised as an intercorporeal 'gestalt contexture'. Meyer and von Wedelstaedt find that handball time-outs are structured in terms of a sequence of nine activities which are constituted in finely coordinated, collaborative, and often intercorporeal ways.

Reber examines British Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs), analyzing a specific activity performed across question-answer sequences between the Leader of the Opposition (LO) and the Prime Minister (PM). The study finds that enticing questions represent a resource for the LO to set the agenda of an adversarial activity, in soliciting a pre-figured answer on the part of the PM which is used as the basis for an accusation in

[5]This point was raised by Harrie Mazeland.

what follows. The analysis addresses aspects of action design and sequential organisation in light of the complex, mediated participation framework at PMQs and shows how participants use vocal, verbal, and visual resources—in particular gaze, gesture, body posture, and proxemics as well as the manipulation of objects—to display (epistemic) authority, dominance, and power relations in time and space.

Reed's work on musical masterclasses focuses on a point of transition between two participation frameworks in this public instructional interaction. He traces the moment when the performance of the musicians is closed by applause from the audience and the master starts teaching the student. With the help of minutely placed assessment receipts such as *well done*, the participation framework is changed; the musician turns to student; public performance turns to dyadic instruction.

All in all, the contributions to the section *Complex Participations Frameworks* illustrate the finely tuned micro-management of different resources in a diversity of settings. In all of them, the participants perform activities in front of audiences, being co-present and/or mediated through cameras which may or may not (explicitly) be addressed or—in Meyer and von Wedelstaedt's case—even be battled against, providing new insights into the staging of social interaction in the public sphere.

The chapters in the last section show how issues of *Affiliation and Alignment* are negotiated and accomplished in diverse ways across various activities. All papers focus on the sequential unfolding of practices through which participants display affiliation and alignment with the ongoing activity. However, the real beauty of these three studies is to observe how affiliation is only one dimension made relevant here and how this may account for the variety of resources used and the amount of extra interactional work required in the respective contexts analysed.

Kupetz presents the results of a study of how comforting actions are embodied and organised in adult-child interaction across different contexts: between mother and child at home, teacher and student at school, and—in a mediated setting—the German chancellor and a child in a TV broadcast. One can witness that these are embedded in the same sequential structure: potentially stressful event/display of mental or physical distress—acknowledgement—(ongoing) displays of distress—comforting actions—orientation to 'business as usual'/'achievement of remedy'.

Li shows how the closing of face-to-face activities can be negotiated in exploring the interactional functions of temporally and sequentially adjacent head nods between the recipient and the current speaker in video recordings of Mandarin Chinese conversational tellings. She finds that the recipient's head nod at the possible completion of a telling is closing-implicative. This practice is reciprocated and aligned with by the teller using head nods and summary statements.

Finally, Mazeland proposes the term 'position expansion' for turns by next speakers that piggyback prior turns and elaborate a stated position. Position expansion is achieved by being next turn (adjacent placement), *and*-prefacing, and by syntactically incorporating the utterance into the prior turn (constructional dependency). Most importantly, as social actions, position expansions have to contribute to the action undertaken in the prior turn, functioning as potential elements of a larger activity pattern.

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